Issue 54 • Spring 2013

Mallorn

The Journal of the Tolkien Society


Soni Alcorn-Hender
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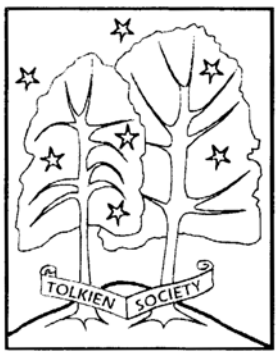

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well, I'm back

Mallorn is the Journal of the Tolkien Society, and appears once a year, in the Spring (copy deadline 25 December). 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).

The Tolkien Society Founded in London in 1969 the Tolkien Society is an international organization registered in the UK as a charity (No. 273809) dedicated to furthering interest in the life and works of Professor J. R. R. Tolkien, CBE (1892–1973) who remains its President in perpetuo. His daughter, Miss Priscilla Tolkien, became its honorary Vice-President in 1986. As well as *Mallorn*, the society publishes a bimonthly bulletin, Amon Hen. In addition to local gatherings ('Smials') there are annual national meetings: the AGM and Dinner in the spring, Summermoot and the Seminar in the summer, and Oxonmoot, a celebratory weekend held in Oxford in late September. For further information about the society please contact Sally Kennett, 210 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 3ER or visit http://www.tolkiensociety.org.

Questions of authorship

John Gilbey

Henry Gee

Many years ago when the world was young I was a graduate student in the Natural Sciences. Back then (my crest has long since fallen) I believed that facts were facts, and anything else was just waffle. An Eng. Lit. undergraduate, however, got something under my skin, and that was the notion of authorship.

It's not what you think it is, she said.

You might think (she continued) that when you read a book — *The Lord of the Rings*, say — and when the words 'by J. R. R. Tolkien' are printed on the flyleaf all plain and square and flat for all to see, with no ambiguity and no contradictions, then it's a fair assumption — a certainty, even — that *The Lord of the Rings* was written by J. R. R. Tolkien. It stands to reason.

Except, of course, that it doesn't.

First, just who is this 'J. R. R. Tolkien'? He was a human being who, proximately, wrote *The Lord of the Rings*. But the act of writing was not isolated. Tolkien was influenced by his milieu, the things he read, the people with whom he conversed, the news on the radio, the feeling of flannel trousers riding up over his knees as he stood up to give a lecture, what he had for breakfast on 12 July 1939, the way that a visiting scholar from the United States pronounced the word diphthong, the taste of the guest beers in the Eagle and Child, the sight of a long-barrow emerging from fog, the rattle of rocks cascading down a mountainside, the way a student on one of the examination scripts he was marking had written the letter 'd', the shape of the branches of a particular tree in the Oxford Botanic Garden, and no doubt an infinity of other things. His published works might seem just like words on a page, but between the lines stand an infinite regress of experiences from the easily charted to the infinitely subtle, indefinable and ineffable.

The same might be said about any reader's attitude to *The Lord of the Rings*. When we approach a work, we bring to it a range of impressions and allusions that are peculiar to us. We can never read *The Lord of the Rings* in the way that Tolkien did, or C. S. Lewis. Neither can we read *The Lord of the Rings* in the same way as any of our contemporaries. At some kind of base level, people either like a book or they don't. At a more refined level, different readers take different messages from *The Lord of the Rings* — some philosophical, some moral, some devotional. You never know, they might even just enjoy it as a ripping yarn.

Perhaps more startling, the same readers will derive different pleasures from the work at different stages of their lives. When I was younger, I found Frodo, Sam and Gollum's long three-handed slog to Mount Doom the most boring part of the book, as dull as a game of billiards; as I got older, it became its moving and dramatic highlight. Where the Council of Elrond was incomprehensible to the infant Gee, it is now a delight of different voices and styles. When, having read *The Lord of the Rings* times beyond count, I read it aloud for the first time, to one of my children (then aged 10), it took on an entirely different flavour. It felt as if I were reading a wholly new book, afresh. That same child (aged 14) is reading it for herself for the first time, bringing a new set of impressions to the book, including (I suspect) Peter Jackson's film adaptations. Not that this detracts from her appreciation of the book as a book — in any case, when I read *The Lord Of The Rings*, I am sure I had a few of Alan Lee's and John Howe's images in mind. But in the act of her reading *The Lord of the Rings*, she is bringing yet another new and unique version of the book into being.

In his essay 'Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote' (1939; to be found in his English-language collection *Labyrinths*) Jorge Luis Borges turns literary criticism into fantasy. By learning Spanish well, immersing himself in the experiences

Cervantes might have had, and ignoring any events or literature after 1602, the writer Menard wrote a fragment of Don Quixote identical to the original — in terms of the words on the page. But lo! How much richer Menard's Quixote seems to be! How deep his allusions compared with the Cervantes original! Menard brings the impressions and associations of a reader to enliven Cervantes' text. For a book that remains unread is no more than a sump for the feelings of the person who wrote it. It is a waste product, a dead thing, a spasm, of no more value than a collection of used bus tickets. Books only come into being when they are read, and when that happens, they are more than the digital transmission of words from one person to another. Partly — perhaps mainly — because words are a very imperfect means of communication — a book becomes a conversation between the writer and the reader. The book that inhabits a reader's mind is different from that conceived by the author, and different from that imagined by any other person.

In his famous letter to Milton Waldman (*Letters* #131), J. R. R. Tolkien spoke of his once-lofty ambitions for his own legendarium. "I would draw some of the great tales in fullness," he wrote, "and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama."

And then he wrote — "Absurd".

Why 'absurd'? Perhaps because, when he wrote the letter, he was beginning to despair of having *The Lord of the Rings* published, a work which had at that time been read by only himself and a few friends — a work that threatened to be starved to extinction for want of readers, not one that stood any chance of being canonical, less still the basis of a new mythology for England on which others could embroider. But the work was published, and as you can see in these pages and elsewhere, others have been minded to take up the brush and pen, and create their own visions of Middle-earth, which are more than sterile echoes of the 'original', but works with their own integrity and vigour.

And as people continue to create, or sub-create, paintings, music, even stage musicals, inspired by Tolkien's universe, they will — of course! — steer by their own impressions of Tolkien's work. What else can they do? The authors will exaggerate, they will bowdlerize, they will belittle. They will coarsen and sentimentalize. They will take Tolkien's characters and make them do new things. A lot of what they will produce will be second-rate. As Tolkien knew very well — in fact, it was a central theme of his mythology — the high tales that were once so pure will become distorted in the retelling, their meaning lost. All we have left in the modern world are fragments, all but bereft of meaning. In the simplest of many examples, Tolkien asked whether a simple nursery rhyme,

Hey diddle-diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the Moon;
The little dog laughed to see such fun
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

… fit only for burbling to babies, mightn't have had a more exalted start. Tolkien imagined the original, fuller version, as the song Frodo sang at the Prancing Pony. 'Only a few words of it are now, as a rule, remembered' Tolkien wrote, archly. From the homely and bucolic, so too to the lofty and cosmogonic: when Tolkien read that line in Old English from the Crist of Cynewulf

Eala Earendel, engla beorhtast, ofer Middangeard monnum sended

… his mind lit up with visions of a heavenly mariner sent to save the beleaguered souls of Middle-earth, and the whole legendarium was born. Conversely, that single enigmatic line might have been all that was preserved in English of the great mythology Tolkien imagined might have been present, but was lost. The theme of loss runs through Tolkien's legendarium like letters through a stick of rock. Such loss might well have been informed by Tolkien's Catholicism — the Elves are Man, before the Fall — or what Man might have been, had he not been tempted. But the theme is so pervasive that it transcends any necessary connection with religion. Great tales of any tradition are repeated, mutated, twisted, refracted, warped and diminished.

That's an inevitability of mythmaking. The mighty Elves and doughty Dwarves of lore diminish to filmy bottom-of-the-garden fairies and kitsch pondside ornaments.

In which case, what possible objection can one have to some shoeless New Zealander taking Tolkien's tales and adapting them for the Magic Lantern? Whenever one asks that question, self-elected Keepers of the Flame (you know who you are) scuttle from the wainscot and point out Tolkien's scathing criticism of an earlier film treatment (*Letters* no. 210) from which it is clear that Tolkien was interested in the exercise, although he didn't think much of the example then on offer.

Almost half a century later, we are witness to the phenomenon that is Peter Jackson (for it is he), and his films of *The Lord of the Rings* have been made, whether one likes them or not. Whatever one might say about these films as films (and one might say a great deal) they do not detract from the books, which remain on sale, for all to enjoy, should one so choose. Given what I have said about the nature of authorship, and of Tolkien's own views of his subcreations — artefacts which, in any case, we should hold but lightly — one can have no objection whatsoever to Mr Jackson's oeuvre. Sure, his films might deviate from the canon, but so what? Hey diddle diddle is not the same as Frodo's song from the Prancing Pony.

I get the impression that the aforementioned Keepers of the Flame cling to Tolkien's legacy as an acolyte to a holy text, impugning any possible change as some kind of blasphemy. One can only respond that blasphemy is the most victimless of crimes — who is hurt, precisely, by blasphemy? What is the substantive damage caused by the supposed 'offence'? Tolkien conceived of his legendarium as fluid, protean, and published it only when backed into a corner. Christopher Tolkien, his literary executor, has had that unenviable and unTolkienian task, akin to lassoing the clouds.

But then, there is Art. Were the Keepers of the Flame to make the film their way, it would be as wooden, as nauseatingly sanctimonious, as a school nativity play. If you don't like Jackson, just imagine what *The Lord of the Rings* would have been like had Walden Media got their hands on it. (On second thoughts, don't.) The aforesaid Keepers ignore two things, from which it is evident that the joke is on them. First, that their own conceptions of Tolkien's work will be unique to the minds of each one of them, as different from one another as from Tolkien's conception, and therefore no more valid than anyone else's view, even Peter Jackson's. Second, the lovely irony that Tolkien himself did not consider himself as the author but as the rapporteur, the translator, of records written in other hands and recovered from the deep past.

The Hobbit was first read to me when I was eight, by a schoolteacher of great character called Mrs Elias. I still remember her as the Great Goblin: 'Who are these Miserable Persons?' she roared to me and my classmates. I remember it almost half a century on. Later, at High School, I took part in a stage production of *The Hobbit*. I played a female troll (we were a boys' school, acutely conscious of the lack of good parts for girls, so we invented some.) Peter Jackson has returned with his own production, and in this issue of *Mallorn*, several movie-goers give their impressions. One of my few reservations is that the part of the Great Goblin was substantially miscast, played for laughs by Barry Humphries. But then only I can remember Mrs Elias' voice — it is part of my own, unique experience that I bring to bear on the unfolding theme. That, and John Howe's picture (Miss July in my Official Hobbit Calendar for 2013) of the Great Goblin, who looks like Idi Amin on steroids.

This is my final editorial for *Mallorn*. I henceforth step down as editor. I hope you have enjoyed the past ten issues. I'd like to thank the Tolkien Society for its indulgence; all the contributors for their insightful and spectacular offerings, each one a unique interpretation, echo of and homage to Tolkien's world, whether in the form of an essay, a poem, a sketch, a painting, or a review. I offer an especially heartfelt thanks to my friend and colleague Colin Sullivan who, as Production Editor,

came to my rescue just in time for issue 47 and made *Mallorn* into the beautiful magazine you see before you.

I confess that I do not know what happens next. At the time of writing a new editor is not in place, and the TS is unsure whether to continue with the current lavish and expensive form of publication or to embrace immense possibilities (and considerable cost savings) of cyberspace. The fact is that *Mallorn* costs a dragon's hoard to produce; with an Arkenstone on top, to mail it to you. Given the current state of the economy, things will have to change. I am assured that *Mallorn* will continue in some form, although it is possible that this is the very last printed *Mallorn* you'll ever see. But whatever is in store, please don't ask me!

In support of Eowyn

SIR — It was with great pleasure that I read Catherine Madsen's excellent and enjoyable article on Eowyn in *Mallorn* 52. Eowyn has also been my favourite from my very first reading of *The Two Towers* in 1969. And upon seeing the lovely Miranda Otto as Eowyn in the film I've had an almost schoolboy crush on Eowyn.

I am so glad to see someone recognize how important Eowyn was to the victory over Sauron. Without her acting to fulfil Glorfindel's prophecy to Eärnur at the Battle of Fornost regarding the death of the Witch King, I believe Sauron's victory would have been assured.

My two favourite Eowyn episodes in the books are in *The Two Towers* (Book III, Chapter 6) when Háma asks that Eowyn lead Rohan in Theoden's absence. The second is in *The Return of the King* (Book VI, Chapter 5), which contains the dialogue in which Faramir declares his love for Eowyn and asks that she accept it.

Lastly, when thinking of a great warrior who becomes an instrument of peace and healing I think of Prince Siddartha Gautama who became the Buddha and whose Principle of Ahimsa preaches compassion, empathy and non-violence to all God's Creation.

Richard Gonsowski

Meriadoc: the source

SIR — Maybe I've lost the plot, but in Appendix F at the end of *The Return of the King* the author clearly states that Meriadoc is his familiarization for us of the real Westron name which was Kalimac! So any references to St Meriadoc of Brittany and so forth are entirely irrelevant.

Adrian Tucker

A Merry dance

SIR — Letter 297 in *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* is an incomplete draft written in response to a letter for him from a Mr Rang which to judge for Tolkien's response contain a number of suggestions by Mr Rang of possible sources for names of persons and places in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien denies all of Mr Rang's guesses except for the likely possibility that Black Speech *nazg* 'ring' derives from Irish *nasc* which also means 'ring'.

In most cases, Tolkien indicates, his Elvish names are derived from or fitted into his Elvish languages and any meaning or association that they might have in a real-world language is unimportant to any interpretation of his writing:

> The "source", if any, provided solely the sound-sequence (or suggestions for its stimulus) and its purport *in the source* is totally irrelevant except in case of Earendil, see below.

Tolkien also writes:

> It is therefore idle to compare characters chance-similarities between names made from from "Elvish tongues" and words in exterior 'real' languages, especially if this is supposed to have any bearing on the meaning or ideas in my story. To take a frequent case: there is no linguistic connexion in significance between *Sauron* a contemporary form of an older **θaurond-* derivative of an adjectival **θaurā* (from a base √THAW) "detestable" and the Greek *σαύρα* [*saúra*] "a lizard".

Yet commentators continue to ignore this. In *Mallorn* 53 David Doughan writes an article entitled "Meriadoc and the matter of Rohan". Despite Tolkien's very clear and reasonable distinction between names derived by him from Elvish forms and names from the real world which happen to be synonymous Doughan claims that Tolkien's country name of *Rohan* (a Sindarin form) is derived from *Rohan* which was the name of a very important Breton family.

This article is mostly an expansion of an earlier short article named "More about Meriadoc, and related matters" by David Doughan, published at the bottom of a page on the Tolkien Society website. This earlier article mainly tries to connect Tolkien's *Rohan* with the Breton *Rohan* on the grounds that the name *Meriadoc* is connected with each. Doughan also indicates that "Looking at other Brandybucks, whose names '*had a style we should perhaps vaguely to be "Celtic"*" (Appendix F) …" that Tolkien is confusing matters. Doughan claims:

> However in fact, this is a typically Tolkienian muddying of the waters, since very few of these names are authentic Welsh, Cornish or Breton; the majority of them derive from the Matter of Britain, i.e. Arthurian stories and romances, which include characters with names like Gorbadoc (or Gorboduc), Dodinas, Seredic, etc., which may look "vaguely Celtic", but which actually are not.

What muddying of the waters? Tolkien carefully indicates that the style of the Brandybuck names only appears "vaguely to be 'Celtic'", not that the names actually are Celtic. It is Doughan who is "muddying the waters", not Tolkien. Doughan realizes he is in error as in the revision of this article in *Mallorn* Doughan admits that it is he, not Tolkien, who is muddying the waters when he says about Tolkien:

> His words are carefully chosen as although Gorhendad is modern Welsh for great-great-grandfather, few of these names are actually of Brittonic or Gaelic origin.

In the second article Doughan writes about the connection between Meriadoc and Rohan:

> Examining the context and wording of the letter cited above, we can see that he never quite denies a connection; indeed at one point he even hints that he picked on the name Rohan because it fitted his existing stem Roh (= horse).

I do not know who the we that Doughan speaks of are supposed to be. *I* cannot see that "he never quite denies a connection". Tolkien writes quite plainly: "Nothing in the history of Brittany will throw any light on the Eorlingas." Tolkien does not just "hint" that he picked the name *Rohan* because it fitted the existing Elvish stem *Roh* but plainly claims so. Doughan ends his essays with the sentence, "Certainly it is a lesson in looking carefully at what Tolkien actually says rather than what he seems to say," but never indicates what statement (or statements) of Tolkien we are supposed to be looking at.

Possibly Doughan intends it to be understood that he imagines that Tolkien originally created the Sindarin word *roch* (*roh-*) from the historic Breton *Rohan*. But about this in itself, Tolkien does not say or seem to say anything.

If one wishes to connect the name *Meriadoc* with *Rohan* or with the House of Rohan one may do so in other ways than bringing in Hercule-Mériadoc. The House of Rohan claimed descent from Conan Meriadoc, the traditional leader of the founding of Brittany. The St. Meriadoc venerated in Cambourne Parish Church in Cornwall according to his legend later became a hermit in Brittany where he founded a chapel in Josselin, in the lands of the Viscounts of Rohan. Doughan mentions both of these Meriadocs but does not mention the connections with Rohan, probably because he does not know that they had connections with Rohan.

One may of course claim that Tolkien was lying when he claimed more or less (based on what Tolkien says about Sauron):

> To take a frequent case: there is no linguistic connexion in significance between *Rohan* a contemporary form of an older *Rochand* derivative of the compound *roch* (from a base √ROK) "horse" combined with the ending *-and* and the hononymous Breton place name and family name *Rohan*.

In Dougan's article he cites Tolkien as saying: "Nothing in the history of Brittany will shed any light on the Eorlingas." This indicates that Tolkien is not here concerned with the possibility that Tolkien at times created his names and words from real-world sources only because he thought their sound or appearance suitable for his purposes. Tolkien believes that Black Speech *nazg* 'ring' derives from Irish *nasc* and that the element (*n*)*dor* 'land' probably owes its existence to names like *Labrador* but such words and names shed no light on the use of those elements in *The Lord of the Rings*. But the case will sometimes arise where the use of a word or name in the "real world" may seem to shed light on the use of a word or name in *The Lord of the Rings* even though Tolkien may have never considered a connection that to some readers seems obvious.

A good example is the supposed connection between *Sauron* and Greek *saúra* 'a lizard' which to many readers seems obvious, especially in light of the modern invented compound *dinosaur*. It is a debated question of to what extent the author's understanding of his work trumps that of the work's readers. According to some critical thought it does not matter that Tolkien did not connect *Sauron* and *saúra*. As Tolkien did not in *The Lord of the Rings* indicate that the forms were unconnected, then (despite a claim published much later in one of Tolkien's letters) *Sauron* is linked to *saúra* because many readers see the link and because the link makes sense (to those readers). Others take his idea of interpretation to be nonsense.

To take an example outside of Tolkien's writing, imagine a somewhat naïve reader who is reading the Bible without taking into account that what they are reading is a translation of a work into English from other languages (just as Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is supposed to be a retelling in modern English of a work originally written in Annúnaid [Westron]).

The reader finds it appropriate that the first woman is named Eve, since she brings about the end of her and her husband's stay in the Garden, as the eve(ning) brings an end to the day. Her first two sons are named Cain and Abel, an obvious play on Cane and Able. Abel is the *able*-bodied good son while his murdering brother Cain relies on tools. Doubtless he slew Abel by striking Abel with a *cane*. Cain departs and builds a city, apparently the first city. By having Cain live in the "land of Nod" the author indicates that Cain's apparent success is only a dream. One of Cain's descendants, Jubal, becomes the first musician and a source of *jubilation*. But all that kindred is slain in the Great Flood. Noah survives the flood with his wife, his three sons, and their wives. One of them, named Ham, is cursed, which reminds the reader that *ham* is a word generally meaning pig meat, and pigs are unclean animals. As people increase and divide into many kin-groups, the ancestral line of David is given precedence. One of them is named Ram, a symbol of the associations of the ram as the first sign of the Zodiac. His grandson is Salmon, obviously a symbol of the fishes as the last sign of the Zodiac and to be taken as a symbol of Jesus Christ and his followers. The above is altogether bogus in my opinion. It shows how bogus symbolism can often seem to make sense. Similarly a particular interpretation of Tolkien's writing may make sense without that sense being anything meant by Tolkien.

In *Amon Hen* 235 David Doerr in an article entitled "Answering Allan Turner's Letter in AH 234" provides a number of interpretations of names in Tolkien, none of the interpretations which shed any light on what they ought to explains, apparently simply random associations based on a vague similarity of form between Tolkien's name and a name from the real world.

Doerr attempts to link *Arǭmēz*, the supposed Valarin origin of Q. *Oromë* and S. *Araw*, to the real-world name *Aramean*, a language related to Hebrew which Doerr claims, giving no source, "represents an 'original' Aramean language prior to the dispersion of peoples and the fracturing of the world's language groups." In "The Lhammas" section of *The Lost Road* Tolkien has the Elves who have awakened at Lake Cuiviénen learn their first language from Oromë which therefore may be called

according to Tolkien Oromian.

The forms *Araw* and *Oromë* both occur in *The Lord of the Rings* and in both cases refer to the Vala. In letter 297 Tolkien claims that no Elvish name in *The Lord of the Rings*, except for *Eärendil*, has any real-world source. If Araw/Oromë has a real-world source, then Tolkien is either deliberately lying or possibly Tolkien has here forgotten the three references he had made to Araw/Oromë in *The Lord of the Rings*. That Tolkien's Elvish bears no resemblance to Aramean suggests that Tolkien is neither lying nor forgetful and that Oromean is not to be connected to Aramean.

The form *Aramean* derives from the country *'Ărā́m* plus the French and Latin suffix *-an(us)*. Doerr also attempts to link the Vala to Zeus-Aramazd and to Zeus-Oromasdes. But these are simply identifications of the Greek god Zeus with the supreme god of the Persian religions, Ahura Mazda, rendered in Greek as Aramazd or Oromasdes. There is no relation with the country Aram or its language and so no relation between the names. One might as well bring in English *aroma*. More likely would be a connection to the Welsh god Arawn Head of Annwfn (Annwn). Arawn appears in surviving texts mainly in the First Branch of the Welsh *Mabinogion* as a hunting god and the name of his kingdom resembles Tolkien's *annûn* 'west'. But if one goes by Tolkien's own statement in letter 297 this resemblance will also be a coincidence. Doerr's other attempts at identifications are equally doubtful and go against Tolkien's explicit statement.

A more careful use of source work might be expected in a book. But Nicholar Birns' "The Stones and the Book: Tolkien, Mesopotamia, and Biblical Mythopoeia" in Jason Fisher's *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources* is also over-daring. He notes on the name Meneltarma (52) that:

> Part of this is that the name seems to contain the Biblical theophoric *el* (even though in the internal world of the legendarium *menel* means "heaven" in Quenya).

What is Birns on about? On page 72 of the second edition of *The Road Goes Ever On* Tolkien glosses the word *menel* as "firmament, high heaven, the region of the stars" and then in an attached footnote indicates:

> Not thought of by the Elves as a "firmament" or fixed sphere. The word was a Q. invention from *men* (direction, region) + *el* (the basis of many star-words).

The element *el* in Tolkien's Elvish is not "theophoric".

On the matter of *Erech* and *Uruk* Birns blames some earlier writers for being too ready to go against Tolkien's statement in letter 297:

> In any case the fact that *Erech* is a famous name is of *no* importance to *The L.R.* And no connexions in my mind or intention between Mespotamia and the Númenóreans or their predecessors can be deduced.

Tolkien was obviously wrong when such intentions are deduced. Tolkien would have done better to have used the word *should* instead of the word can.

Birns is quite wrong that a mention of Erech in the Bible

always has overtones of an archaic period. Of course it does in Genesis 10:10, but that has nothing to do with Erech itself but is because the entire chapter is set in an archaic period. In Ezra 4:9 it is said that Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria (668–629 BC), exiled men of Erech to Samaria about 640 BC, a period not so archaic. But in the King James translation "men of Erech" is rendered *the Archevites* and in the Douay-Rheims translation is rendered *the Erchuites*. The city is only mentioned twice in the entire Bible. It is quite believable to me that Tolkien did not think of the ancient Mesopotamian city called Erech in the Bible when inventing his Erech which is a large, black stone, not a city at all. Tolkien merely inserted a word which made sense in his Sindarin and happened to echo Biblical *Erech*.

In medieval literature Erech son of Lac is a variant form of a name of a Knight of the Round Table found in the Perceval continutation attributed to Gerbert de Montreuil lines 1542 and 3702. He is more often called Erec son of Lac. Malory calls him Harry le Fise Lac. The name of his father, Lac, means 'Lake' in French. Would this be a reference to Tolkien's Stone of Erech that passed over the water from Númenór?

A further reference to Lac appears in the medieval *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. In Book V of the work (as translated by Cyril Edwards on page 107) Parzival's cousin Sigune tells to Parzival details of the sword which Parzival has recently been given by his uncle Anfortas:

> Of noble lineage, Trebuchet's hand wrought it. There is a spring near Karnant, from which King Lac takes his name. The sword will withstand one blow intact; at the second it will shatter entirely. If you then take it back to that spring, it will be made whole by the flowing water. You must take water from the source, beneath the rock, before daylight shines upon it. That spring is called Lac. If the pieces are not dispersed and a man fits them together properly, once the spring wets them, its weld and blade will be whole and even stronger, and its ornament will not lose its sheen.

The breaking and reforging of this sword that has been broken is referred to again briefly near the beginning of Book IX (183):

> His sword which Anfortas had given him when he was in the presence of the Grail, broke afterwards when he was attacked. Then the art of the spring near Karnant, which is called Lac, made it whole again.

Did Tolkien intend a knowledgeable reader to here understand a reference to Aragorn's sword that was broken? Would Tolkien himself have perceived such a reference? Probably not. Similarly I see a supposed reference to a Mesopotamian city to be an invention by credulous critics looking for parallels. The supposed parallel is too vague to be convincing to me, especially when Tolkien wrote: "[No] connexions in my mind or intention between Mesopotamia and the Númenóreans or their predecessors can be deduced."

The same goes for Uruk, which is a more linguistically correct name for the same city. If one wished to invent a more repugnant variant on *Orc* for people with an English linguistic background, the most obvious way to produce a more uncouth sound is the substitute the least used written vowel in English. That written vowel is Y, but Y is really just a duplicate of I. The next least used vowel is U. Using two Us in the same word makes it more uncouth. So for *Orc* it is obvious to invent a form like *Uruk* or *Urku*. That *Uruk* is also the name of an ancient Mesopotamian city seems to me just chance. That the Uruk-hai share their name with an ancient city doesn't "shed any light" on them. Tolkien's Uruks do not write in cuneiform on clay tablets.

Birns talks of *Minhirath* which he tries to relate to Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates. Mesopotamia and Minhiriath both mean 'Between the Rivers'. Birns claims: "Readers aware of the Sindarin meaning could not *help* but think of Mesopotamia." I have a BA and an MA specializing in (Ancient) Near Eastern Studies and I didn't think of Mesopotamia particularly (that I remember) in part because the *Minhiriath* of *The Lord of the Rings* is an almost deserted land, very unlike Mesopotamia. There are places other than Mesopotamia actually named *Between the Rivers* but they seem to be mostly in the US, for example *Between the Rivers*, an historic district in Rome, Georgia.

Birns does not discuss Tolkien's *Moria*, presumably accepting Tolkien's claim in Letter 297 that his use of *Moria* as the name of one of the Dwarvish homelands has no relationship to the Biblical use of *Moriah* as (in most Bible translations) a reference to the place where Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:2) and the location of the temple in Jerusalem built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 3:1). But Khuzdul, the original language of the Dwarves, like all real-world Semitic languages, including Hebrew, is based on a system of mostly triliteral roots. And in Letter 176 Tolkien writes:

> I do think of the "Dwarves" like Jews: at once native and alien to their habitations, speaking the languages of the country, but with an accent due to their own private tongue.….

Accordingly it seems reasonable, if one is looking for real-world parallels in Tolkien's world, that the name *Moria*, a name given to an ancient Dwarf city and realm now fallen into ruin should parallel *Moriah*, the name of the mountain on which the temple was built in Jerusalem, when regarded by Jews in exile after the fall of Jerusalem. It appears in this case that Birns has decided (for what reason?) to listen to Tolkien's statement: "As for the 'land of Moriah' (note stress): that has no connexion (even 'externally') whatsoever."

The standard English mispronunciation of *Moriah* is [mɔ'raɪə] (approximately *Moe-RYE-uh*) with a stress on

the second syllable. In Tiberian Hebrew it is shown (מוֹרִיָּה) to be pronounced [moːʀiˈjɔː] (approximately Moe-ree-YAH) with a stress on the final syllable while Sindarin Moria should be pronounced ['mɒrɪˌɒ] (approximately MOE-*rih-ah*) with a stress on the first syllable according to Tolkien's descriptions. So Tolkien is correct that Hebrew *Moriah* is stressed differently from Sindarin *Moria*, regardless of whether the standard English or Tiberian Hebrew stress pattern is chosen for the Hebrew name.

Jane Chance, the author of *The Lord of the Rings: The Mythology of Power*, also looks at a supposed and unproved source for one of Tolkien's place names, *Mordor*, instead of Tolkien's invented languages. Although *Mordor* itself does not appear until *The Lord of the Rings*, the element *mor-* appears much earlier connected with 'to hide', 'night', and 'black' taken from Tolkien's early language dictionaries and commented on in the "Appendix" in *The Book of Lost Tales: Part I* under the entry **Mornië**. The element *-dor* appears in the same chapter under the entry **Dor Faidwen** as "Gnomish *dôr* (< *ndor-*) '(inhabited) land, country, people of the land'; see *Valinor*." The name *Mordor* means something like 'Hidden Land' or 'Black Land'.

In "The Etymologies" in *The Lost Road* the stem **MOR-** is again associated with words meaning or associated with 'black' or 'blackness'. The stem **NDOR-** is given the meanings 'dwell', 'stay', 'rest', and 'abide'. From it derive Qenya *nóre* 'land', 'dwelling place', and 'region where certain people live, as *Vali-nóre* (*Valinor*)'. From it also derives Noldorin *dor*. No meaning is given here, but there is a cross-reference to *Doriath* under the stem GATH. Looking up **GAT(H)-** gives at the beginning: "N *gath* (**gattā*) cavern; *Doriath* 'Land of the Cave' is Noldorin name for Dor. *Eglador* = Land of the Elves." In short, the meaning of neither element of a name *Mordor* has changed significantly. It still means 'Black Land'.

In *The Lord of the Rings* there are a number of names containing the element *mor-* where its meaning is given as 'black'. The names of a number of countries end in *-dor* and readers who bothered about such things quickly figured out that -dor and -nor meant '-land' or '-country'. My own *A Glossary of the Eldarin Tongues* simply defined *Mordor* to mean 'Black Land' on page 84. In Letter 297 Tolkien writes about the name Moria (bolding mine):

> Does it not plainly contain the √MOR "dark, black", seen in ***Mordor***, *Morgoth*, *Morannon*, *Morgul* etc. (technically √MOR: **mori* 'dark(ness)' = Q. *more*, S. *môr*; adj. **mornā* = Q. *morna*, S. *morn* "dark".)

Jane Chance writes on page 14 of her book:

> In most cases the name of a character, species, weapon, or place had an etymological appropriateness that revealed some hidden or inner reality (for example, "Mordor," from the Old English word for murder and death).

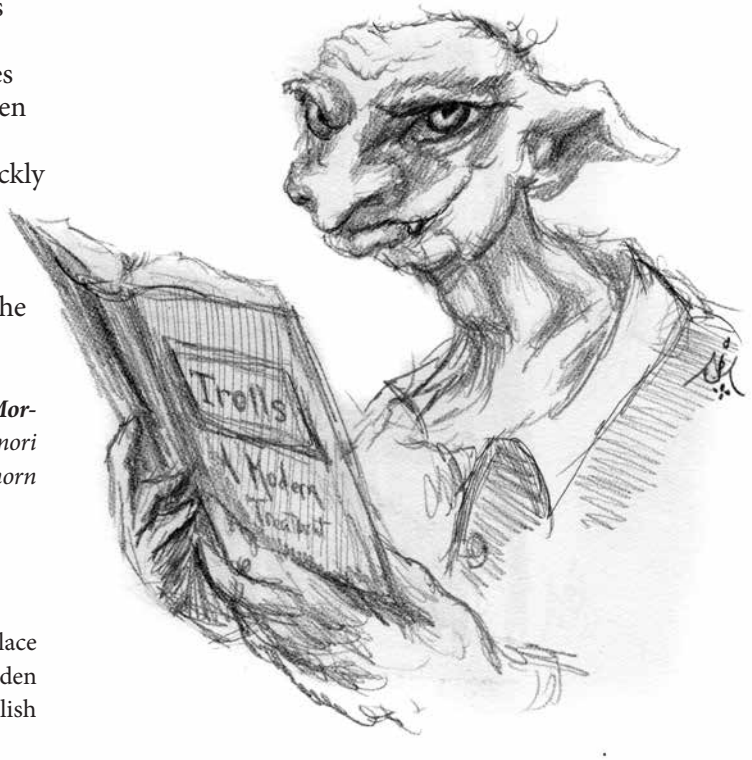
In some cases personal names are too appropriate to be believed, but most are not. The Rohirrim, for example, are named to reveal their open and apparent connection to horses. There is no hidden or inner reality revealed in most names. On page 47 Jane Chance repeats her claim that *Mordor* is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning 'death'. She writes:

> Frodo demands that they return to Mordor (I:285) when they call to him to 'Come back' and promise to take him to Mordor; they cry, "The Ring!" with "*deadly* voices," as if to underscore the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word "mordor" as death.

If *Mordor* meant 'Nice kitty' in Old English, would the Ringwraiths have mewed cheerfully? (This is the same passage where Chance astoundingly and wrongly identifies the white figure seen by Frodo as Gandalf rather than Glorfindel.) On page 81 Chance writes:

> In the east, Mordor is named after the Anglo-Saxon word for "death". Accordingly, the land it names conveys the idea of violence and extinction of the Other.

Obviously "death" conveys the idea of the extinction of not just the Other but of everything. And violence is not *necessarily* part of this. And in *The Lord of the Rings* Mordor is so-named universally, not just so-named "in the east". One may assume that the country had other names outside of the Westron language, but we are not told them. But Chance's real problem is her continued insistence that *Mordor* is an Anglo-Saxon word for 'death' instead of Tolkien's presentation of it as a Sindarin word meaning 'Black Land'. Perhaps Chance's meaning is



better, but she is supposed to be writing about Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, not about Chance's idiosyncratic interpretation of *The Lord of the Rings*.

The Old English word that Chance is referring to is spelled in Old English as *morðor* or *morður* and means something like 'secret killing'. The word *mordor*, with *d* instead of *ð*, did not mean anything in Old English. In Middle English the word *morðor* becomes *mordre*, *morder*, *morthre* and other spellings. In Modern English these become the word *murder* with a slightly changed but related meaning. The form *murther* is a dialectal variant.

Tolkien, as an Old English scholar, certainly knew of the similarity between the Old English word *morðor* and his Sindarin country name *Mordor*. Perhaps he considered the similarity to be significant. Perhaps he considered it no more significant than the similarity between the Greek word saúra and the Sindarin name *Sauron* applied to the Dark Lord. Perhaps Tolkien would have written, to paraphrase what Tolkien wrote about attempts to relate *Sauron* to *saúra*:

> To take a frequent case: there is no linguistic connexion in significance between *Mordor* a contemporary form of the compound *mor-* (from a base √MOR) "black" combined with the ending *-(n)dor* "land" and the similar Old English word *morðor*.

Old English *mōdor* 'mother' is arguably as close to *Mordor* as *morðor* is. One can bring in Ungoliante and make a case from her.

Chance ignores entirely the meaning 'Black Land' assigned by Tolkien to *Mordor* and puts forth another meaning without at least indicating also Tolkien's meaning and without anywhere indicating that this other meaning is somewhat dubious. And if the Old English meaning of *morðor* connected to *Mordor* is to be taken as correct according to Tolkien, what of the meanings of the related words *Arnor*, *Gondor* and *Eriador*? Jane Chance has claimed that "In most cases the name of a character, species, weapon, or place had an etymological appropriateness that revealed some hidden or inner reality". So what do these other land names mean?

Let us assume that *-dor* means simply *door* according to its modern English sound. Metaphorically the door would be the door to the future. *Mordor* then means 'More-door' as the land where apparently the future lies. *Gondor* means 'Gone-door', an appropriate name for a failing country without a king. *Arnor* means 'Are-nor' (or 'Are-in-existance-though-now-not-apparent') indicating the hidden pure Númenórean race of the Rangers, including one who has the right to be king, and so provides a possible opposition to 'More-door'. *Eriador* means 'Area-door' indicating that Tolkien does not include Eriador in this symbolism and that the name merely represents an 'area'.

Perhaps better than this is to take Tolkien at his word: *Mordor* means 'Black Land', *Gondor* means 'Stone-land', *Arnor* means approximately 'Royal-land', 'Land of the King', and *Eriador* means approximately 'Lone-land' (and *Turkey* has nothing to do with a large bird that goes *gobble-gobble*). Don't try to make these names mean anything more. Don't try to be over-clever in guessing what Tolkien meant which may lead one to produce obscure meanings probably or certainly not intended by Tolkien.

Tolkien in Letter 297 states:

> From which it follows that "Anglo-Saxon" is not a "fertile field", but the sole field in which to look for the origin of words and meanings of words belonging to the speech of the Mark; and also that A-S will *not* be the source of words and names in any other language — except for a few (all of which are explained) survivals in the Hobbit-dialect derived from the region.

Tolkien afterwards indicates that the sole exception to Elvish names from Old English in *The Lord of the Rings* is the name *Eärendil*. But could not Tolkien have forgotten some others in the heat of composition? Yes indeed. Tolkien forgot *Orc* and *Ent* which he elsewhere indicates he took from Old English and he forgot the place name *Orthanc* which means 'Mount Fang' in Sindarin but 'Cunning Mind' in Old English. It is *possible* that Tolkien forgot others. In some cases his choice of a particular element in his invented Elvish may owe something to the meaning of that element in Old English or in another language.

A commentator is quite at liberty to point out such cases. But the commentator ought to indicate that these interpretations come from the commentator's mind and may not reflect Tolkien's thoughts even when the interpretation seems obvious. That *Sauron* was related to Greek *saúra* was *obvious* to many readers. If a commentator is following the belief that any interpretation is valid regardless of what an author or a specialist has said, the commentator should warn the reader.

Jim Allan

David Doughan replies: Kalimac: I was assuming that readers would have in mind Tolkien's 'translation' conceit whereby the (fictional) Common Speech is represented by English, and that names have been adjusted accordingly. And I at least accept that it is indeed a conceit.

On the other hand, looking once more at my piece, I can see that I could have expressed myself less elliptically, hence less ambiguously. To put it more plainly, I know full well that the resemblance between Breton Rohan and Rohan–Riddermark is purely coincidental. I simply speculated that, having derived 'Rohan' quite regularly from a Sindarin element, Tolkien might then have noted the similarity to the Franco-Breton name and the associated family, which could have suggested to him that the 'vaguely Celtic' Meriadoc, with links to Rohan, would be suitable for this hobbit. In all of this my tongue was at least half way into my cheek.

A journey to the cinema

CHAD CHISHOLM, RUTH LEWIS, BRITTA SIEMEN, BECKY DILLON, MARCEL BUELLES, SIMONA ROSETTI, SHAUN GUNNER, VICTORIA LEE, CÉSAR ROJAS, HENRY GEE & CHARLES NOAD

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.
Directed by Peter Jackson
New Line Cinema (2012).

For those who have not seen the film, the following reviews inevitably contain spoilers — be warned.

Chad Chisholm

Relax. The storm cloud of a title aside, Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* has again proven his ability to create an entertaining movie that can earn him 'a fist full of dollars' (and, with $600 million and counting from worldwide sales, maybe 'a few dollars more'). The movie begins not with Tolkien's "in a hole in the ground", but with a history of the Lonely Mountain and some added dwarf history, until we get to the snug home of Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman) and learn of the quest that Gandalf (Ian McKellen returning to his role) and Thorin (Richard Armitage) are arranging. Jackson ends the movie after the company escapes the Misty Mountains, which is an interesting choice because in the writing of the novel, it was after this escape from the goblins that Tolkien was stuck for some time.

What is most admirable about the film is that Jackson continues to strive (most of the time) to be a faithful adapter of J. R. R. Tolkien's fiction. What does it mean to be a faithful adapter? Tolkien readers would probably agree that a good adapter follows the book, and I think that is understandable. After all, the story in the book is the story we enjoyed, and it is the initial reason for the film. But being a faithful adapter means a lot of things. The most faithful rendering might not be the one that tries to literally follow the book 'line and verse', but a faithful adaptation might emphasize parts of the book and skip others in order to better capture and communicate the essence of the author's story. How does a director accomplish this?

The most obvious enhancement of the original material is the contradistinction between Bilbo, who represents a suburban and middle-class Englishman from the late Victorian era, with Gandalf and Thorin who are characters that seem to leap from the pages of Nordic myth. Innate to the story is the collision of the two worlds, and Jackson makes the contrast more intense with Thorin telling Bilbo that he does not belong on the quest and telling him to go home. The effect is for the audience to experience the same quest through different worldviews and it serves as a study of the many forms courage can take through multiple viewpoints. Most of all, we see different ideas of home, and Bilbo's yearning to return to his place of refuge once his quest is complete is enhanced into a more universal idea shared by many of the characters.

Jackson does not seem to pull out any new tricks for his new Tolkien film — the contrasts between darkness and light, the Wagnerian peaks and valleys in the soundtrack, the large and dramatic landscapes, and vivid battle and escape scenes are all here from the previous *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy. As Jackson had a $150 million budget for his retelling of *The Hobbit*, it was probably a given that he would enhance these various conflicts and backcloths. What was not as easy to predict was Jackson's choice to include some pieces of Tolkien's Middle-earth legendarium in *The Hobbit* that are not really present in the original story (such as the geopolitical significance of Sauron and the looming troubles).

However, one difference between Jackson's earlier films and his *The Hobbit* is humour. The trolls in the story, for example, are given common English names — Bert, Tom and William — which adds to the comic nature of their culinary conversation before they're turned to stone. The 'rough and ready' dwarfs bursting into Bilbo's neat little home and cleaning out his pantry, and Bilbo's first encounter with Gandalf where he curtly 'good mornings' the grey wizard, all add a sort of constant comic relief to the dangers in the dark. Jackson faithfully tries to adapt his original filmmaking formula to allow these elements into the movie. The Merry and Pippin action aside, Jackson's earlier films are largely devoid of much humour. Although Jackson clearly chose not to emphasize some elements of *The Lord of the Rings* that might have lightened the mood at times (such as Tom Bombadil or Butterbur), this is not necessarily a directorial oversight because humour and the craft of a story is more at the centre of *The Hobbit* than it was in Tolkien's later, more legend-heavy books.

The reason for these changes is that although *The Lord of the Rings* are books of quality fantasy that were intended for adult readers, we easily forget that Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* as a story for children. Indeed, the story began as a tale Tolkien told to his own children, and he began writing down details — first so that he would not mix-up the details for his kids, and later he was encouraged by C. S. Lewis and other colleagues to write down a more completed version of the story. As medievalists and fans of late Victorian adventure writers (such as H. Rider Haggard and E. Nesbit), Tolkien and Lewis were dissatisfied with the sort of contemporary fiction being written, and so they agreed to try to write the sort of stories they had liked for a modern readership.

Drawing from some elements of his Anglo-Saxon language

studies as well as from his knowledge of Celtic and Nordic myth, Tolkien sets up an adventure story that — in addition to exposing them to a mythical landscape and a dexterous character who becomes a hero — is also demanding on young readers. The story is highly readable in some sense as it is not as saturated with Tolkien's Middle-earth mythology, but the characters are complex and do things that are hard for children to understand: for instance, Gandalf uses his rhetorical cleverness to defeat the trolls and get aid from Beorn rather than resorting to magical wizardry; as the last dwarf, Thorin gravely goes to battle with the trolls even though he has no hope of success; the Lake Men hail Thorin and his dwarfs as heroes of legend, only to return to the more craven Master after the malevolent Smaug immolates their town.

What Tolkien wants from younger readers is for them to dive into and vicariously live within the ethos, logos and pathos of the secondary world that he has created for them so that they can interpret the actions of his characters through this lens. As Tolkien scholarship is replete with analysis concerning the significance of his world (including many thought-provoking papers in recent *Mallorn* volumes), I will not delve into it here. However, for those of us who enjoy the storytelling magic of *The Hobbit* and want others to benefit from it as we have, I think Peter Jackson's adaptation poses another question: will our children and grandchildren ever be able to experience Tolkien's first Middle-earth book in the same way, or has Jackson's film rendered this impossible?

Many Septembers ago, I remember a particular conference early in my teaching career when I read aloud to a student a passage from William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* — it was a narration on the death of Miss Emily's father. I normally do this to get students to see an important detail they have missed from rushing their own readings. However, I was reading Faulkner's account of Mr Grierson's death not to show the student what was there, but to illustrate to him what was not.

I used to show my students the film adaptation of the story before discussing it. I had pedagogical reasons for doing so, but I also wanted to warn students to read the stories rather than relying on Sparknotes.com or other media as a substitute for reading. John Houston's short film is done well, but the act of dramatic translation forces it to deviate slightly from Faulkner. For example, in the story Miss Emily's father is just said to have died, but in Houston's film Emily's commandeering father suddenly falls over while gnawing on a chicken wing too rapidly. On the quiz, many students mentioned Emily's father dying from eating chicken because they had not read. However, when it came to this student, he had read the story and he truly believed that Mr Grierson had died at the table eating: after I finished reading, the student was taken back — he was sure he recalled a passage in Faulkner about the death and was baffled when he could not find it. I believe the student's substitution of Faulkner's

narration of Mr Grierson's death for Houston's dramatized version was unconscious. However, I think it illustrates some of the risks of taking a story and adapting it for a larger (and oftentimes non-reading) audience.

Once a film adaptation is created, and if that film becomes a popular culture phenomenon, then our perception as readers is forever affected. Movie adaptations often prove to be a sort of 'death of the novel' for two reasons: (1) because it influences how future readers will interpret the original story and (2) because it gives the broader culture a sense that they 'know it' already and are thus free to look elsewhere for their entertainment fix. We can see this sentiment of 'knowing it' in our Western politics where there is little interest among our 'low-information voters' when they have the opportunity to understand the green perspective or an evangelical viewpoint (to give just two instances) on a given issue because these voters feel that they 'know it' based on their exposure of a representation of that worldview from mass media or their popular programming. This threat to our democratic stability (I have no use for the 'democracy' emerging in this millennium) is also a menace to our understanding of why classic texts of literature were ever widely venerated in the first place.

Facing the death of a cherished book is similar to facing our death in that there are several stages such as denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance. For those looking for more 'rage against the dying of the light' here, please see my review of the recent Narnia films (*Mallorn* 52) where is plenty or anger (and even bargaining). I supposed I've long accepted that *The Hobbit* has long been pried from the cold fingers of literary venerators for the commercialized public since 1978 when Rankin-Bass made it into a classic animated film. Today, only the scope has changed.

Part of me is consoled that even if the wider culture blurs the book into a Frankenstein amalgamation of media culture (the growing list of *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Wind in the Willows* and so on), there will still be generations of weird kids out there who will find *The Hobbit* (as I found *The Secret Garden* in my university years) and be able to enjoy it as we did either because (1) for whatever reason, they have been unexposed to the various media representations or (2) they will be good readers (an increasingly rarer feat in our declining Western mass-education system) who can appreciate the story for what it is rather than adding mental pictures into it for the sake of 'getting through' for some school assignment or required reading list.

More important for me, when discussing Jackson's film and its qualities, I think this is a question to contemplate: in Anne Sexton's poem that brings to life Van Gogh's "Starry Night", the suicidal poet thrice repeats, "This is how I want to die", which poses an ineluctable question for us all: Peter Jackson's adaptation is a good movie, but is it the ebulliently glorious death that is worthy of Tolkien's story? Probably not, although more time is needed to study the full effect of Jackson's films. But if Tolkien's story is destined to fade into pop-cultural marketing mess, will it arise to another life elsewhere? If all we can hope for the novel right now is a sanctuary existence in our reading groups or within an academic monastery, existing the way *The Wizard of Oz* does, will the magic of Tolkien's storytelling arise from somewhere else? I would argue that it has already risen indeed.

In other places, I've discussed other films such as Pixar's *Up* and *Toy Story 3*, and the Hughes Brothers' *Book of Eli* that use Tolkienian elements of storytelling and creation, even if their films do not tell a Tolkien story. Of course, Tolkien's influence on film is more recent as his power over generations of novelists is well-documented. I suspect that many of us often turn Chris Van Allsburg's final statement in *The Polar Express* into a question: "As we grow old, how will the bell still ring for us?" As of now, the music of the bell is not silent, although new generations might have to search for it in other places, which is cause for joy as well as sorrow.

I know this last declaration is not the comfortable assurance we would like, but as we are reminded, "It's a dangerous business going out your front door." Do we turn back? I prefer Bilbo's choice.

Ruth Lewis

The adaptation of a well known and well loved book into another medium such as film will always be the cause for complaint as well as compliments. This was true of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy of movies that Jackson directed in 2002 onwards, and it is just as true of the trilogy of movies based on J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, starting with part one, *An Unexpected Journey*, in December 2012.

Peter Jackson gained much credit for his adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*, long thought to be unfilmable. Yet with amazing CGI effects and wonderful attention to detail in both costumes and choice of actors, Jackson proved that he could make a very good attempt to fulfil enough of Tolkien's masterpiece for most fans.

He also had a trump card up his sleeve — the choice of location: New Zealand. This wonderful land astonished filmgoers when they saw the breathtaking vistas in the original *Lord of the Rings* movies.

Jackson returned to New Zealand for *The Hobbit* — although not without some thought to going elsewhere. A dispute with actors unions at one stage almost forced the film maker to abandon his homeland and shoot the movies in Eastern Europe.

But all the hurdles were overcome. The initial legal wranglings with the Tolkien estate were sorted out, even the loss of Del Toro as director just brought Jackson to the fore of the project once more.

But — the trump card was gone. You can't astonish people with New Zealand a second time. There was also the huge expectation. Some have compared it to the level of expectation for the three-prequel *Star Wars* movies, and the terrible disappointment some people felt about those movies when comparing them with the original *Star Wars* trilogy filmed 20 years earlier. So, some people were preparing themselves to be disappointed by Jackson — and for those people the first part of *The Hobbit* perhaps lived down to their expectations.

However, what a movie it is! Who is this movie aimed at? Not the die-hard fans and those who know the books

well. It is aimed at the general movie-going public, and they have never read *The Hobbit*. In those terms *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is an amazing success. Coming out of a movie theatre after seeing it, just listen to what those people say about it — I did, and the comments were all very positive. They loved it. More, they wanted to tell their friends about it. Some of them even wanted to go off and read the books, which has to count as a result.

For myself, I found the changes bearable rather than glaring. The result works as a story unto itself, which is not a small achievement compared with the muddle that Hollywood can and regularly does make of much simpler tales. Yes, there's perhaps too much action in certain sequences — like Goblin-town. And out of all the songs, I regret the loss of 'Fifteen birds in five fir-trees'. But then, given the content, that might well have upped the age-rating — re-read the original and think about it. For a children's book, *The Hobbit* can be incredibly dark and serious, more so than many of us choose to remember. Some of the things that people are complaining about seem to me to reflect a misunderstanding of both source and film.

The Hobbit may have become one of the roots of Middle-earth, but it emphatically was not written within the same set of 'rules' as the published *The Lord of the Rings*. It's a lot wilder and weirder. That is something that, to judge by styles and their other work, Jackson has been trying to trim down to fit in with the earlier movies (so no talking purse or eagles' conference), but Del Toro was probably celebrating (as witness Radagast and the Stone Giants). Just think of *Pan's Labyrinth* for example. I actually liked the Stone Giants, for one large instance — although I know I'm in a small minority there! As ever, the levels of design work are astonishing, even for things glimpsed only in passing. The landscapes may be more familiar, but they are still stunningly beautiful and well used. And the performances are excellent, with Martin Freeman making a far better Bilbo than I dared hope.

There was a sensible delineation of the characters of the Dwarves — in the book we have an amorphous mass of 13 dwarves with only their hood colours really to distinguish them. Jackson took the courageous step of giving each of them a character — and it works well. The actors who played the Dwarves were mostly very acceptable.

It was good to see Rivendell again, and a treat to have the White Council with Galadriel, Elrond and Saruman meeting Gandalf.

Overall? It isn't 'the movie of the book' — but we never, ever get that with any book, for the simple reason that telling stories on a page and on a screen are different artforms. And people who say they wanted that might like to go back and read the book first, anyway. *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is a good, pacey movie that, compared with most adaptations, manages to incorporate a reasonable amount of the book and stay fairly true to its ethos. It is a grown-up 'darker' version, yes, but the book itself is no bundle of laughs, and the alternatives don't really bear thinking about. We've had those, with the Rankin-Bass version, and in comparison, thank goodness for Peter Jackson. The other thing we need to remember is that so far we've got Part One. Assessing the *Lord of the Rings* movies was decidedly difficult until we had the whole thing.

We can spend the next two years worrying about this set of movies, being thoroughly, Eeyoreishly, glum and depressed, and refusing to admit there's anything to enjoy. Or we can embrace them, enjoy them for what they are rather than criticizing them for what they're not — oh, and welcome the people who come to Tolkien's writings through them. I know which I would rather do! I am a 'movie is half full' type of person rather than the opposite.

Britta Siemen

I'll be perfectly honest: I was more nervous than excited as I walked into *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. After reading numerous articles about the inclusion of old characters, the creation of a new one, and seeing photos of the Dwarves in all their sexy glory, I fully expected to see my favourite childhood story ruined. My apprehension was especially increased when, during *The Colbert Report*'s 'Hobbit Week' special, I realized that Stephen Colbert knew much more about the material that would be taken from *The Lord of the Rings*' appendices than the film's own director — and that lack of knowledge, unfortunately, is the film's greatest weakness.

Visually, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is impressive — Jackson and his team prove that even a decade after making *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, they are still masters of digital effects. And the high frame rate was extraordinary. The landscapes looked incredibly realistic, but not overly so, as many critics had previously suggested. As someone who suffers from chronic migraines, I had had some reservations about seeing the film in 3D and at 48 frames per second, but within the first five minutes I was swept up in the beauty of it all. The only instances in which I felt any visual discomfort were close-up scenes of characters running across the screen, at which points my eyes strained to keep up. Thankfully, these scenes were few and far between. For the majority of the film, however, it felt as though filming *The Hobbit* using this new technology and recreating a Middle-earth just as beautiful as, if not more than, *The Lord of the Rings* was Jackson's sole interest.

Had I not read the original version as written by J. R. R. Tolkien, I might have enjoyed this film more. It began at a rapid pace, which it maintained for most of its nearly three-hour span (thus making it a bit more enjoyable to sit through). It countered *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy in that there were few moments that really seemed to drag on; but at the same time, it mirrored the trilogy in the sense that it was similar, if not darker, in tone (aside from the Mouth of Sauron in the extended edition of *The Return of the King*, I don't recall seeing any beheadings in Jackson's previous adaptations). Although *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is not necessarily meant to be a children's movie, it has all but lost the spirit contained within the book and seems to be more of an attempt by Jackson to one-up his previous trilogy.

In addition to changing the tone of *The Hobbit*, Jackson and his fellow writers took many unnecessary liberties. Numerous characters who did not appear in the original tale

managed to make their way into the film — Frodo, Galadriel, Saruman and Radagast all make appearances, no matter how brief, out of place, or needlessly comical. But perhaps the most reprehensible character to make an appearance was Azog — or, as I like to call him, the Orc incarnation of Merle Dixon (which is a bit of a stretch, and I'm not criticizing; but as a *Walking Dead* fan, I couldn't help noticing the similarity). For those who have not read any of Tolkien's work, Azog was killed by Dáin Ironfoot in the Battle of Azanulbizar nearly 142 years prior to the Quest of Erebor. And yet, as if wargs, goblins, spiders and Smaug were not enough, the writers felt that *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* was in need of another obstacle — so, although Thorin believed that Azog had died from his wounds in battle, the Orc somehow managed to break free from captivity and recover enough to seek revenge. Thus the first film seems to be more about Thorin's struggle with Azog than about making it to Erebor.

But the biggest issue I have with *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is its portrayal of Bilbo Baggins. Although Martin Freeman certainly looked the part and did an excellent job in the role he was given, the writers almost completely missed their mark, failing to illustrate the very essence of the original novel — that is, Bilbo's transformation from reluctant adventurer to burglar-hero. With the narrator who explained much of Bilbo's behaviour within the book absent from the film, the writers should have made up for that loss by really setting the scene at Bag End. From the very beginning, Bilbo seems to change his mind almost instantaneously and with no real motivation; one minute he's wishing those obnoxious Dwarves out of his home, and the next he's eager to tag along on their little adventure. The childlike spirit that the film lacks in tone is almost made up for by Bilbo's eagerness to please. Yet this, too, is slightly off target: where in the book, Bilbo spends a majority of their adventure desperately trying to prove to both himself and the Dwarves that he can be the burglar they need, in the film he seems completely focused on pleasing Thorin only. This, of course, takes not the entire journey, but only the first film to achieve; by saving Thorin from becoming a trophy for the Orc-chieftain Azog, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* ends on a happy, yet sappy, note, with the Dwarf taking back every nasty thing he ever said about the hobbit.

One of my favourite moments in the film, however, was the game of riddles between Gollum and Bilbo. Although luck plays little to no role in Bilbo's victory (discounting another important theme from the book), the portrayal of Gollum is extremely well done. Not yet wholly corrupted by the ring, he is so far the most heart-wrenching character in the film; with those sad, puppy dog eyes, I felt more of an emotional connection with him than any of the other characters. Once again, Andy Serkis has proven that not only is he the king of motion capture, but he is a brilliant actor worthy of some serious recognition.

Overall, I enjoyed the film for what it was — a well-coordinated visual interpretation of Tolkien's classic meant to entertain for a few hours. The action, digital effects and score were all worthy of praise, but the story itself left much to be desired. I'm slowly getting to the point where I dislike sitting through lengthy movies (or paying an arm and a leg for tickets) unless they're absolutely worth it, and unfortunately, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* was not entirely what I had hoped for. Sure, I'll probably go back and see this film once in IMAX — and maybe once in 2D, 24 fps — so I can compare the viewing experiences; and if the few glimpses here and there were any indication, Smaug will be absolutely worth coming back next December for *The Desolation of Smaug*. But for now, my fear that *The Hobbit* trilogy is nothing more than a horde of gold being sat upon by a greedy dragon who has no use for it still holds true.

Becky Dillon

I saw the film in 3D, 24 fps, and it was difficult to watch. Visually, it had a tendency to 'vignette' and be out of focus or lose its depth of field. It made watching it very difficult, but that was all I had available. No, I will not make an attempt to see it in any other venue or format. Of the film: most of it appeared to be a long chain of previously done 'gags' — either from *The Lord of the Rings* or other films (*Indiana Jones* comes to mind immediately) and the storyline was lost behind the series of visual assaults. There were two redeeming scenes, in my opinion. The Unexpected Party was fun and worked well. Riddles in the Dark was very well done, even if not exactly per the book. Andy Serkis's interpretation of Gollum improves with each outing, and I look forward to seeing him play out the role. The Oscar nomination categories are well assigned. Sadly, nothing else in the film — with perhaps the exception of the musical score — rated a nomination. I will be at the TOR.n 'One Expected Party' for the Oscars in Los Angeles, and will be pleased to see *The Hobbit* pick up at least one award, but if not — then they will have to try harder next year. —

Marcel Buelles

When I thought about writing a review on *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* I quickly realized I would either need 50 pages or would not want to do it at all. There is so much to say about the cast and crew, the technological and production changes, the changes from book to film if you want to do justice to it all.

But later on I remembered another review I had written more than ten years ago and by quoting it I could easily explain what I think about Peter Jackson's latest instalment in his Middle-earth ventures. I have changed some of the wording my impressionable younger self used but except for those minor changes this is a translation of my review of *The Lord of the Rings. The Fellowship of the Ring* from 11 December 2001.

"Today my life changed. Today one of the few press showings of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* took place at Cologne's Ufa-Palast. I managed to get in at the last second, with sweaty hands and a queasy feeling.

I had received a fax from Warner Bros in a cloak-and-dagger operation because originally I did not have a ticket. But as I have been dreaming of such a film for fifteen years I think it must have been fate …

On entering the cinema we were thoroughly searched as the fear of pirated editions seems to be quite real. Early on in the proceedings I saw familiar faces such as Stefan Servos, webmaster of Herr-der-Ringe-Film.de and Helmut Pesch, one of Germany's leading Tolkien experts. We quickly exchanged a few words and at 10 a.m. sharp *The Fellowship* started screening.

I have thought long and hard about what to write and therefore to give away. One thing is absolutely clear: this film has basically nothing to do with the book. If you are a Tolkien purist hoping for a literary adaptation you might be sadly disappointed — this isn't it. But the imagery, the atmosphere, the music, the cast …

Whoever thinks *The Lord of the Rings* is a violent, exciting, gripping story will be rushed into it right from the start. In a flashback sequence, Sauron's defeat is being described: hundreds of thousands of orcs in a battle against the Last Alliance of Elves and Men. Isildur, Anarion, Elendil and Elrond — major names in many stories. However, they pale into insignificance in comparison to Sauron. Like the reaper swinging his scythe he throws Elves and Men back. This violence, this brutality is the sign of an ancient past. Nobody will stand a chance against such power˜ˆ…

When I saw those images unfold in front of my eyes, when I first caught a glimpse of Minas Tirith in all its glory and Isengard in all of its ugliness, I knew I was up for three eventful, visually stunning hours. And this turned out to be true, very true, indeed.

This film really is different from the book — really, truly different. Almost everything has been shortened, shifted, changed. However: it is pretty close in atmosphere. The actors really make their characters come to life: Gandalf is convincing as well as Aragorn and Boromir. How Elves are depicted — arrogant towards other peoples — is daring but could be deemed appropriate. Having that argument at the Council of Elrond — that's a tricky one …

I walked the streets of Cologne for several hours today. I was in a state of trance and when I met acquaintances they all asked me: 'Are you okay?' I told two of my friends (not interested in Tolkien at all) about this experience and they kind of smiled at me. Who would understand a Tolkien fan close to tears and completely disoriented after this kind of a cinematic dream? I am just happy I didn't cause an accident …

The press representative from Warner asked me after the screening whether I liked the film. My only answer was: 'I don't know what to say.' Do have a look at it. It's worth it …"

Reading this old review brought a smile to my face. Much has happened since then. It is not only that I have grown older, have met many interesting people thanks to Middle-earth and know more about many things, both personal and professional, but also that I have changed very much, indeed.

However, not this particular film. There really is no change at all. It is *The Lord of the Rings* — again. And we have all seen it before. We knew what to expect. Hundreds of fantasy films tried to copy this, thousands of fantasy books were written just to cash in on the waves of success crashing into fantasy publishing coasts. And although Martin Freeman is a much better hobbit than Sean Astin ever was (yes, there is a difference between British and American actors) and although Ian McKellen is his grand old wizardy self — it didn't touch me at all. I have seen it three times and will in all probability see it much more often. But it still won't fascinate me, bewilder me or aggravate me as much as *The Fellowship* more than ten years ago.

I'll start reading *The Silmarillion* again soon.

I hope those stories will never suffer the same fate.

Simona Rosetti

I must admit that I was doubtful about this movie, for the same reason most Tolkien fans probably are: three movies out of one little book; where will Jackson get the material for that? The doubt stands for the next two movies, but like as happened for the first trilogy I am not disappointed. We all know a movie cannot be as good as a book. Of course there are faults, the first of all being the battle between rock giants: I actually do not recall being in any part of Tolkien legendarium, but I might be mistaken; my memory is tricky at times. Despite all the criticism one can think about though, I believe that there are at least two parts of the movie that made it worth the price I paid to see it. The first one is the Riddles in the Dark episode. Andy Serkis as Gollum is simply outstanding. The second one is the flight of the eagles: in IMAX it was really something. Not sure about the effect in the 3D or 2D versions of the movie. General casting was good and I look forward to hearing Smaug's voice (Benedict Cumberbatch: yes I watched the new series of *Sherlock Holmes*), hopefully in the second movie. I enjoyed the soundtrack as well.

Shaun Gunner

A decade on, after many legal, financial and personnel problems, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* finally arrived on 13 December 2012 amid a shower of much excitement, anticipation, caution and criticism from both fans and critics alike. Based on a book that has sold more than 100 million copies and coming after the highest-grossing film trilogy ever made, the bar has certainly been set high.

Following the decision to split *The Hobbit* into three — surely made by director Peter Jackson because he shot tonnes of footage and not because he is short of money — the film traces the first third of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* from the chapter 'An Unexpected Journey' to 'Out of the Frying-Pan into the Fire' as the hobbit Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman) joins the wizard Gandalf (Ian McKellen) and a host of 13 dwarves on a quest to retake their homeland from the greedy dragon Smaug.

Jackson's task with the dwarves was unenviable. He had to take 13 similar characters, whose only real defining characteristics were coloured hoods, and turn them into 13 clear personalities. Although the film only really shows off Balin (Ken Stott), Dwalin (Graham McTavish), Kíli (Aidan Turner), Bofur (James Nesbitt) and, of course, Thorin (Richard Armitage), the idiosyncrasies of the other eight dwarves are also on display. Hopefully, as with Legolas and Gimli in *The Two Towers*, some of the other characters will

be explored in more depth in the second and third films.

The film opens with an elderly Bilbo (Ian Holm) narrating the history of Smaug and the Lonely Mountain. Mirroring the prologue to *The Fellowship of the Ring*, this nicely sets the backdrop to the story and mitigates the problem of a confused audience. Right from the off, the prologue also makes clear that the cinematography and special effects on offer are second-to-none. First-class CGI is maintained throughout the film in the shape of the trolls, Rivendell, Gollum and Goblin-town. It is notable that the orcs of *An Unexpected Journey* are universally CGI in comparison to the prosthetics-based orcs of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, underlining the improvements in technology over the past decade.

It is pleasantly surprising to see the number of lines and references that have been lifted directly from the book and the wider Middle-earth canon. These include: Ungoliant, the five wizards, "To think I should have lived to be good-morninged by Belladonna Took's son, as if I was selling buttons at the door!", Beater and Biter, Lobelia Sackville-Baggins, "Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don't look like mutton again tomorrer", handkerchiefs and Golfimbul. Even when the exact wording and mechanics of a scene have been altered, such as with Roast Mutton, it is quite clear that Jackson is remaining loyal to the nature of the book.

It is also clear that attempts have been made to make sure that this film sits comfortably with the pre-existing trilogy. Aside from the design and feel of the characters, costumes and locations, Howard Shore's soundtrack has the same music themes — leitmotifs — that ran through *The Lord of the Rings*. Among others, the audience are treated to the Hobbiton, Fellowship and the Ring themes, as well as the new Gandalf and Company themes. The most powerful musical composition is the orchestral composition that plays over the montage of the Company leaving Rivendell; sadly, the rest of the soundtrack does not contain the same number of memorable themes as there were in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the film would have benefited from a little more musical originality.

At this point Riddles in the Dark must be mentioned: Andy Serkis's performance of Gollum was superb making the whole scene immensely watchable, enjoyable and satisfying. Of course, the improvements in CGI technology over the past ten years have benefited the whole film but it seems the improvement in Gollum is most rewarding. Every movement of Andy Serkis's face is replicated in stunning realism on Gollum, granting the character a level of humanity and personality he never had before. Many critics will surely be disappointed that Serkis has missed out on an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor.

Aside from Gollum, Bilbo, Frodo and Gandalf, we are also reintroduced to Elrond (of course), Galadriel and Saruman. No doubt in an attempt to explain Gandalf's disappearance while the Company is in Mirkwood, Jackson has proved his fan-credentials by rummaging around in the Appendices (and sailing close to *Unfinished Tales*), to include a White Council/Dol Guldur story arc introduced by Radagast. Although it is gratifying to meet Radagast and see Rhosgobel and Dol Guldur, the whole thread does not sit easily within the rest of the film making the White Council at Rivendell feeling like an awkward sideshow to the main action.

The other story arc that has been weaved into the plot is Azog, called 'the Pale Orc', who survived the Battle of Nanduhirion (brilliantly recreated in a flashback) and is now seeking Thorin to revenge the loss of his left hand. The Pale Orc is the main baddie of the film who provides dramatic tension by chasing the Company around Middle-earth up to the dramatic conclusion of the film. As with the White Council, it is not entirely clear why Jackson felt the need to include Azog (and why not Bolg?) but this may be a pitfall of seeing the film without the benefit of the following two parts.

An Unexpected Journey is certainly too drawn-out with several scenes dragging on for far too long. The "at home with the Bagginses" prologue is wholly unnecessary as it serves only to inform the remaining three members of humanity, who weren't already aware, that *The Hobbit* films are indeed prequels to *The Lord of the Rings* while also, sadly, underlining the obvious fact that Ian Holm and Elijah Wood (Frodo) have both clearly physically aged in the intervening period. The scene with Radagast (Sylvester McCoy) going round and round with the ridiculous rabbits of Rhosgobel — yet, catastrophically failing to draw away the wargs — feels both painfully long and absurd.

However, at other times, breathing-space within the film is to be welcomed. Riddles in the Dark is a masterpiece and could easily have been trimmed right back, while An Unexpected Party similarly benefits from a little extra room allowing the audience to fully experience and appreciate the distinct natures of these 13 dwarves. It could scarcely be argued that any scene feels 'rushed', as opposed to some chapters of the book which certainly are rather too brief. Indeed, in spreading the book out over a couple of films and making the it consistent with *The Lord of the Rings* films, arguably Jackson has done a better job of reconciling *The Hobbit* with the rest of Middle-earth than Tolkien did.

Although *An Unexpected Journey* would have benefited from more footage ending up on the cutting room floor, it is unquestionably a well-produced and thoroughly enjoyable film into which Warner Bros has clearly poured a lot of time and resources. It is a stunning, cinematic feast of beautiful magnificence which successfully manages to balance the line between staying faithful to the spirit of the book while remaining consistent with the pre-existing trilogy. This is no small achievement and Jackson *et al.* should be applauded for persisting with this film franchise and stepping up to the plate to bring one of the nation's most-treasured stories to screen.

Victoria Lee

In the few days between Christmas and New Year's Eve, I went to our local cinema to watch *The Hobbit*. I was already uneasy. "How on earth," I wondered, "can Peter Jackson possibly stretch one children's story into a *Lord-of-the-Rings*-length epic". After nearly three of the most disappointing hours of my life, I believe I have the answer. Acres and acres of back story. Scour *Unfinished Tales*, trawl *The Silmarillion*, ravage the *Appendices*, and where no back story exists, make

it up. *The Hobbit* is an unholy mess. The cinema equivalent of using up the last of your holiday film.

There are a few good points. Martin Freeman makes a passable Bilbo Baggins, but his performance is drowned out by the whizz-bang firework display of special effects and nonsense. The dwarves are far too handsome to be credible. Thorin Oakenshield strides across the screen, battle axe in hand like some miniature Aragorn. The Elves are unbelievably self-righteous; Gandalf seems bored (I know I was). The original story has been sacrificed in the attempt to lengthen the plot. By the time Radagast the Brown and his racing rabbits appeared, I was ready to leave the cinema. All that tosh with the White Orc nearly cost me my Christmas-induced good will to all men. In short, a wonderful story, that could have been a truly beautiful piece of cinematic art, is instead turned into another soulless piece of non-literature with the one aim of making money. It left a taste in my mouth as stale as the popcorn Peter Jackson made me choke on. *The Hobbit* was a childhood friend. I could not feel worse if Jackson had dug up Tolkien's corpse and done a ventriloquist act with it.

César Rojas

"A book is a book, and a movie is a movie." I completely agree with this statement. When movies are adapted from books, lots of details are omitted, because books are much more complex. Sometimes minor additions are made, to add to the movie's plot, or to make it easier for the audience. But on rare occasions characters are invented or random battles added. Unfortunately, this has happened in *The Hobbit* movie.

I have always been very critical of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* movies, especially because of some changes in the story, for example: Arwen rescuing Frodo and Elves appearing at Helm's Deep, but mostly Frodo dismissing Samwise and trusting Gollum instead. Despite these and some other changes (if they made a literal transcription of the book into movies, it would take around ten films or so!), the *Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy is wonderful and follows the plot, more or less. So when *The Hobbit* movies were announced, I already feared Peter Jackson and his team would do some things that I would dislike, and then when I saw a beardless Dwarf, a fictional feminine Elf and the sudden division of the movies into three parts (which, by the way, was a decision made for monetary reasons, in my opinion), my fears were strengthened. Nevertheless, I was eager but emotionally prepared when I went to watch it, especially after reading some reviews that stated that although the movie had some differences with the book, it was fully enjoyable.

The prologue I found remarkable, I loved it! Lots of Dwarves, the Kingdom under the Mountain in its splendour, they only showing Smaug's shadow … fantastic! Afterwards, when Bilbo appeared, the problems began. In the book, Bilbo invites Gandalf to tea after his sudden appearance, action that Bilbo regrets. In the movie, Bilbo simply dismisses him (or so I believe, I've only watched it once). So in the movie this element of Bilbo's own blunder (as he himself sees it) of inviting Gandalf into his house is missing. The Dwarves arrival I found hilarious, although I missed their long, coloured beards and hooded cloaks, and Thorin doesn't arrive separately: a small detail, though. And the Misty Mountains song is simply fabulous.

Then one of the biggest alterations from the book to the movie takes place: in the book it is Gandalf who persuades and almost forces Bilbo to follow the Dwarves, in the movie Bilbo takes the decision entirely by himself! One of the key points in *The Hobbit* is Bilbo's transformation from a normal, comfortable hobbit into an adventurous one, and the movie completely ignores it in this section! He should of left Bag-end without anything, not with his huge backpack!

Then comes the Troll scene. Gandalf mysteriously disappears, and all Dwarves see a light at the distance, and send Bilbo to investigate, he is captured, and confesses his companions are near. Later, the Dwarves are captured in pairs and unawares, they don't suddenly charge at the Trolls, except for Thorin, who is soon captured. Then Gandalf comes and saves the day. But not in the movie, where it's Bilbo who outwits the Trolls and has them discuss cooking issues until daylight! Another meaningful change, in my opinion, as Bilbo has not yet matured, as it's depicted in the movie.

Next, an utterly crazy, unneeded and ridiculous series of events happen, starting with the inclusion of Azog. Azog indeed killed Thrór, though not in the battle of Azanulbizar (Nanduhirion), in 2799 TA, but nine years before! In fact, that battle was fought because of his decapitation! Thorin is indeed wounded, but not by Azog (as in the movie), who beheads Náin, Thorin's relative, not Thrór! Azog is slain in battle by Dáin Ironfoot, although strangely enough, this great Orc is included as Thorin's mortal enemy! In fact, as Britta points out in her outstanding movie review, it seems the main conflict in this first movie is Thorin's dispute with Azog and not his quest on reclaiming Erebor!

Radagast is also included in the movie, where he supposedly discovers Sauron has returned to Dol Guldur (which by the way, is pronounced Dol GUldur, not Dol GuldUr, as the Istari and Elven Lords pronounce incorrectly, go figure!), and travels all the way from Mirkwood to the west of the Misty Mountains to warn Gandalf. Well, in the book, of course, this meeting never happens: it's in 2941 TA the Dwarves' and Bilbo's journey takes place, although in 2850, 91 years before, that Gandalf himself discovers that Sauron is the Necromancer of Dol Guldur, and this is when precisely he recovers Thrór's map and key from Thráin, who was held captive in this fortress. Funny enough, in the movie Gandalf doesn't explain how he got the map and key, as it would contradict this change in the plot they mistakenly created. Radagast's bizarre presence is followed by an attack of Orcs and Wargs to the west of Rivendell, who in turn were destroyed by a small Elven company, the Dwarves' coming to Rivendell by some mysterious rock passage and not by crossing the Bruinen, their hatred and mistrust towards the Elves. I think all this was completely uncalled for! In the book, right after the Trolls' episode, the company gladly head to Rivendell, although more because of the thought of rest and food, and not because of meeting the Elves per se. Thorin receives Elrond's counsels willingly, not in a reluctant fashion as Peter

Jackson shows. During this sequence I really doubted if I was watching an adaptation of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, because the story took so many turns and twists I could not believe what I was seeing. Adapting a book is something, but then adding lots of scenes and characters really bothered me!

The Dwarves in the book are delighted to have Gandalf with them, something that is completely altered in the movie, when they leave him behind! They abandoned their mightiest member! Nonsense! Then they get captured by Orcs (I always thought of the Great Goblin as a mighty warrior, not as a fat, dumb one with this weird thing under his chin!), and again, the story changes: in the book Bilbo gets captured and is dropped accidentally by Dori, becomes unconscious, is missed by the Orcs and it is while he is crawling in complete darkness that he finds the Ring (the most relevant and fascinating scene in the whole book). In the movie he escapes from the Orcs because of his cleverness, falls into the abyss, hides, watches Gollum kill an orc and sees the Ring slip from him, and retrieves it. If there's one scene that should remain truth to Tolkien's story, it's this one! It is a key event that changed the destiny of Arda forever! But the moviemakers didn't seem to care much about it.

The Riddles in the Dark scene is great. Gollum is fantastic, and although Bilbo's luck element is ignored, important as it is (as Britta points out), some riddles are left out, such as the Dark one, the Sun and daisies one, and the fish one.

And to end this mini-essay, the scene of Thorin's Company's escape from the Wargs is modified too (I was not surprised at all by when this moment arrived): Azog showing up, Thorin confronting him, Bilbo saving him (really? come on!), just supported my negative opinion of the movie I had by that time, and that I still have.

Summarizing, the movie itself is well made, with a catchy score, beautiful landscapes and so on, but with too many additions, omissions and changes from the book, way too many to ignore. I feel Peter Jackson abused of his power of adapting the movie from the original story. I really feel sad for Christopher Tolkien, seeing how his father's works are once more (and this time much more deeply) turned into a commercial issue, greatly altered against his will. Citing an interview he made to *Le Monde*: 'Invited to meet Peter Jackson, the Tolkien family preferred not to. Why? "They eviscerated the book by making it an action movie for young people 15 to 25," Christopher says regretfully. "And it seems that *The Hobbit* will be the same kind of film."' He was correct. It is.

I'm really scared of how the movies' plot will be in the next two films, and honestly I'm sure I'll feel sadder than I feel now, if the rumours about the plot of *Desolation of Smaug* are true.

Henry Gee

The Hobbit was originally a tale Tolkien wrote for, and read to, his children. Its publication, in 1937, was almost an accident, and it was likewise a coincidence that Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was released that same year.

Like Disney before him, Peter Jackson, director of *The Hobbit*, seeks to scale new technical heights. *Snow White* was the first feature-length animation, and people were worried that a cartoon that long would be too taxing on the human eye. Jackson has filmed *The Hobbit* at an unprecedented 48 frames per second, double the usual frame rate — and I have heard rumblings of a similar sort, though at my local cinema, where they have only just dispensed with the man walking in front carrying a red flag, it's probably hard to tell.

Both stories feature a lot of dwarfs, or, as Tolkien had it, 'dwarves', but there the similarities end. In Tolkien's story, a stay-at-home, everyman character, the protagonist, the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, is whisked away on an 'adventure' that tests his mettle, and on the way he discovers an inner strength and resourcefulness he never knew he had. This theme runs throughout all Tolkien's writing, perhaps because he, like many other ordinary people, was a veteran of World War I, fighting on the Somme, where ordinary people endured extraordinary things. "Even if you survive to tell the tale," Gandalf warns Bilbo, "you will not be the same."

I must confess that as a novel, *The Hobbit* doesn't work for me — at least, not in the way it did when I was a child. Its tone is uneven, it is horribly dated, and it is let down by patronizing, authorial asides. The rollicking adventure story at the beginning dissipates by the end into a geopolitical power-play that I could never quite fathom when I was eight. What happened was this: what started as a stand-alone story for children got sucked in to the rich undergrowth of Tolkien's private fantasy world — taking shape in the protean, never-to-be-fully published *Silmarillion*.

The Hobbit, however, was a hit, and Tolkien's publishers wanted a sequel. This, if nothing else, shows that you should be careful what you wish for. A tale of years and more than a thousand pages later, and after another world war, Tolkien delivered *The Lord Of The Rings* — an altogether weightier proposition. Where *The Hobbit* was simple, often comedic and tolerably linear, the text concentrating on the narrative while keeping the scenery vague, *The Lord Of The Rings* is complex, often serious, multilayered, and the scenery is rendered in what, for the reader, is almost photorealistic detail. If *The Hobbit* was a fairy-tale for children, *The Lord Of The Rings* was a fairy-tale for grown-ups, and, as such, started the fantasy genre we know today.

The prospect of turning any part of Tolkien's world into film was always going to be daunting. The 'realistic' tone of *The Lord Of The Rings* made it the least difficult contender. Despite Peter Jackson having to film a wide range of fantastic creatures on an epic scale, using every film-maker's trick he could get his hands on, from old-fashioned forced perspective to up-to-the-minute computer animation, Tolkien had done much of the scene-setting.

The Hobbit, though, is different. If you are going to give it the same, 'realistic' treatment, one might have thought, you could well do violence to its fairy-tale air. In our heads, and as we read to our children, we want to hear the dwarves sing as they do Bilbo's washing-up — but what would the effect on our minds be were we to see this rendered realistically? The trolls in *The Lord of the Rings* are terrifying and almost mute — in *The Hobbit* they are buffoonish, talkative and cor-blimey. In *The Hobbit*, the 'back story', involving

the 'White Council' meeting to discuss what to do about the strange 'Necromancer' that has come back to haunt the world, is merely done as reportage, to give an excuse for Gandalf's frequent absences from the action, which are always ended by a return just in time to get the dwarves out of a pickle. Here, the back story has to come to life.

And what of the dwarves themselves? Anyone raised post-Disney will inevitably read Tolkien's long roll-call of dwarves — Ori, Nori, Dori, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur and the rest — as Grumpy, Sleepy, Happy, Sneezy and Dopey, even though Tolkien emphasized that his dwarves were as proud, canny and hard-bitten as Disney's were knockabout, gurning and stupid. Tolkien's own word to describe the dwarves was thrawn, and this comes out in the Norse names for his dwarf kings — Thrór, Thráin and Thorin.

The choice for Jackson, then, was simple — *The Hobbit* had to be pulled from its fairy-tale moorings and treated as a prequel to *The Lord of the Rings*. Bits of the backstory, including the White Council, had to be made more explicit, as did the reason why the dwarves were engaged on their quest to begin with. In this, Jackson is doing what every good filmmaker should — he is showing, not just telling. There is a lot more fighting, a lot more action in the film than in the book, and this is just as it should be: Tolkien's action was always there, just relegated to dry annals, footnotes and noises-off. However, this only points up as a little awkward the parts of the novel which, as prose or poetry, are the set-pieces — the unexpected party in Bilbo's cosy hobbit hole; the dwarves doing the aforementioned chores, and singing about their lost treasure (admittedly to a beautiful theme by Howard Shore); the scene with the comedy trolls. Yes, there are places where the patchwork doesn't quite hang together, and one feels as did that wag who described Wagner as having wonderful moments but dreadful quarters-of-an-hour.

The things that save the film, though, are not the effects, but the good, old-fashioned virtues of script, direction and acting. Great care has been taken with the dwarves. Yes, they are all 'characters', but far from cute or bedisney'd: their character comes from a hard and weatherworn life, not from any inherent jokeyness. Their 'hardness' is indicated by a range of British regional accents — Bofur is an Irishman; Balin a Scot; Fili and Kili are as Yorkshire as Tetley tea bags. Thorin, their leader, is pure received-pronunciation, perhaps to indicate that he is a haughty posh boy. At least we were spared the strains of Kiwi and Strine that occasionally offended one's sensibilities in *The Lord of the Rings*. Their characters, though — not necessarily their accents — are traceable straight back to Tolkien — Thorin is indeed proud; Fili and Kili are young and good archers; Balin wise and kindly to Bilbo. Jackson has brought them to life with appropriate reference to the text.

A highlight scene for me is the one which, in retrospect, is the most significant in the novel — Bilbo's encounter with Gollum, during which Bilbo quite by accident 'steals' Gollum's magic ring, the same artefact that causes all the trouble in *The Lord Of The Rings*. Readers of *The Hobbit* will remember the riddle game, and this is done full justice in the film, and again it's the acting that carries it. Martin Freeman, with his innocent, everyman understatement, is peerless as Bilbo, and Gollum is a role that Andy Serkis made his own a decade ago. For me, the finest moment is where Bilbo sees Gollum's agony at losing the Ring, and, through pity, decides not to kill him, as he so easily could have done — just as Tolkien demanded.

The film ends on a cliff-hanger — literally. There are two more episodes to go before we come to the denouement. That doesn't mean that the end isn't satisfying, because it is. It closes with Bilbo admitting that whereas he often yearns for his comfortable, bourgeois home, he is motivated to stick with the dwarves precisely because they don't have a home, and are striving to reclaim it from an enemy in the face of indifference from others, especially the elves, and even their own kin. It is perhaps no coincidence that Tolkien wrote the novel at a time when the homelessness of the Jews was high in peoples' minds, and with the rise of Nazism tweaked feelings of liberal guilt. This is more than idle fancy — Tolkien several times likened the dwarves to the Jews, a proud, secretive and awkward bunch who'd long since lost their homeland. If Jews, like dwarves, are proverbially enamoured of jewels and gold, it is because small, high-value items are the easiest to take with you when you are turfed out the door.

Yes, one could say that *The Hobbit* as a film is overblown considering its source material — overwhelming, even. As a curtain-raiser to *The Lord of the Rings* it is (so far, at least) a little jarring. That doesn't mean it's a clunker — it's much, much better than, say, *The Phantom Menace* when compared with *A New Hope*. Again, traditional virtues save it. It goes without saying that the source material is far better, with greater depth and integrity. The casting is almost without exception superb: we don't have to suffer the juvenile whining of Hayden Christensen. A better comparison, though, is not with *The Lord of the Rings* but with Peter Jackson's treatment of *King Kong*. It's vast — but in its detailing and sensibilities it's very true to the 1933 original. You get the impression that this is how the film would have been made in the thirties, had the technology been available. Like *The Hobbit*, *King Kong* wins through its acting, in this case by Jack Black, Adrien Brody, Andy Serkis (yes, him too) and the luminous Naomi Watts.

My overall verdict? A promising start, though far from perfect. Roll on *The Desolation of Smaug*. But is *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, for all its technical sophistication, as good a film as *Snow White*, a technical tour-de-force in its day, and arguably one of the best films ever made? No. Not by a long way.

Charles Noad

As with *The Lord of the Rings* films, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is an astonishing piece of cinematic entertainment. A brief judgement might run: in what it sets out to do, it succeeds admirably; but whether it is a good dramatic adaptation of the original book by J. R. R. Tolkien is another matter; and, as this reviewer feels that this is a fairly important issue, I shall emphasize that aspect of it. Some of the changes from the book might be seen as reasonable restructuring done to make the events more suitable for a coherent film: screenplay has its own rules; but a good deal has, I feel,

been done simply to pad out the action, especially in the matter of adding more 'business' to maintain the level of interest.

The epic beginning of the film, where the tale of the proud dwarvish kingdom of Erebor and its destruction by the dragon is recounted, at once sets a note of epic. Now, in the book, the tale refers to all this only briefly and indirectly, and, as C. S. Lewis noted, it is only near the end that the epic note is achieved, culminating in the Battle of Five Armies; but the film sets the epic pitch straight away. The main reason for this, I suppose, is that Jackson is filming a book that Tolkien never wrote — or least never completed — that is, *The Hobbit* as the direct precursor to *The Lord of the Rings*. This it never was. When Tolkien wrote it he had absolutely not considered a sequel. When that sequel was begun (his publisher wanted something more about hobbits), it took on a life of its own, leaving the earlier book far from consistent in tone and details. In 1960 Tolkien wrote two-and-a-bit chapters of a revised version of *The Hobbit* to make it match up more precisely, both in tone and in detail, with the latter epic, but soon gave it up. However, such independence cannot be allowed to the cinematic version, so a much greater degree of integration with the history of Thorin's ancestors is needed. (But note that even in the 1960 version, the indirect account of the coming of the dragon was retained. For all this, see John Rateliff's excellent *The History of the Hobbit*.) Still it makes for a very spectacular opening. Indeed, the glimpses of Smaug assailing Erebor could almost be taken for Glaurung assaulting Nargothrond in the Elder Days.

In this first part, the Elves of northern Mirkwood are portrayed as refusing to help the Dwarves against the dragon (although it's difficult to see what they could have done in any case). This, presumably, is there to establish a degree of animus between the two races, which will doubtless be of significance in the next episode when Thranduil imprisons Thorin's company, without having to bring up the matter of Thingol of Doriath. Here we have a glimpse of Legolas's father Thranduil, mounted on an elk, of all things.

We start at the same point that the main narrative of the earlier films starts, the preparations for Bilbo's birthday, with (again) Frodo running off to meet Gandalf. If *The Hobbit* is to be considered as a series of more-or-less memorable set-pieces, the first is the arrival of Gandalf at the door of Bilbo's hobbit-hole, which is handled as a flash-back to 60 years before Bilbo's party. This scene is well done, it counts as a reasonable interpretation of the book, and little more need be said. Then we are 60 years back in time to find a younger Bilbo, smoking his pipe on a spring morning. It is fairly apparent that when we see Ian Holm as the aged Bilbo, he has been subjected to a 'de-aging' technique which is available to film-makers these days thanks to digital technology — and quite a few other of the actors, too, I think it would be safe to say. This application smooths the skin and takes years off an actor, perhaps an essential requirement when 'prequels' are filmed some ten years after the original. Martin Freeman makes, I feel, a fairly plausible Bilbo. He is some nine or ten years younger than Bilbo's 'real' age when he began his journey but, as hobbits apparently age a little less slowly than the Big Folk, that seems reasonable. He is much more plausible than Elijah Wood, who was absurdly young for the part of Frodo in the earlier films. A bit tubbier, and Freeman would have been perfect.

Next is the arrival of the dwarves and the unfolding of their plan. Perhaps the film drags a little here. The dwarves of *The Lord of the Rings* films were fairly traditional: stocky, with long beards. These dwarves seem to have pretty much human proportions and tend not to have long beards: some have no beards at all. This seems to be done for the sake of giving the 13 dwarves diverse individual personalities. I think that Jackson should have stuck to something more traditional. Tolkien's physical descriptions of dwarves support (I think) stockiness and long-beardedness, although beyond that the evidence is scanty. We have his drawing of 'Dwarves marching' (as well as other sketches for *The Hobbit* to be found in Rateliff); and his remark that his publisher Stanley Unwin looked 'exactly like' one of his dwarves might give a clue (see Douglas A. Anderson's *The Annotated Hobbit* (2nd edn, p. 13; 2002). However, Unwin was hardly that stocky, and had a beard, although a short one. The film's Thorin looks quite young, whereas in the book he is the oldest of the company. (Why do some characters have to have their age reduced in the films?) This rather expository episode, setting out the nature of the business Bilbo is wanted for, goes fairly slowly, and might test the patience of some.

The morning after, Bilbo finds the Dwarves gone, but he makes a sudden decision to chase after them. His conversation with Gandalf serves to introduce Radagast the Brown, a fellow wizard. We cut to Radagast, finding sick vegetation and animals in his part of Mirkwood. Perceiving that Sebastian the hedgehog is ill because of 'dark magic', he applies a magical cure that, when it succeeds, somehow drives away the giant spiders which were starting to climb over and into his house, plainly a foretaste of their bigger role when Thorin's company crosses Mirkwood. Then Radagast, using his bunny-drawn sleigh (yes!), heads off to Dol Guldur to investigate. Sylvester McCoy makes an interesting Brown Wizard, played to an extent for laughs, but he has the talent to give the role some weight.

When the company is encamped, we get a little more history from Thorin. Here we have a flashback to the Battle of Nanduhirion. This is presented as a consequence of the Erebor dwarves' attempted return to Moria. They win the battle (which, if anything, is underrepresented in what we see of it), and much is made of Azog, here a great 'pale orc', who, having beheaded Thror, is not killed by Dain Ironfoot but has his arm cut off by Thorin, who believes he has mortally wounded him.

The episode of the trolls is extended and filled out beyond the book. The trolls' odd combination of brutality and delicacy as they capture the dwarves and prepare to cook them ("They'll go well with a little seasoning …") is the main engine of the humour. They are indeed turned to stone, but this is because Gandalf splits a rock (like splitting the Bridge of Khazad-dûm) to reveal the hidden risen sun which shines upon them.

Once on the move again, Radagast joins the company

(amazing how he finds them!) for a hasty word with Gandalf, to tell him about the dark goings-on at Dol Guldur in Mirkwood Forest, and the emergence of the Necromancer. Radagast must have crossed over the Misty Mountains remarkably quickly to speak to Gandalf, it would seem (unless the previous scene with him took place much earlier). In Radagast's adventure he battles with a resurrected Ringwraith and even catches a shadowy glimpse of the Necromancer himself. A justification of the word 'Necromancer' is attempted because he is apparently able to raise the Ringwraith from the dead. But that is wrong: the Ringwraiths have their own form of immortality because of the Nine Rings. Radagast picks up the wraith's sword, which he passes to Gandalf when they meet.

Shortly after, the party are attacked by a band of orcs mounted on wargs, from whom they barely escape by a combination of the orcs being diverted by Radagast and by mounted elven archers, who turn up like the Seventh Cavalry, attacking the orcs. Radagast's confidence that his rabbits will be able to outrun wargs is memorable. I wonder if "As fast as the rabbits of Rhosgobel" will become a standard descriptor among Tolkien fans (if with a measure of irony).

Gandalf leads the party into a cave which turns out to be an entrance to Rivendell. (How different from the book's gradual discovery of the place among the many hidden ravines and valleys over the edge of the Wild.) Here, Rivendell looks like a pure Maxfield Parrish creation. The dwarves are welcomed and fed, and soon we get on to the real business: Elrond's inspection of Thror's map. Here we see the moon-runes, runes which can only be seen in the light of a moon of the same age and season as when the runes were written. This is, of course, an amazing coincidence, although the coincidence is in the book. (Tolkien does rather rely on coincidences, it must be said.) But then we have something certainly not in the book, not at least at exactly that time and place: a meeting of the White Council at Rivendell, which here consists of just Gandalf, Saruman, Elrond and Galadriel, the latter of whom looks more goddess-like than ever, as though Varda herself were to put in an appearance. They discuss what to do. Saruman dismisses the orc-raids as unimportant, and disregards Gandalf's report of Radagast's news: "He eats too many mushrooms!" Saruman has not gone over to the enemy at this point, but he is impatient of other points of view than his. When Gandalf produces the Ringwraith's sword, he refers to it as having being buried with his body. But that is to rewrite history. (The last definite mention of the Witch-king before the events of *The Hobbit* appears to be in Third Age 2050, when King Eärnur of Gondor answers his challenge to single combat. No mention of his entombment.) It is unclear just what is happening at this meeting. Gandalf seems to be the only one who is physically present, whereas the others are apparently projections, who vanish when the meeting is over. Of course, the White Council isn't mentioned in the book but comes from *The Lord of the Rings* appendices.

I might add that here at least is one point where Jackson has not been faithful to the book, and it is something for which we may be truly thankful: we do not have the elves of Rivendell greeting Thorin's party with such memorable lines as "Just look! Bilbo the hobbit on a pony my dear! Isn't it delicious!", "Most astonishing wonderful!" Some changes are for the better.

But the dwarves have left on their own by now, on foot, and Gandalf has to catch up with them. The raiding Orcs report back to Azog, who turns out to be alive, but with a spear with a claw-like end stuck into his partially severed arm. Azog's aim is to extinguish the house of Durin (which is new from the book), and he sets a reward for Thorin's head. His minions ride out on Wargs to spread the news.

The party approaches the Misty Mountains and starts to cross over them in a heavy storm. The mention of the 'stone-giants' in *The Hobbit* has always been a bit problematic for many readers. They don't seem quite to fit in to Tolkien's world, and they are not mentioned in the latter epic at all. The film's approach is radical. Here they are 500-feet-tall humanoids constructed of the very rock of the mountains: they are sides of the mountain come to life. They throw rocks about and generally smash each other up, but take no notice of Thorin's company, whom they doubtless don't even notice. Although this makes for some spectacular filming, it is terribly implausible. If this kind of thing takes place every time there's a storm in the mountains, there soon wouldn't be any mountains left. I wonder if this depiction of the stone-giants owes something to Guillermo del Toro, who was the initial choice to direct the film, and is credited as one of the screenplay writers. Del Toro is into horror and had hoped to film H. P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*; the Stone-giants might be said to illustrate those blind forces of nature that are not so much hostile to humanity as totally indifferent to him, which is a very Lovecraftian point of view. In the novel the Stone-giants are merely mentioned; in the film, they are expanded to a major scene.

The party finds a cave to shelter in. Hurt by Thorin's harsh words about him, Bilbo is just about to start back home, after conversing with the sympathetic Bofur, when the bottom of the cave opens up and the whole party (although not Gandalf) is precipitated into a dizzying, bone-cracking fall down into a trap in the lair of the goblins who dwell inside the mountains. I say 'goblins' advisedly: these are not the orcs we are familiar but wizened, diseased creatures. Lord knows why the difference.

Astonishingly still in one piece, they are brought before the troll-sized Great Goblin — except for Bilbo, who tries to hide but is chased by a single goblin. They fall into a crevasse and are both stunned when they hit the bottom. And here Bilbo does not wake up in a dark tunnel, his groping fingers, quite by chance, coming across a ring lying on the ground. Instead he wakes up in an amazingly well-lit underground cave, with no ring in sight. Then Gollum enters the scene: he drags away the goblin and takes him over to his little island in a lake, where he kills him (and Bilbo's sword tellingly ceases to glow blue. Incidentally, the swords of Gandalf and Thorin — Beater and Biter — should, of course, being of ancient elvish make, also glow blue in the presence of orcs.) Bilbo notices a gold ring that Gollum has accidentally dropped, and pockets it. Then they become aware of each

other, each with his own agenda: Bilbo desperate to find a way out, Gollum on the look-out for food, although perhaps momentarily pleased to have Bilbo's company — Bilbo must be the first person he has had a conversation with in centuries. The Riddle Game which follows is generally well and plausibly done, in contrast to the absurdities in the cave of the goblins. I shan't dwell on these other than to say that Gandalf turns up and gets the dwarves out of the goblins' clutches. There are fantastic chases, bone-cracking drops, but they all eventually get out on to the other side of the Misty Mountains and continue their journey. And we do see Bilbo squeezing out through the goblins' door, which is such a tight squeeze that he loses his waistcoat buttons.

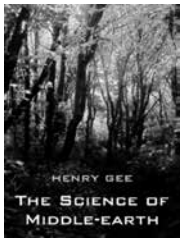
The dwarves, when he joins them, are curious about how he escaped, but Gandalf diverts them: he seems to know more about Bilbo's ring than he lets on (again, *The Hobbit* is seen here very much as the precursor to *The Lord of the Rings*). They carry on their journey, but are still pursued by Azog's orcs, now with Azog himself leading them. But we don't quite have the scene where they escape up pine-trees as in the book. The party climbs into three trees bending over a chasm to escape from the chasing orcs and wargs. But then Thorin, seeing Azog, descends from his tree and tries to fight the Orc but is very quickly felled. Bilbo rushes in and saves him from being beheaded, and some of the other dwarves come out to join the scrap. But by now the Eagles of the North have arrived, having been summoned earlier by Gandalf's having sent a moth to their eyries. (How long does it take a moth to fly the distance?) After a dizzying flight — they must all have a good head for heights — they are deposited on the top of the Carrock. There is no overnight rest in the eagles' eyries, so we have no scene of Bilbo waking up with the early sun in his eyes. They see the Lonely Mountain in the distance, on the other side of the forest which lies at their feet. It looks remarkably close given how far across the forest of Mirkwood is. Thorin reconciles himself with Bilbo. We see a thrush start to fly over the forest towards the mountain. Then we see it at the mountain itself. Of course we don't know how long it takes to fly the distance, but again one gets the impression here as elsewhere that distances have been vastly compressed. We go into the mountain, and there, mostly hidden under a pile of gold except for a protruding ear and nostrils, and a closed eye that suddenly opens — the dragon! On which note, this part of the story ends.

Notice has been taken of the advances in technology used for this film: not just 3D, but projection at 'HFR' or high frame rate — 48 frames per second, or double the usual rate. This does, as claimed, give a much smoother view of the action, almost like watching television. There is less sense of distancing. Whether it is too much of a break from the 24 fps mode of perception that cinema-goers are used to is an other matter. It has been claimed that HFR can give some viewers motion sickness. Not this viewer, except just once, for a second or so during the helter-skelter escape of Gandalf and the Dwarves from the goblins' cavern in the mountains.

There is much in the film that is just about spot-on; and there is much where the screenplay writers have taken a decidedly creative approach. We all have our own idea of what *The Hobbit* should look like, and doubtless Jackson *et al.* have a right to theirs. And yet I feel something is missing, even if it difficult to say exactly what it is. I am not a film-buff, and doubtless there are many aspects which one such would notice and this reviewer hasn't. But then, most of the people who will see *The Hobbit* aren't film-buffs either.

A scientific perspective

TROELS FORSCHHAMMER



The Science of Middle-earth
Henry Gee
Published by Jill Grinberg Literary Management. eBook for Amazon Kindle.

Did Balrogs have wings? How do the palantíri work? Do Elves have pointy ears? Do Hobbits?

These questions, and many others, are discussed wherever Tolkien fans meet, and they stem from the desire to understand how Tolkien's wonderfully sub-created world works — to understand the underlying mechanics, and ultimately they provide a way to extend the enchantment of the story, to make the sense of immersion in Middle-earth even deeper.

In *The Science of Middle-earth*, Henry Gee discusses the creation and recreation of Orcs over two chapters and his approach is, naturally, scientific. Not just by using ideas and concepts from Primary World science, but by applying a basically scientific approach to solving the problem, to filling the gap in our knowledge.

Henry Gee sees a question, such as 'how did Orcs reproduce?' and he then goes on to investigate the problem (looking at the textual evidence from Tolkien's writings), and moves on to formulate hypotheses that are then evaluated according to their explanatory power (can they explain the phenomena) and for ad hoc assumptions (what needs to be assumed true for the hypothesis to work).

As a scientist I cannot heap enough praise on Gee's

discussion of these issues: it is well thought out, it illustrates clearly my claim that the natural sciences are the most creative of all human pursuits, and it is a school example of scientific reasoning (I avoid mentioning the scientific method only because we're a bit challenged on ways to experimentally test theories about the reproduction of Orcs).

As a Tolkienist, however, I feel that Gee's discussion in two aspects falls just short of being completely satisfactory. Both of these can be traced back to the fact that we are, after all, dealing with hypotheses regarding a sub-created literary world rather than our Primary World.

The Catholic Church claims that no conflict is possible between science (as long as it does not override moral laws) and the faith, and the Church even sponsors some scientific research. One reason for this is that it believes that one can learn about the Creator by studying his creation.

Try putting 'sub-' in front of 'creator' and 'creation' in that last sentence and you will find what is an important part of my motivation for studying Tolkien's Middle-earth: I want to take into account what Tolkien intended — or what he might have intended if he had ever given that particular question any thought.

Whatever he may have had in mind, I am sure that Tolkien didn't think of the Orcs as reproducing by parthenogenesis (virgin birth — female Orcs giving birth to female children that are effectively clones of their mothers), even if, scientifically, this is a highly attractive hypothesis, and one Gee promotes (at least to explain the Orcs' ability to reproduce their population very quickly).

Another complication that arises from prefixing 'create' with 'sub-' is that although the mind of the Creator is traditionally seen as immutable, the mind of a sub-creator can change. And in Tolkien's case, change it did — often.

Invented while he was writing 'The Fall of Gondolin' Tolkien first called them Orqui, but soon changed this to Orcs. This word is known from Old English texts such as *Beowulf*. Tolkien glossed O.E. *orc* as 'demon', and the Orcs of *The Book of Lost Tales* are indeed demonic "for all that race were bred by Melko of the subterranean heats and slime. Their hearts were of granite and their bodies deformed; foul their faces which smiled not, but their laugh that of the clash of metal" (*The Book of Lost Tales 2*, chapter III, 'The Fall of Gondolin' pp. 159–160). This demonic race created by Morgoth, stayed in the Silmarillion tradition, where work prior to *The Lord of the Rings* adds that they were made in explicit mockery of the Elves.

Meanwhile Tolkien also wrote that children's story that would come back to haunt him. He freely borrowed from his Silmarillion mythology for background, but he did not import the demonic Orcs from the mythology, possibly feeling they were inappropriate in a children's story. Instead he based the goblins of *The Hobbit* mainly on George MacDonald's stories (especially the *Princess and Curdie* books). Tolkien had been using 'goblin' as a synonym for 'orc' in his mythology from the start, so although he didn't borrow the creature itself, he did borrow the identification of goblin with orc and thus *Orcrist* became the Goblin-cleaver.

Therefore, as his attempt to write a sequel to *The Hobbit* grew in the telling and got firmly rooted in the Silmarillion mythology, Tolkien was faced with the problem of

having to somehow merge two different Orkish traditions: the demonic Orcs created by Morgoth in mockery of the Elves (represented by Treebeard's descriptions of Orcs and also by the indifferent slaughter of Orcs during the Battle of the Hornburg) and the Hobbit tradition with its MacDonaldesque goblins (mainly seen in the descriptions of the Orcs in Moria and perhaps Merry and Pippin's experiences in the clutches of the Uruk-hai). The result was a third kind of Orc — no longer created by Morgoth, but corrupted from some other stock as proposed by Frodo and exemplified by the Orcs seen by Sam (and Frodo) in Mordor.

In the years after finishing *The Lords of the Rings*, Tolkien would rewrite the Silmarillion texts to show Orcs as bred from captured Elves, and this was the situation at the publication of *The Lords of the Rings*. Then Tolkien started to niggle in earnest, and numerous other ideas were tested.

This complex history of Tolkien's concept of the Orcs is, however, not considered in Gee's otherwise excellent (and in any circumstances highly recommendable) book, and textual evidence belonging to different orkish conceptions are mixed, giving an impression of a single, highly conflicted, conception, rather than of a series of reasonably consistent conceptions.

When we try to fill the gaps of our knowledge about Tolkien's world with our own hypotheses, I feel that the most satisfying result comes when the scientific approach and the authorial intention approach are in dialogue and when they both respect that Tolkien's conception was always changing. Gee's scientific approach is brilliantly executed, and gives me the desire to enter into a dialogue with it as a vehicle for better understanding of both Tolkien and his work.

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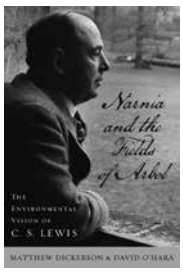
An ecological question

KUSUMITA P. PEDERSEN



Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: The Environmental Vision of C. S. Lewis

Matthew Dickerson and David O'Hara

University Press of Kentucky Press, 2009. 304 pages. $ 35.00

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A remarkable reference to Tolkien occurs in the second chapter of this book. C. S. Lewis says in a letter: "Tolkien once remarked to me that the feeling about home must have been different in the days when a family had fed on the produce of the same few miles of country for six generations, and that perhaps this was why they saw nymphs in the fountains and dryads in the wood — they were not mistaken for there was a real (not metaphorical) connection between them and the countryside. What had been earth and air & later corn, and later still bread, really was in them." Lewis goes on to say that living on a "standardized international diet" we are artificial beings who now have "no connection (save in sentiment) with any place on earth". The passage is also the first of two quotations on the frontispiece of the book and is repeated in the eighth chapter. In both of those places, Tolkien's name is omitted. Yet at least up through the telling phrase *they were not mistaken* — so significant and yet enigmatic — this insight comes from Tolkien. To discover it is enough to make the book reviewed here worth reading. And for those interested in C. S. Lewis and/or the environment, there is much more to commend.

This book is a study of the relevance of the thought of C. S. Lewis to the ecological crisis. It follows *Ents, Elves and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J. R. R. Tolkien* (2006), also co-authored by Matthew Dickerson[1], as part of *Culture of the Land: A Series in the New Agrarianism* from the University of Kentucky Press. Dickerson has also written *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings* (2003). David O'Hara teaches philosophy at Augustana College in South Dakota and with Dickerson has co-authored *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy* (2006). They wish not only to draw attention to the environmental aspects of Lewis's works, but also to demonstrate that one can be a convinced Christian and an equally committed defender of nature, or "the environment". They offer a thorough, solid and straightforward account of Lewis's ideas to make their case.

Dickerson and O'Hara have adopted the strategy of an environmental interpretation of Lewis's best-known works of fantasy, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the interplanetary trilogy *Out of the Silent Plant*, *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*. The reason for this is that many more readers know Lewis as the author of these works than have read his works of Christian apologetics or literary scholarship. The authors necessarily supplement this reading with material from Lewis's other works and his letters. Because Lewis is pre-eminent among writers on Christianity and his works of fantasy expose Christian themes in an explicit manner, they focus throughout on the relation of Christianity to the environment.

The book has a distinct polemical edge. As the authors say candidly at the outset:

> though we do not want to turn Lewis's fictional work (or our own book) into explanations and defenses of Christianity (such as Lewis's *Mere Christianity* or *Miracles*), or into more responses to Lynn White[2] there is some degree to which we are using Lewis's writing as a defense of a certain Christian view of ecology. It is a defense both to Christians who appreciate Lewis but who don't see ecology as an important topic and to those who are not Christian, who see ecology as very important, and who hold a low view of Christian ecology.

While clarifying that the book is about what Lewis actually says rather than about "what he would have said" on contemporary issues, the authors make frequent connections between Lewis's ideas and those of other more recent writers, almost all within the context of American and Christian environmental thought. Those who have "a low view of Christian ecology" are mostly not named by name or engaged directly, although "Deep Ecology" and "eco-paganism" (as one of its varieties) are critiqued briefly.

The book begins with a chapter on Lewis's life outlining the development of his thinking and influences on him, including Tolkien and George MacDonald. The unity of Lewis's thought is emphasized; the authors quote Owen Barfield as saying what Lewis thought about *anything* touched on what he thought about *everything*. Lewis's Platonism is identified as a medieval neo-Platonism that does not "*devalue* the material world in favor of a separate spiritual realm but sees the spiritual *permeating* the physical". They add, "once he began to believe in the supernatural, however, Lewis began to see the sacredness in nature as well" (we probably could just as well say, based on his account in *Surprised by Joy*, that Lewis had already seen it, but had not called it that). On the closing page of their book Dickerson and O'Hara say Lewis's "is a world of spirit — spirit dwelling in the trees, rivers and stones, hovering over the deep and upon mountains … for millions of readers, Lewis succeeded in enchanting, or rather *re-enchanting* nature. He brought the woods and fields and rivers and seas, and the animals that live in them, alive with spiritual significance, helping us not only to see them in new ways, but to care for them more deeply." There is nonetheless ambivalence on this point. Sometimes quoting Lewis, they warn repeatedly against "nature-worship" and caution the reader about "paganism" and "pantheism", which seem to be equated. These warnings echo the anxiety that many Christian environmentalists have even today about regarding nature as "sacred."

In the next three chapters Dickerson and O'Hara give a reading of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. A virtue ethics is set forth in which humility, honesty, contentment, hospitality, generosity, self-sacrifice and self-discipline are described as "ecological virtues". Persons with these moral qualities protect nature, whereas those who are arrogant, deceptive, greedy and self-seeking exploit and destroy it. The biblical "dominion" of humans over other species is construed as responsible service determined by the duties of sovereigns to their subjects (reiterating the conclusion long established in eco-theology). Dickerson and O'Hara acknowledge that there is an unresolved tension in Lewis's treatment of animals. Throughout his works Lewis has great sympathy for animals and recognizes interspecies communion as a human need. Thus in Narnia some animals speak, fulfilling this desire, but there is a divinely created hierarchy of Talking Beasts and dumb common beasts. To mistreat the former is far worse than to make use of the latter.

Attention is given here as elsewhere in the book to themes of agrarianism. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Frank and his wife Nell are country folk who have been demeaned by life in the big city. When they come to Narnia, they return to the land. As he installs Frank as the first King of Narnia, Aslan tells him to "use a spade and plough and raise food out of the earth", to care for the animals, to treat all his subjects equally and to pass this way of life on to his children. Narnia when it flourishes "is largely wilderness, with some agrarian landscapes (albeit missing scenes of working farms), and free from the ravages of modern development, industrialization and large-scale agriculture". Indiscriminate cutting of trees, as in Tolkien, is a sure sign that evil is at work. Lust for power like that of Jadis, who becomes the White Witch, arises from the desire to avoid one's own death and results not only in a will to dominate but eventually a readiness to destroy all living things. With ample reference to *The Great Divorce*, the "end of nature" in *The Last Battle* is shown to be a renewal: "Nature, it seems, has passed away. But it has passed away only to be restored … Nature grows more real and potent the deeper one goes into heaven." Heaven, one might say, turns out to be the real Earth.

Dickerson and O'Hara next provide a detailed and useful study of Lewis's interplanetary trilogy, with a chapter for each of the three novels. Not written for children, these books contain a good deal of explicitly theological discussion and the authors concentrate on explaining Lewis's positions and distinguishing them from other views. They note that to describe "Deep Heaven", Lewis draws on the cosmology of the medieval Platonist Bernardus Silvestris, which is one of ontological plenitude — the Universe is *full* of life and being. Lewis thus opposes the modern "nightmare-myth" that the Universe is empty space in which humans are alone, a world view found in the science fiction works of H. G. Wells and Henri Bergson's philosophy of the life-force. Lewis also seeks to counteract the idea instilled by "imaginative training" that alien species will be hostile to humans, that they will be "monsters", and especially the view of the villain Edward Weston that humans have a right to dominate and kill all other species. On the planet Malacandra, three rational species live in harmony and the Malacandrians comment that on a planet (our own) that has only one such species sympathies are bound to be contracted. Also, although on Malacandra all life is soon to end, in their faith in Maleldil, or God, the planet's inhabitants do not fear death.

On Perelandra, the world is new, and the narrative as a whole centres on the establishment of its first humans as the rightful rulers of a world properly ordered under Maleldil. Here humans are to be the teachers and uplifters of animals.

There are other forms of life which may have no relation to the human — a qualification of anthropocentrism. The demonic vitalism of Weston is effectively contrasted to the Christian view of Elwin Ransom. It should be added, however, that Weston's possession by evil is not merely "the consequence of Weston's playing host to a diabolical worldview", as the authors say. He also is receptive to a certain worldview because of his "massive egoism" and lust for power, and becomes subject to what psychologists call "inflation": projecting one's own ego onto the large processes of history or in this case, the vast processes of the cosmos. Weston says: "In so far as I am the conductor of the central forward pressure of the universe, I am it … I am the Universe. I, Weston, am your God and your Devil." The authors say that "All ontological difference has been erased in his thinking" but more precisely, Weston denies spirit, collapsing it into an unconscious energy. He says that the driving force of evolution is "a blind, inarticulate purposiveness" even as he commits "verbicide" by calling this force "the Holy Spirit". It therefore is not quite right to compare the flattened ontology attributed to Weston to the biocentrism of some Deep Ecologists or "eco-pagans" (who in any case have differing views on these questions).

In *That Hideous Strength*, the story literally and figuratively is brought home to England, where the plan of the hostile *eldila* besieging our planet is to strip it of all organic life. Their instrument, the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.), has adopted a life-destroying ideology based on the superiority of the non-material. One of its leaders says: "In us the organic life has produced Mind. It has done its work. After that we want no more of it." The ideology fosters an illusion of immortality which intends the death of all biological life. In contrast to the N.I.C.E. is the egalitarian spiritual community around Ransom, whose members live by the vision which is Lewis's own. It is an ethics of love and gratitude for the natural world as creation and the community of all life, including *eldila*, animals and humans, each in service to the Creator.

In conclusion, Lewis's environmental vision is indeed compelling and, as should not be surprising, bears a strong family resemblance to that of Tolkien. Like Tolkien, Lewis too anticipates much of the ecological thought developed after him. The matter of "pantheism" and "paganism" remains troubling. In Christian environmentalism the first and most important point is that "nature" is "creation" or, as Lewis puts it: "Nature is a creature." Dickerson and O'Hara say: "we must not confuse the creator with the creation. Nature, or creation, is filled with Deity, but it is not divine." We should regard nature as "sacred" but should not engage in "nature-worship" lest we become "pagans" and "pantheists". But these terms are problematic. When not used by self-identified Pagans, "pagan" usually indicates anyone who is not a Jew, Christian or Muslim, a sweepingly general meaning. And what is pantheism? In *Miracles* Lewis gives an extended and vehement rejection of pantheism. All religions and philosophies ancient and new, except for Judaism, Platonism and Christianity, Lewis says, are "Pantheist". He lists India, the Stoics, other Greeks and Romans, Spinoza, Hegel, Wordsworth and Emerson, among others. Lewis's intensity of condemnation seems to come not so much from any assertion by pantheism that there is no transcendent reality "above" or "apart from" Nature, but from the denial by pantheism (as he constructs it) of a living God who is personal, concrete and who wills and acts, pantheists preferring a formless generality, an abstraction drawn out from "everything"[3]. Here one must object that to be formless and impersonal is by no means the same thing as to be neither concrete nor transcendent. These are two quite different points and must not be conflated.

There is also possible confusion about "pantheism" and divine immanence. Although Lewis rejects phrases such as "a great spiritual force pervading all things" as "pantheist", very similar language is used by Dickerson and O'Hara, as by many others, when they speak of spirit "indwelling" or "permeating" nature, or of the divine "in nature". What does it mean to say that God is "in nature" or, in Lewis's own words, that nature is "filled with" Deity or even, as he also says, that nature is "a manifestation of the Divine"? The consideration of divine immanence versus a supposed "pantheism" does not achieve the degree of clarity that it needs. Likewise, the word "worship" in "nature-worship" is unclear, as some Christians make a distinction between "worship" and "veneration", whereas adherents of other religious traditions may use entirely different language and concepts. For example, to make offerings to a great tree as Hindus do in Bali does not mean that I have mistaken the tree for its Creator, nor that I do not know or believe that there is one uncreated Creator. References to "tree-worship" should not be made with a hand-wave, and whatever practices or beliefs are discussed in environmental studies should be depicted with accuracy.

A half-century after C. S. Lewis's death, it is no longer possible to dismiss all philosophies and religions other than Plato and the Abrahamic faiths by the designation "pantheist" or "pagan". The term "pantheism" needs to be rigorously scrutinized and adherents of "pagan" traditions themselves included in conversations about the "pagan". The comparative study of the world's religions and ecology is well under way and is in dialogue with other approaches; no religion or culture's environmental philosophy and practices need be misrepresented for lack of knowledge. Today the world's religions are encountering each other directly as never before and the environmental crisis confronts all of us regardless of tradition. We are in this together, and the frame of reference for our reflections must be global. This book is an important contribution to the study of C. S. Lewis and of environmental thought, yet it would be even better with more attention to this wider context.

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1. Reviewed by the author in *Mallorn* No. 52 (2011).
2. In 1967 historian Lynn White published an essay 'The Historical Roots of Our Environmental Crisis', in which he lays the blame for the crisis on Christian ideas of human domination over nature. White's accusations set off a reexamination of Christian theology which has continued ever since. Dickerson and O'Hara call C. S. Lewis "a pre-Lynn White Christian".
3. *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* Chapter 11 (HarperCollins, 1996).

Realism in fantasy: *The Lord of the Rings*

LAWRENCE VAUGHAN KRIKORIAN

Regarding J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Tom Shippey said in 2003:

> I think what he created, very powerfully, was a sense of realism. And realism comes from not knowing what's going on and not knowing what to do next. But he did things which a professional would not have dared to do. And of course they worked. Professionals don't know everything. Sometimes inspired amateurs know something[1].

In this quote Mr Shippey describes the psychological effect of Tolkien's splitting *LOTR* into plot strands. The beings on one strand do not know what's going on on other plot strands and, therefore, do not know for certain what to do next. In Book III there are four plot strands: Merry and Pippin with the orcs; Merry and Pippin with Treebeard and Quickbeam; Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli pursuing the Uruk Hai and Mordor orcs who have kidnapped the two young hobbits; and the return from the dead of Gandalf the White just in time to motivate Theoden and Treebeard to fight. Book IV recounts the perils of Sam and Frodo approaching Mordor together; then with Gollum. That's five or six plot strands. By not intercutting these plot strands, Tolkien left a nasty poser for Peter Jackson, who had to try to intercut the strands in the film *The Two Towers*.

Furthermore, in a war novel, which is what *LOTR* is, lack of communication between components of the fighting force on numerous plot strands creates tactical problems. For example, Aragorn laments how his tactical decisions have gone wrong. Aragorn tells Legolas and Gimli, who ask him to lead the chase to save Merry and Pippin from the Uruk-hai, "You give the choice to an ill chooser … Since we passed through the Argonath my choices have gone amiss." By creating Aragorn's tactical frustrations, Tolkien, the WWI Signals Officer, infused what Shippey called a strong "sense of realism" in a fantasy novel.

This paradox — realism in fantasy — hundreds of millions of readers have expressed. They wonder aloud how a fantasy book can feel more 'real' to them than this world. Fellow readers have said things like this to me since 1972, 40 years ago. In 2004, Tom Shippey adumbrated his idea on psychological realism in *LOTR*[2]: "One of the effects of the kind of strand-by-strand narration of *The Lord of the Rings* is that the characters on any one strand don't know what's going on on the other strand."

This quote of Shippey is indeed a description of psychological realism. And the text in *LOTR* seems realistic, although the setting is fantastic. During their journey to and through Mordor, Sam and Frodo wonder aloud what is happening to their friends who are far away. Hundreds of miles away on his own plot strand, Merry upbraids himself for forgetting Frodo and Sam:

> Then suddenly like a cold touch on his heart he thought of Frodo and Sam. "I am forgetting them!" he said to himself reproachfully. "And yet they are more important than all the rest of us. And I came to help them; but now they must be hundreds of miles away, if they are still alive." He shuddered.

In our real world we seldom know just what is going on in the lives of our friends. Thus one commonly hears "I had no idea he felt so-and-so" or "I was clueless that she was going to do such-and-such". Again, in a fantasy novel such realism is a paradox to which hundreds of millions of readers have responded.

Now Shippey did analyse such psychological realism in his *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. He writes:

> As a general rule one may say that none of the five or six major strands of narrative in the central section of *The Lord of the Rings* ever matches neatly with any of the others in chronology: some are always being advanced, some retarded. Two major effects of this, naturally, are surprise and suspense … One might feel that a more experienced writer, one who wrote novels or fantasies professionally rather than passionately, would have known not to risk such finesses or trust so much to the ingenuity of his readers: but Tolkien knew no better than to try it. The main effect of his interlacing technique, however, does not lie in surprise and suspense. What it does is to create a profound sense of reality, of that being the way things are. There is a pattern in Tolkien's story, but his characters can never see it (naturally, because they are in it).

Almost as if thinking about Peter Jackson's need to intercut plot strands cinematically, Shippey used the term 'interlacing' — like the strands in rope. Both are metaphors based on the simple tool Sam Gamgee values so highly: rope. The paradox that the plot of a fantasy novel is realistic explains in part the ongoing popularity of *LOTR*.

Another type of realism set paradoxically in the Ur-fantasy novel, *The Lord of the Rings*, is Tolkien's use of three-dimensional minor characters. Too many fantasy novels deploy two-dimensional minor characters like pawns set to be sacrificed in a chess game. These place holders for certain themes or actions are somewhat analogous to characters in allegories from centuries ago. And we all know how much Tolkien "cordially dislike[d]" allegory. Some of the three-dimensional

minor characters in *LOTR* develop from the novel's beginning to its end. Some move the other direction, decaying rapidly while the War of the Ring is fought. While Fredegar Bolger and Lobelia Sackville-Baggins actually improve, Ted Sandyman and Bill Ferny both decay to the point of no return, seemingly. Ferny is, of course, not a Hobbit. He is one of the Big People from Bree, a man who has invaded the Shire and is bullying hobbits on Saruman's/Sharkey's orders. But most readers agree Bill Ferny, although not small in stature, is nevertheless a very minor character indeed.

At the beginning of *LOTR*, Lobelia, whose name means 'spider lady', is a liar, petty thief, and real-estate hoarder. But at novel's end, when she emerges from the Lockholes on Frodo's arm, she is suddenly "popular" for having stood up alone to the Chief's Big Men, almost before anybody. In the holograph drafts of *LOTR* at Marquette University, one reads that Tolkien made Lobelia blame herself out loud for her son's murder. "She never got over the news of poor Cosimo's murder and she said that was her fault[3]."

There are at least eight holograph drafts of the first page of 'The Grey Havens'. As the name Cosimo has not yet been changed to Lotho, this draft is quite early. Lobelia is finally redeemed morally by defying Sharkey's Ruffians with her umbrella — the same one she used to try to steal "several small (but rather valuable) articles" right after Bilbo had left the Shire for good. As for her having done hard time in the Lockholes, not only does she appear "very old and thin", but evidently she has had time to think about her greed and mendacity, to the extent that, in the drafts, she blames herself for her son's murder. Lobelia Sackville-Baggins dies at around 100 years of age, having given Bag End back to Frodo, and most of her fortune to help Hobbits displaced and despoiled by Sharkey's men's occupation of the Shire.

In contrast to the aged Lobelia, whose redemption and death give readers a sense of closure in her case, poor Fredegar or 'Fatty' Bolger is not let off so easily. Unlike Lobelia, he is not old, so he is not afforded the release she is by dying soon after Frodo's return. Fatty's two worst character flaws are gluttony and cowardice. On the first score, Fatty Bolger is not made the butt of as many fat jokes in *LOTR* as Bombur was in *The Hobbit*, but clearly one of his character flaws appears in his obesity. In Chapter 5, 'A Conspiracy Unmasked', Fatty eats heartily, especially the coveted bacon-and-mushroom dish prepared by Mrs Maggot, until "even Fatty Bolger heaved a sigh of content". Then he objects to the other four as they discuss their plans, "But you won't have any luck in the Old Forest … I am more afraid of the Old Forest than of anything I know about". Halting at the gate out of the Shire and into The Old Forest, Fatty declares: "Goodbye, Frodo! … I wish you were not going into the Forest. I only hope you will not need rescuing before the day is out. But good luck to you — today and every day!"

Each of Fatty's actions in Chapter 11, 'A Knife in the Dark' — fleeing the Black Riders, running through Buckland, raising the Horn Call — is humorous because of how fast he must move despite how portly he is. His flight is intelligent: posing as Frodo, indeed wearing Frodo's clothes, has brought the forces of Mordor down on Fatty Bolger, first of all Hobbits! His terror is very real — and realistic.

> Fatty Bolger opened the door cautiously and peered out. A feeling of fear had been growing on him all day, and he was unable to rest or go to bed: there was a brooding threat in the restless night-air. As he stared out into the gloom, a black shadow moved under the trees; the gate seemed to open of its own accord and close again without a sound. Terror seized him. He shrank back, and for a moment he stood trembling in the hall.

Obesity and cowardice appear in unexpected places in *LOTR*, not only in the comfortable Shire. In the Barrow, a grave mound, Frodo contemplates abandoning his friends in order to save the Ring. Tolkien wrote, "There is a seed of courage hidden (often deeply, it is true) in the heart of the *fattest* and *most timid* hobbit, waiting for some final and desperate danger to make it grow" (my emphasis). And Fatty's redemption from cowardice and overeating, indeed his weight-loss regimen, is revealed at the end of *LOTR*. He, too, emerges from the Lockholes as Lobelia did, but he must be carried on a litter, "Fatty no longer". He is emaciated from long imprisonment and from having led a band of rebels who have, evidently, functioned like Robin Hood and his merry men. They would come down out of the hills and harass the Chief's Big Men, probably stealing back food and drink that had already been stolen from the Hobbits by the Gatherers and Sharers.

Now here is the linchpin of this entire essay, drawn from the holographs at Marquette University. Although in all the many hand-written drafts of the first page of 'The Grey Havens' Fatty Bolger does not appear juxtaposed directly to Lobelia, he does appear on the first typescript. Tolkien wrote Fatty's emergence from the Lockholes by hand in pencil on the typescript. It is definitely Tolkien's pencil writing. All of this is to say, the juxtaposition of Lobelia S.-B. and Fatty Bolger's development as minor characters is purposely carried out, this late in the composition of *LOTR* — on the typescript[4]! Lobelia's lifelong pursuit of comfortable real-estate and great wealth changes to moral leadership and financial generosity; then, she dies. And Fredegar Bolger goes from being a fearful fat guy to a brave rebel leader who gets starved for his courageous defiance of the murderous bullies.

In Christopher *Tolkien's Sauron Defeated: The History of Middle Earth Volume IX* he writes:

> From this point the text of A, rough but now fully legible, differs chiefly from the final form of the chapter not in what is actually told nor in how it is told but in the absence of several significant features and a good deal of detail that were added in later. For example, while the rescue of Lobelia Sackville-Baggins from the Lockholes in Michel Delving and the disposition of her property is told much as in RK, there is no mention of Fredegar Bolger.

So Christopher Tolkien notes the fact that at this earliest stage of his father's composition of *LOTR*, Fatty Bolger is absent from the first page of 'The Grey Havens', final chapter of the published *LOTR*.

Although the minor characters Lobelia Sackville-Baggins and Fredegar Bolger are redeemed, by the end of *LOTR* Bill Ferny and Ted Sandyman have decayed so far that 'The Scouring of the Shire' includes the disposal of them. Ferny is sent packing by Merry Brandybuck — but not before the other Bill, the pony, kicks him. "He went off with a yelp into the night and was never heard of again". And in 'Scouring' Ted Sandyman has begun to speak the language of Mordor — orc talk in fact: "Garn!"

Both Ted Sandyman and Bill Ferny are lost souls. However, in *Sauron Defeated* Christopher Tolkien demonstrates that his father believed even the Ruffians could be redeemed. Christopher Tolkien deciphers for readers a very old, edited-out passage in which his father asserted just this belief:

> It was some time before the last ruffians were hunted out. And oddly enough, little though the hobbits were inclined to believe it, quite a number turned out to be far from incurable.

No, the Hobbits of the Shire did not invite the former Ruffians who had honestly turned over a new leaf, to live with them, to settle down within the Shire. The Shire even in these earliest drafts did not feature coexistence and tolerance between Big and Little Folk as at Bree. Christopher Tolkien continues to decipher this passage:

> If they gave themselves up they were kindly treated, and fed (for they were usually half-starved after hiding in the woods), and then shown to the borders. This sort were Dunlanders, not orc-men/half breeds . . .

The initial Sharkey in these oldest drafts was not Saruman, but just such an orc-man, an Uruk-hai chieftan, whom the early-draft Frodo runs through with Sting. I found Christopher Tolkien's deciphering these two holograph pages at Marquette in his *The History of Middle Earth*, to be indispensable.

Neither Sharkey the orc-man nor the redeemed Dunlanders (not yet Dunlendings) make it into the published *LOTR*. Ferny and Sandyman do, of course, but are never morally redeemed as far as we readers know. Sandyman spits, cusses like an orc, boasts of his reliance on (the now dead) Lotho, and winds a warning horn to alert the Chief's Big Men — by that time also dead, captured or expelled — to the presence of four armed, dashing Hobbits. Merry Brandybuck scours the Shire in the case of Ted Sandyman, too. Merry counters Sandyman's horn blowing.

> 'Save your breath!' laughed Merry. 'I've a better.' Then lifting up his silver horn he winded it, and its clear call rang over the Hill.

Then, Ted is never mentioned again in either 'The Scouring of the Shire' or 'The Grey Havens'. Ted Sandyman does not even afford readers the closure given to the hopeless Bill Ferny in that stock line "He … was never heard of again."

Sam, whose low-class origins have been much discussed, fittingly utters the last word on Ferny and Sandyman, beings of both low class and low morals. "'Neat work, Bill,' said Sam, meaning the pony" after Bill the Pony kicks his former owner, Bill. And in regards to Ted Sandyman, Sam Gamgee's antagonist, Sam declares "I shan't call it the end, till we've cleaned up the mess". This mess includes the horror that Bag End has become. But Sam also means the ecological mess made of the whole Shire by Saruman and his minions — which mess includes Ted's worst crime against the Shire: its literal defoliation. Before blowing his horn, Ted taunts Sam for shedding tears over the wanton destruction of the Party Tree, and Ted has probably burned many of the most beautiful trees to feed the fires of Lotho's Mill, a mechanical nightmare that is turning "the Shire into a desert". Sandyman has unwittingly imitated his true master — Saruman, not Lotho. Saruman is guilty of war crimes, not only against the peoples of Rohan and the Shire, but against nature itself. We readers would do well never to forget what Quickbeam called Saruman: "the tree-killer". Finally, the lack of a war crimes trial to deal with collaborators, implies the insignificance of Sandyman. He simply drops out of *LOTR*. So even at the bitter end, the Ur-fantasy novel, *The Lord of the Rings*, cannot report all characters redeemed. How, ahem, realistic!

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3. Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the RIngs* holograph, Marquette University 3/8/18/23 (Series 3, Box 8, Folder 18, Page 23).
4. Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the RIngs* typescript, Marquette University 3/8/34/1a

The poetic C. S. Lewis

COLIN DURIEZ

> Poetry … is a little incarnation, giving body to what had been before invisible and inaudible. (C. S. Lewis[1])

A poetic sensibility is fundamental to C. S. Lewis's writings, but there is a history and development to it, as he once revealed in a letter:

> The imaginative man in me is older, more continuously operative, and in that sense more basic than either the religious writer or the critic. It was he who made me first attempt (with little success) to be a poet. It was he who, in response to the poetry of others, made me a critic, and, in defence of that response, sometimes a critical controversialist. It was he who after my conversion led me to embody my religious belief in symbolical or mythopoeic forms, ranging from *Screwtape* to a kind of theological science-fiction. And it was, of course, he who has brought me, in the last few years to write a series of Narnian stories for children; not asking what children want and then endeavouring to adapt myself (this was not needed) but because the fairy-tale was the genre best fitted for what I wanted to say[2].

A key point in this history is Lewis's dual conversion, first to theism (in 1929) and then to Christian belief (in 1931), in the second of which his close friend J. R. R. Tolkien, a devout Roman Catholic, played an important part. Tolkien placed his basic arguments in a poem addressed to the pre-Christian, sceptical Lewis, entitled *Mythopoeia* (the making of myth). In this he praises history's storytellers and mythmakers, as vehicles of truth and hope about the Universe and its creator.

> Blessed are the legend-makers with their rhyme
> of things not found within recorded time …
> They have seen Death and ultimate defeat,
> and yet they would not in despair retreat,
> but oft to victory have turned the lyre
> and kindled hearts with legendary fire,
> illuminating Now and dark Hath-been
> with light of suns as yet by no man seen[3].

Tolkien also spoke to Lewis of the New Testament Gospel narratives[4]. His argument persuaded Lewis that he needed to respond to them imaginatively — as he had done readily to Old Norse, Celtic and Classical mythology — as well as intellectually. The Gospels, Tolkien suggested, had all the qualities found in myth and great story, with the astounding unique factor that they record events which, in fact, happened in history. They are rooted in time and place. Tolkien essentially drew Lewis into an old book at a time when what he called his 'chronological snobbery' — his imbibing of the modernist myth of progress — had been deconstructed by another and mutual friend, Owen Barfield. Lewis had already realized that reading old books was necessary to counteract imbalances and distortions created by the modern view. Soon Tolkien and he would embark on projects to rehabilitate an older view.

A striking and characteristic feature of the writings of that older and increasingly lost world, particularly prior to what Lewis came to see as the post-Christian West, was its embodiment of at least traces of an original unitary consciousness in the human being (an idea from Owen Barfield that captivated both Lewis and Tolkien). As someone who had a very strong ambition to be a major poet before his conversions at the age of 31 and 33, Lewis recognized that with changes in consciousness, leading to a characteristically modern mentality, the very nature of poetry had changed. In an essay on Edmund Spenser in 1954, Lewis wrote:

> The general quality of *The Faerie Queene* is so highly poetic that it has earned Spenser the name of 'the poet's poet'. But if we examine the texture of the language line by line we may think that it is sometimes flat and very little distinguished from that of prose. … The truth is that Spenser belongs to an older school. In the earliest times theology, science, history, fiction, singing, instrumental music, and dancing were all a single activity. Traces of this can still be found in Greek poetry. Then the different arts which had once all been elements of *poesis* developed and became more different from one another, and drew apart (the enormous gains and losses of this process perhaps equal one another). Poetry became more and more unlike prose. It is now so unlike it that the number of those who can read it is hardly greater than the number of those who write it[5].

It could be argued that C. S. Lewis also, as much as it is possible for a twentieth-century person, belonged to an older school, an older world, where his heart lay. His concerns with, as he put it, "symbolical or mythopoeic forms" in his writing was directly related to his conversion, and his increasing preoccupation with an older consciousness, which was highlighted for him by the increasing separation of poetry and prose, and dramatically spotlighted by modernism in poetry. Ruefully he claimed, in his inaugural lecture upon taking up the new Cambridge Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature in 1954:

> I do not see how anyone can doubt that modern poetry is not only a greater novelty than any other 'new poetry' but new in a new way, almost in a new dimension[6].

He pointed out elsewhere the unprecedented difficulty of conceiving of evening, as T. S. Eliot wished his readers to, as a patient on an operating table[7]. Modern poetry sought originality, rejecting what he called 'stock responses' to experience — rejecting, that is, a kind of decorum of the imagination. In the old view, goodness and truth are full of light; evil and

falsehood are a shadow world. Deity and worship are associated with height. Virtue is linked with loveliness. Love is constant and sweet, death bitter and endurance praiseworthy. "In my opinion," Lewis writes, "such deliberate organisation is one of the first necessities of human life, and one of the main functions of art is to assist it. All that we describe as constancy in love or friendship, as loyalty in political life, or, in general, as perseverance — all sold virtue and stable pleasure — depends on organising chosen attitudes and maintaining them against the eternal flux"[8]. Lewis uses such stock and archetypal symbolism in the Narnian Chronicles — for instance, the lush valley world of Narnia is an indicator of its spiritual health. It faces dangers from the north of cold (the White Witch) and, from the south, of heat, in the form of the warlike Calormenes (*calor* of course is Latin for 'heat'). This Mappa Mundi echoes that of Lewis's first fiction, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, where its Everyman, John, must stick to the straight central path to avoid the demonic dangers from north and south. The hazards embodied allegorically in that story pertain to Lewis's intellectual climate at the end of the 1920s, and still have a great deal of relevance today.

When Lewis's poetry is read, it often seems excessively modelled on older poetry, both in form and content, at times veering towards pastiche. To describe it one needs the vocabulary of traditional rhymes and metres, such as rhyme royal, the Spencerian stanza, the alliterative metre, tetrameters, pentameters, iambs and trochees. Don W. King spells out Lewis's 'lifelong fascination with prosody' in his stud, *C. S. Lewis, Poet: The Legacy of his Poetic Impulse*.

The distinguished poet Ruth Pitter[9] became a friend of C. S. Lewis, and, although admiring some of his verse, recognized that his true poetry resided in his poetic prose, and struggled to articulate why this was so. She mused in her journal on their correspondence about each other's poetry[10]:

> Did his great learning, a really staggering skill in verse inhibit the poetry? … He had a great stock of the makings of a poet: strong visual memory, strong recollections of childhood: desperately strong yearnings for lost Paradise & hoped heaven ('sweet desire'): not least a strong primitive intuition of the diabolical (not merely the horrific). In fact his whole life was oriented & motivated by an almost uniquely-persisting *child's* sense of glory and of nightmare. The adult events were received into a medium still as pliable as wax, wide open to the glory, and equally vulnerable, with a man's strength to feel it all, and a great scholar's & writer's skills to express and to interpret. It is almost as though the adult disciplines, notably the techniques of his verse, had largely inhibited his poetry, which is perhaps, after all, most evident in his prose. I think he wanted to be a poet more than anything. Time will show. But if it was *magic* he was after, he achieved this sufficiently elsewhere.

There is no doubt that Lewis is a significant minor poet. His first volume of poetry was published in March 1919, when he was 20, some of it reflecting his experience of the First World War (he arrived at the trenches around his nineteenth birthday and was severely wounded a few months later by the shards of a shell that killed a friend standing beside him). In 1926, a long narrative poem, *Dymer*, was published that, like the earlier book, was shaped by unbelief in Christianity. Indeed that rejected faith was lumped together with all forms of supernaturalism, including spiritism, whereas the poem favoured a form of this-worldly philosophical idealism.

> Old Theomagia, Demonology,
> Cabbala, Chemic Magic, Book of the Dead,
> Damning Hermetic rolls that none may see
> Save the already damned—such grubs are bred
> From minds that lose the Spirit and seek instead
> For spirits in the dust of dead men's error,
> Buying the joys of dream with dreamland terror[11].

Soon after his conversion to Christian faith in 1931, Lewis turned to fiction that was fantasy, allegory or parable — the symbolical or mythopoeic focus he mentioned in my earlier quotation. Less than two years later, in 1933, he published his contemporary take on Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress — The Pilgrim's Regress* — a philosophical allegory of the modern zeitgeist endued with themes that would prove to be characteristic of his writings — such as the quest for joy and a recognition of spiritual cosmic warfare between good and evil. His science-fiction trilogy, the first volume of which was published in 1938, started as a wager with Tolkien to write fantasy for adults, rescuing it from being relegated simply to children's literature. A tossed coin between the two of them resulted in Lewis writing a tale of space travel and Tolkien of time — in the latter case, an effort which, though abandoned, did lead to *The Lord of the Rings*. During the war years — a prolific period of publication for Lewis — he produced the bestselling *The Screwtape Letters*, and *The Great Divorce*, as well as the second and third in his science-fiction series, *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* appeared in 1950, with the other Narnian Chronicles coming out annually until 1956. Also in 1956, *Till We Have Faces* appeared, a novel of great maturity which retells the myth of Cupid and Psyche as a precursor of the Christian Gospel story when, for Lewis, myth became historical fact.

It is into these books that Lewis most found expression for his 'poetic impulse', as Don W. King calls it. There is also, however, poetic prose embedded in more discursive works, such as essays and popular philosophical theology such as *The Problem of Pain*, *Miracles*, *A Grief Observed* and *Letters to Malcolm*. King, in a major study of Lewis, the poet, believes:

> In *A Grief Observed*, Lewis works through his grief [at losing his wife, Joy Davidman] to a new understanding and a renewed faith; it is his free verse lament for Joy, himself, and his understanding of God.

Perelandra and *A Grief Observed* suggest Lewis's propensity toward poetic prose. Other of Lewis's prose works, including

Mere Christianity, *The Problem of Pain*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, as well as others, demonstrate similar poetic elements, though not as extended nor marked as these[12].

The thinking behind Lewis's symbolic and mythopoeic fiction was often shaped in the context of his friendship with Tolkien, and is greatly concerned with the art of narrative, the nature of story, the function of myth and the foundational place metaphor has in our thinking and language, including in scientific theory and philosophical abstraction. As a writer, not merely a theorist and critic, Lewis had at the heart of his concern a desire to create meaning, to capture qualities or states in fiction. Such a desire resulted from and was accomplished by his poetic sensibility — what he called the fundamental 'imaginative man' in his make-up. Lewis champions the imagination as the organ of meaning, involved in all human knowledge of reality; for him the imagination provides a sensing, perceiving, feeling knowledge that is objective but personal. A human facility with metaphor is a condition of winning truth. Typically, Lewis states: "a man who says heaven and thinks of the visible sky is pretty sure to mean more than the man who tells us that heaven is a state of mind" ('Bluspels and Flalansferes' in his book *Rehabilitations*, 1939).

Lewis held that elements of fantasy, fiction and poetry are embedded, by necessity, in all human language and thinking. He distinguished reason and imagination, and truth and meaning. A concern he shared with Tolkien and other friends was to embody the qualitative, or what in thought is general and abstract, in literary form while retaining the integrity and reality of these extra-literary qualities. Tolkien for instance embodied the perilous journey and the heroic quest in his *The Lord of the Rings*. Lewis made the quality of joy or *sehnsucht* incarnate in his fiction, particularly in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, *Till We Have Faces* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, but also in his non-fiction, such as his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*. Such universal, archetypal or symbolic elements in a successful narrative are rooted in the concrete and particular nature of the story or account. At times, a principle that seems contradictory or paradoxical as an abstraction (such as the relation of divine providence to free human agency) can work satisfactorily, organically and integrally in a fictional narrative. In this, there was for Lewis and Tolkien a fascinating parallel with history (the most successful marriage of the general and the particular, they believed, being the incarnation of Christ — when myth become fact, as Lewis expressed it).

In his book *Planet Narnia*, Michael Ward[13] reveals how the medieval world model that Lewis loved so much is incarnate in the seven Narnian Chronicles. Ward argues that a particular astrological planet exists in each of the seven as a quality or atmosphere. The Sun, for instance is particularly represented in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*. The voyagers head east towards the sunrise, gold (the metal of the sun) tempts Eustace and provides the curse on Deathwater Island, and light takes on a numinous quality as the adventurers approach World's End and Aslan's Country. In achieving this correspondence, Lewis goes further than in

his science-fiction trilogy, which only fully represents two of the planets — Mars and Venus — in its splendid re-envisioning of the medieval cosmos. In *Out of the Silent Planet*, as Ransom lay contemplating the stars, planets and galaxies through the spacecraft's window, "he found it night by night more difficult to disbelieve in old astrology: almost he felt, wholly he imagined, 'sweet influence' pouring or even stabbing into his surrendered body"[4].

Don W. King observes that *Perelandra*, the second of the space trilogy, is the most poetic of all Lewis's prose writings. He demonstrates how the poet Ruth Pitter, with Lewis's approval, turned part of the concluding section of the book into Spenserian stanzas. This concerns the gods, whom Lewis has revealed as ruling angelic beings, using such a familiar category without losing their splendour and imaginative power over readers. Although the gods are difficult for human eyes to see, Ransom on the planet Perelandra, or Venus as it is known to us, hears their voices and those of the new humans of that planet speaking of the Great Dance of the Universe. Ruth Pitter found the prose of this section of the book particularly conducive to poetry, as William Wordsworth before found with his sister Dorothy's journals, or, recently Ruth Padel found with Charles Darwin's letters and other prose in her verse biography[15]. Here is an example of Pitter's adaptation that Lewis especially praised. In this example a voice speaks of a tree planted on Thulcandra (Earth, the silent planet) bearing fruit in the world of Perelandra, with its new Adam and new Eve.

C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra*:

> The Tree was planted in that world but the fruit has ripened in this. The fountain that sprang with mingled blood and life in the Dark World, flows here with life only. We have passed the first cataracts, and from here onward the stream flows deep and turns in the direction of the sea. This is the Morning Star which He promised to those who conquer; this is the centre of worlds. Till now all has waited. But now the trumpet has sounded and the army is on the move. Blessed be He![16]

Ruth Pitter, stanza IX:

> The Tree was planted in that world, but here
> The ripened fruit hangs in the heaven high:
> Both blood and life run from the Fountain there,
> Here it runs Life alone. We have passed by
> The first strong rapids: the deep waters ply
> On a new course toward the distant sea.
> Till now, all has but waited. In the sky
> There hangs the promised star, and piercingly
> The trumpet sounds: the army marches. Blest be He![17]

In essence, Lewis's quest to embody poetic, symbolic and, at its height, mythopoeic meaning in his prose took precedence over poetry in his post-conversion writing. Although he continued to write and to publish poems (in periodicals such as *The Cambridge Review*, *The Spectator*, *Punch*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Time and Tide* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*), he no longer integrated his work around an attempt to become established as a poet, even a major one. Instead, the quest to capture the real and the tangible as qualities or states attainable in imaginative writing — so much so that the reader's very experience could be enlarged — possessed him. He wished to enact a necessarily limited kind of 'little incarnation' following the model of the period when, he believed, myth became fact at a real historical moment in the first century, and just before[18].

In *Perelandra*, Lewis's fictional self in the story recalls a remark to Ransom after the return of the latter from Venus, concerning the difficulty of telling his story:

> I […] had incautiously said, 'Of course I realise it's all rather too vague for you to put into words,' when he took me up rather sharply, for such a patient man, by saying, 'On the contrary, it is words that are vague. The reason why the thing can't be expressed is that it's too definite for language'[19].

In his prose writings, particularly his 'symbolical and mythopoeic' fiction, Lewis put his whole self into the quest for the 'thing,' for the real — into its capture in words. This was his wider vision of what poetry as *poiema* is, as he attempted to rehabilitate an old and lost view. As his friend Tolkien put it to him, in words in the poem, Mythopoeia that helped in his conversion in 1931: "We make still by the law in which we're made"[3].

Colin Duriez' book *J. R. R. Tolkien: The Making of a Legend*, is published by Lion books. This paper was first given at the Poetry and Belief Conference, UCLAN, Preston, 2009.

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4. We learn this from Lewis's letters, his essay 'Myth Became Fact' and Tolkien's essay 'On Fairy Stories', which contain many of the ideas apparently discussed. See my *J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis: The Story of their Friendship* 53–59 (Sutton Publishing, 2003).
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'That sickle of the heavenly field': celestial motifs in *The Lay of Leithian*

KRISTINE LARSEN

As a number of authors have demonstrated, there are myriad astronomical allusions in the legendarium, from Tolkien's use of the phases of the Moon to synchronize the chronology of *The Lord of the Rings*, to Earendil as the apparition of the planet Venus (the Morning and Evening Star). This article focuses on astronomical allusions in one particular set of Tolkien's writings, namely the various versions of the tale of Beren and Lúthien. The goal is to whet the reader's appetite for Tolkien's accurate and artistic use of astronomical allusion in his poetry, and invite the reader to seek out similar references whenever one reads Tolkien's works.

Most readers of Tolkien are first introduced to the love story of Beren and Lúthien Tinuviel in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when Aragorn sings of their meeting. As he recounts (in *The Fellowship of the Ring*):

> And in the glade a light was seen
> Of stars in shadow shimmering.
> Tinúviel was dancing there
> To music of a pipe unseen,
> And light of stars was in her hair,
> And in her raiment glimmering …

After Beren sees her through the hemlock trees,

> … forth he hastened, strong and fleet,
> And grasped at moonbeams glistening …
> He sought her ever, wandering far
> Where leaves of years were thickly strewn,
> By light of moon and ray of star
> In frosty heavens shivering.
> Her mantle glinted in the moon,

Finally he catches up to her and calls her by name, and

> As Beren looked into her eyes
> Within the shadows of her hair,
> The trembling starlight of the skies
> He saw there mirrored shimmering.

Readers who move on to *The Silmarillion*, and make it past the creation of the universe and the fall of the Noldor to Chapter 19 learn the details of the tale of Beren and Lúthien. The narrator of the tale explains that:

> It is told in the 'Lay of Leithian' that Beren came stumbling into Doriath grey and bowed. … But wandering in the summer in the woods of Neldoreth he came upon Lúthien, daughter of Thingol and Melian, at a time of evening under moonrise, as she danced upon the unfading grass. … Blue was her raiment as the unclouded heaven, but her eyes were grey as the starlit evening; her mantle was sewn with golden flowers, but her hair was dark as the shadows of twilight. As the light upon the leaves of trees, as the voice of clear waters, as the stars above the mists of the world, such was her glory and her loveliness.

Beren, struck dumb, wanders in the woods for some time, and when he finally catches up to her in the spring he hears her singing "as the song of the lark that rises from the gates of night and pours its voice among the dying stars, seeing the sun behind the walls of world". He finds his voice, calls out to her, and the rest, as they say, is history.

After Beren is captured by Sauron and thrown into the pit, Lúthien comes to his aid, and sings a song "no walls of stone could hinder. Beren heard, and he thought that he dreamed; for the stars shone above him and he sang a song of challenge that he had made in praise of the Seven Stars, the Sickle of the Valar that Varda hung above the North as a sign for the fall of Morgoth. Then all strength left him and he fell down into the darkness." As we all know, Lúthien rescues Beren, they eventually steal one of the Silmarils from Morgoth's crown, Beren dies, un-dies, and he and Lúthien live somewhat happily for some time after before both dying.

Readers of the various *History of Middle-earth* volumes are treated to multiple prose and poetic versions of this famous tale, and learn how central these astronomical motifs are to Tolkien's story. For example, in the earliest extant version, found in *Book of Lost Tales Part 2*, Tinúviel, the daughter of Tinwelint, dances to the music of her brother Dairon every night under the moonlight. Beren comes upon her "dancing in the twilight" with her bare feet "twinkling among the hemlock-stems". Beren is seen by Dairon when the full Moon illuminates his face, and Tinuviel is warned by her brother to run. Instead she hides among the flora, and "she looked in her white raiment like a splatter of moonlight shimmering through the leaves upon the floor". When Beren touches her she runs, and he thereafter searches for her "by dawn and dusk … but ever more hopefully when the moon shone bright". He does find her one moonlit night, as she allows herself to be seen "for long her fear had departed by reason of the wistful hunger of his face lit by the moonlight". As the character of Sauron is still in development here, the scene with the song of the Sickle of Varda is not present in this first version, but it is an early addition to the lengthy poetic lay versions of the tale.

As Christopher Tolkien notes in his commentary: "The story of Beren's coming upon Tinuviel in the moonlit glade in its earliest recorded form was never changed in its central

image." Therefore the astronomical motifs are central to the tale from its earliest forms, and reach their pinnacle in the development of the poetic *Lay of Leithian* (composed during the period 1925–31). In actuality, there are far too many astronomical references in the *Lay of Leithian* to discuss in total here, so I will instead merely focus on several important examples.

In version B of the *Lay*, Beren's flight from Morgoth's allies (before he sees Lúthien) reads as follows:

> The Moon that looked amid the mist
> upon the pines, the wind that hissed
> among the heather and the fern
> found him no more. The stars that burn
> about the North with silver fire
> in frosty airs, the Burning Briar
> that Men did name in days long gone,
> were set behind his back, and shone
> o'er land and lake and darkened hill

In the earlier version A of the *Lay*, the Big Dipper is described as follows:

> About the North with silver flame
> In frosty airs, that men did name
> Timbridhil in the days long gone,
> He set behind his back, and shone
> That sickle of the heavenly field
> That Bridhil Queen of stars did wield
> O'er land and lake and darkened hill

Having the Big Dipper behind his back is consistent with the fact that he is fleeing "the friendless North one autumn night". Not only does the fact that the Big Dipper is behind him inform the reader that he is turning his back on the North, but is also descriptive of autumn, for in this season, the Big Dipper lies low across the northern horizon in the evening. This is also consistent with the description of the Big Dipper as the "Burning Briar" in the first quotation, a name that Christopher Tolkien admitted in his commentary that he could "cast no light at all on". In an article published in *Mallorn* (43, 49–52; 2005) I suggested that the name "Burning Briar", meaning both a burning bush and a burning pipe, depending on the context, describes the Big Dipper as seen with a red aurora in it, an event more likely when the asterism is low in the sky as it is in autumn.

Returning to the fundamental astronomical motifs of the story of Beren and Lúthien, we read of Beren's first glimpse of Lúthien in the *Lay*:

> In sunshine and in sheen of moon,
> With silken robe and silver shoon
> The daughter of the deathless queen
> Now danced on the undying green,
> Half elven-fair and half divine;
> And when the stars began to shine
> Unseen but near a piping woke …

Lúthien is described as dancing to the music of Dairon from sunset on this summer day, when "the moon was yet behind the hill" and continued as the moon "uprisen slow, and round, and white" shone upon her ivory skin. At this point she began to sing

> A song of nightingales she learned
> And with her elvish magic turned
> To such bewildering delight
> The moon hung moveless in the night

Rather than only being meant literally (as a reference to her powers of enchantment), this may also be a reference to the fact that the full moon of summer takes a lower path across the sky, and indeed will seem to be "uprisen slow" and move in a rather leisurely manner across the sky. This is when Beren comes upon her:

> He gazed, and as he gazed her hair
> Within its cloudy web did snare
> The silver moonbeams sifting white
> Between the leaves, and glinting bright
> The tremulous starlight of the skies
> Was caught and mirrored in her eyes.

Beren moves towards her, and Dairon spies him, "a shadow in the moon's pale flame" and Dairon urges Lúthien to flee. She does so, and as in the original prose version of the tale, hides in the hemlocks and the wild roses in her hair "glimmering there/ all lay like splattered moonlight hoar/ in gleaming pools upon the floor". Afterwards Beren often saw her dancing "on moonlit night" until one night in spring he ran and called to her, naming her Tinuviel, and finally kissing her (and sealing both their fates). Christopher Tolkien notes in his commentary "there are many things that derive from the Tale of Tinuviel" including "the moon rising" and "her hiding under the hemlocks *like splattered moonlight*". The motifs of moonlight and starlight are afterwards repeated throughout the *Lay* (as the careful reader will note).

The Big Dipper returns as an important symbol in Beren's life when Lúthien seeks to rescue him from Thu's (Sauron's) dungeon. Here Beren dreams of singing

> Old songs of battle in the North,
> Of breathless deeds, of marching forth
> To dare uncounted odds and break
> Great powers, and towers, and strong walls shake;
> And over all the silver fire
> That once Men named the Burning Briar,
> The Seven Stars that Varda set
> About the North, were burning yet,
> A light in darkness, hope in woe,
> The emblem vast of Morgoth's foe.

Christopher Tolkien notes that the lines cited above are the "first suggestion of the idea that Varda set the Seven

Stars in the sky as an emblem of hope against Morgoth", these lines having been written (according to Christopher Tolkien) on 1–6 April 1928. This predates by two years the following description of Varda's creation of the Big Dipper which is found in the Quenta:

> And high above the North, a challenge unto Morgoth, she set the crown of Seven mighty Stars to swing, the emblem of the Gods, and sign of Morgoth's doom. Many names have these been called; but in the old days of the North both Elves and Men called them the Burning Briar, and some the Sickle of the Gods.

The Big Dipper is referenced again in the *Lay*, when Lúthien heals Beren of an arrow shot by Feanor's sons:

> Then sprang about the darkened North
> The Sickle of the Gods, and forth
> Each star there stared in stony night
> Radiant, glistening cold and white.
>
> But on the ground there is a glow,
> A spark of red that leaps below:
> Under woven boughs beside a fire
> Of crackling wood and sputtering briar
> There Beren lies in drowsing deep

Note the use of briar to reference a burning bush in this case, an interesting play on the reference to the Big Dipper, here called the Sickle of the Gods.

In Tolkien's poetry, as in his prose, we see him paying considerable attention to astronomical artistry and realism, reflecting both his own astronomical knowledge, and what one could expect from the educated reader of his day. However, given the overall decrease of common astronomical knowledge and experience in stargazing found in Western culture today (at least in part due to the rampant light pollution of the modern world), these references in Tolkien's works are becoming increasingly obscure to his audience.

Kristine Larsen is an astronomer and Tolkienist.

A recollection of Tolkien: Canon Gerard Hanlon

DANIEL HELEN AND MORGAN THOMSEN

With the surge in popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* in the 1960s, particularly with its widespread success in America, Tolkien fandom came into its own. But although Tolkien was content that his book had been so well received, he did not understand why people caused such a fuss about him. He found the American cult reaction somewhat perplexing, but the 'Frodo Lives' and 'Gandalf for President' lapel badges did not nearly bother him as much as the continual stream of visitors to his house, the requests for interviews from journalists, or the inconsiderate times at which his fans would make telephone calls. 76 Sandfield Road no longer held the promise of the peace and quiet that the professor and his wife needed. Indeed the house was too large for the elderly Tolkien and Edith to keep up with all the housework. Therefore in 1968 they decided to leave Oxford and move to a bungalow in Poole, near Bournemouth.

The move was imminent when, on the afternoon of 17 June, Tolkien injured his leg in a fall as he was running down the stairs. He was picked up off the floor and taken to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, where even the hospital staff were in awe of his presence. That evening he met a young priest, Father (now Canon) Gerard Hanlon, who had been ordained not long previously on 18 March 1967, and who was serving as a curate at a parish in Headington, Oxford. He was also the Roman Catholic chaplain to the Nuffield and it was under these circumstances that Canon Hanlon came to meet J. R. R. Tolkien. Daniel Helen asked Canon Hanlon for his recollections.

Before you first met J. R. R. Tolkien, what did you know about him? Had you read any of his books?

Well, not a great deal. While I was a student at Oscott [St Mary's College, Oscott, is a Roman Catholic seminary in the Archdiocese of Birmingham], Tolkien was the thing to read and those who did that sort of thing read it. I must confess I tried but got nowhere with it, so I didn't bother. But he was certainly one of the cult people to read in those times.

When did you first meet Tolkien?

I was a curate in a parish in Headington in Oxford, and I was the chaplain to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital, which was a pleasant job. I met him one evening, I think it was the day he arrived, in the hospital. He had a poorly knee and he'd come to have it put right. There was a great commotion, he was in the private ward, and there was a great commotion at the end of the ward. So I enquired of the sister, 'Who's that?'

She said, 'That's Professor Tolkien,' in a hallowed tone.

And I said, 'Oh, he's one of mine!' So I went down to see him after all the herds of people had gone and we had a little chat. I asked, 'Would you like Holy Communion, professor?'

And he said, 'Oh, yes please.' And that was the beginning of our very short relationship.

The first night he was there I think I started the

conversation by saying, 'You're popular tonight, professor.'

And he said, 'Yes!'

At the middle of the conversation he asked me, 'Have you read any of my books?'

And I said, 'I could lie my way out of that one, professor, but I read a hundred pages of the first one and couldn't understand head or tail of it! So I gave up.'

'Good for you!' he said, 'at least you're an honest young man. You know, there are so many people I've met who you know haven't read my books but they're so, you know, "oh of course, you're wonderful." They haven't read the first page, but you're honest!'

'Thank God for that!' I said.

How often did you meet?

Because I liked him he had Holy Communion most mornings, about four or five times during the week. I couldn't do it on Sundays or at weekends, of course. [Note that Canon Hanlon did not celebrate Mass with Tolkien; it was a Communion service.]

What was it like giving Holy Communion to Tolkien?

Well, he was a very pious gentleman, but it was one of the most amusing things in my life. I started the service, as we could in those days, in English, to give him Holy Communion and he automatically responded in Latin. So I stopped halfway through and said, 'Excuse me, professor, are you the Emeritus Professor of English?'

'I am, I am father, yes,' he said.

So I asked, 'Well why are you speaking Latin?'

'Because I like to pray to God in Latin,' he replied.

How important do you think Tolkien's faith was to him?

Oh, tremendously important. He was a committed Christian and a committed Catholic, and his faith meant everything to him. His faith came from the core of his being. And he didn't lay it on the counter for you and say, 'that's it boys'. But you knew that all the glory that he had meant nothing except his faith.

Did you keep in touch after he left hospital?

Not really, no. I was a chaplain to a hospital. Therefore I saw endless people come in, have their operations and go home again. And soon after he came out of hospital, I think within six months, he had sold his house and moved down to Bournemouth. It was very sad for him, he didn't want to go, but he couldn't stand the pressure.

How do you think Tolkien felt about and dealt with fame?

Well, he hated it, in one sense. He and his wife hated fame because they were lovely simple people, in the real sense of the word 'simple'. Do you know how his books came to be written? They were bedtime stories; he said to me, 'My children, thank God, they were so acute that they would very quickly stop me the following evening and say, "Dad, we had that bit last night!"'. So rather than fall into that trap every night, he wrote it all down on scraps of paper so he had the papers to follow. And bit by bit all these scraps of paper amounted on his desk and it was that that formed the bedrock of his novels.

So it was something for themselves, as I was saying, being written on scraps of paper for his children. The papers were all collected and before long the first of the books came out, and the American television people loved him. I think he enjoyed the finished product but I think basically he hated all that went with it. Oxford is the city of the sweeping spires — even now [Oxford is known as the 'city of the dreaming spires', after a line from Matthew Arnold's poem *Thyrsis*]. So you get what it's like forty/forty-five years ago. This sort of thing wasn't akin to the intellectual world of the day, but he had to live with it.

What put him off, and his wife particularly, was that he couldn't do anything in public. As soon as he came out of his lodgings, in the college (I don't know where he was), but as soon as he came out of the college there was an American helicopter hovering as low as it would dare so they could film him every time he walked A to B, or B to C or whatever. He knew he was being filmed and he hated that.

What was your overall impression of Tolkien?

I was just delighted to meet him. It was wonderful to see a man in so much of the world, was a man of immense dignity and power and erudition. It was lovely to see the man at his very core, which was a very simple, happy, a lovely marriage, lovely couple. But sadly, at the end, driven from his beloved Oxford because they couldn't cope with the publicity. It was very sad in many ways, but he was a stoic old man so I think he settled into wherever he went to quite well. And after that, of course, I lost touch with him. Although, of course, he had a priest who, I think it was his youngest son, who was a priest of the Birmingham diocese, so every time we bumped into each other I used to enquire how he was and

all the rest of it. [Canon Hanlon is here referring to the eldest of Tolkien's four children, Father John Francis Reuel Tolkien (1917–2003), who was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in February 1946.] Three weeks of a most enjoyable relationship ended very quickly.

I was blessed by having the ability to meet him because he was such a nice, nice man. You could sense the depth of the man. He was very deep in his religion and his faith, as well as in his own subject matter. He really was a major player, but like all good major players it's always good to point at the boy next door and say, 'well, follow him, he's better than me'. It's a wonderful attitude. If it was me, I would be taking all they could offer, put it in the bank straight away! But that wasn't his style. He was a lovely man.

Commentary

Canon Hanlon's recollection reflects much of what is already known about Tolkien. This is worth commenting on, but there are also some points of detail which need to be considered and clarified.

The liturgical reforms of the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960s permitted the use of the vernacular in religious services. Canon Hanlon was not alone in noticing Tolkien's continued use of the old Latin responses. In the 1992 documentary *J.R.R.T.: A Film Portrait of J.R.R. Tolkien* (1992), Father John Tolkien said of his father's faith:

> It's one of those things that if you have something like that you can't sort of say particularly where it comes out, I think. It pervaded all his thinking and beliefs and everything else. So I think he was very much, always the Christian. And [he] didn't like the changes in the Church. He opposed them all. And, of course, he very strongly couldn't see any point in abandoning Latin because he spoke Latin. And he had his little, his tiny little missal, which he'd always had. I don't know how long he had it. I have it actually. He used to struggle using the Latin missal with the English Mass.

In an article for *The Mail on Sunday*, Simon Tolkien also recalled a similar experience:

> I vividly remember going to church with him in Bournemouth. He was a devout Roman Catholic and it was soon after the Church had changed the liturgy from Latin to English. My Grandfather obviously didn't agree with this and made all the responses very loudly in Latin while the rest of the congregation answered in English. I found the whole experience quite excruciating, but my Grandfather was oblivious. He simply had to do what he believed to be right.
>
> Simon Tolkien, 'My Grandfather', *The Mail on Sunday* 58–59 (23 February 2003)

Canon Hanlon's comments also raise the interesting question of how Tolkien's 'books came to be written'. Studies into the development of the writing of *The Hobbit* have found that it is too simplistic to say that it emerged directly from Tolkien making notes while telling 'bedtime stories' to his children, but it certainly played an important part. Based on Michael Tolkien's recollection, Christopher Tolkien has written a corroborating account from his father's telling of what became *The Hobbit*:

> I was greatly concerned with petty consistency as the story unfolded, and that on one occasion I interrupted: 'Last time, you said Bilbo's front door was blue, and you said Thorin had a golden tassel on his hood, but you've just said that Bilbo's front door was green and that Thorin's hood was silver', at which my father muttered 'Damn the boy', and then strode across the room to his desk to make a note.
>
> Foreword to *The Hobbit*, 50th anniversary edn, vi–vii (Unwin Hyman, 1987).

Based on the scant and sometimes conflicting evidence, detailed analyses of how (and when) *The Hobbit* came into being have been offered by Douglas A. Anderson (see *J. R. R. Tolkien, The Annotated Hobbit* Revised and Expanded Edition, ed. D. A. Anderson, pp. 2–12), Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull (see C. Scull and W. G. Hammond *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide: Reader's Guide* pp. 386–388), and John D. Rateliff (see J. D. Rateliff *The History of The Hobbit: Part One: Mr. Baggins* pp. xi-xx).

The final point that needs to be addressed is the notion that an American news helicopter stalked Tolkien as he went about his daily life in Oxford. Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull have commented that "it seems odd that an American news crew would hire a helicopter to film Tolkien in that way, the cost would have been substantial compared with the news value" (private correspondence). Instead Canon Hanlon is more likely to be referring to one particular incident; a helicopter was used by the BBC for *Tolkien in Oxford*, which was recorded 5–9 February 1968. Tolkien mentioned this in a letter to Donald Swann: "I was not lifted up in a helicopter, though I am surprised one was not substituted for an eagle" (Letter 301). Therefore it is possible that Canon Hanlon has conflated the story of this helicopter (and Tolkien's aversion for *Tolkien in Oxford*) with Tolkien's dislike of the American cult reaction to his works.

Given the brief time that they knew each other, it is striking how much of an impression Tolkien left on Canon Hanlon. Even though much of what Hanlon recalled has long been known, this insight offers a small but interesting perspective of Tolkien in his later life. We can see a man whose good nature and beliefs persevered as he struggled to understand the trappings of literary success. His lifelong commitment to his Catholic faith shines through, a "faith [which] came from the core of his being".

Daniel Helen is a British Tolkienist and editor of the *Tolkien Gateway* website. **Morgan Thomsen** is a Swedish Tolkien enthusiast who runs the Mythoi blog. Together they run the Tolkien Index website. They would like to offer thanks and appreciation to the Very Rev. Canon Gerard Hanlon for agreeing to take part in this interview (conducted in person with Daniel Helen on 14 August 2012). For various comments and suggestions, we thank Shaun Gunner, Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull.

A flying balrog

JIM ALLAN

A Tolkien fan is rereading the Appendices in *The Lord of the Rings* yet another time. Somewhere in the back of the reader's mind are the old problems of *Do Balrogs have Wings?* and *Do Balrogs Actually Fly?* The reader comes across a passage in Appendix A, Section III, Durin's Folk, and for the first time becomes aware of some text that says in black and white that the Moria Balrog can "fly". The reader believes that he or she has found the proof that no-one else has ever noticed and has solved the problem. The text is (with emphasis by me):

> Thus they roused from sleep a thing of terror that, **flying** from Thangorodrim, had lain hidden at the foundations of the earth since the coming of the Host of the West: a Balrog of Morgoth.

The reader excitedly tells a friend of this fantastic news. The friend is surprisingly uninterested. This is old hat. The word flying is not unambiguous in meaning and the passage has been known for years.

Our hero is unconvinced — and wrong. Flying does have more that one meaning. One must prove the case by at least listing all uses of the word flying and fleeing in the main text of *The Lord of the Rings*, and breaking them down by meaning. I list them each in a short quotation, usually a single sentence providing for each as its source the book number from I to VI in Roman numeral, the chapter number, and then the page number in the Allen & Unwin hardcover edition of 1966.

Moving through the air

… there were pillars of coloured fires that rose and turned into eagles, or sailing ships, or a phalanx of **flying** swans; (I, 1, 35)

*There **flying** Elwing came to him,*
and flame was in the darkness lit; (II, 1, 247)

Away in the South a dark patch appeared, and grew, and drove north like **flying** smoke in the wind. (II, 3, 298)

Flocks of birds, **flying** at great speed, were wheeling and circling, and traversing all the land as if they were searching for something; and they were steadily drawing nearer. (II, 3, 298)

'Regiments of black crows are **flying** over all the land between the Mountains and the Greyflood,' he said. (II, 3, 298)

I have also glimpsed many hawks **flying** high up in the sky. (II, 3, 298)

Later as the sun was setting, and the Company was stirring and getting ready to start again, he descried a dark spot against the fading light: a great bird high and far off, now wheeling, now **flying** on slowly southwards. (II, 9, 401)

He seems to be **flying** now away, from this land back to the North. (III, 2, 25)

It wheeled and went north, **flying** at a speed greater than any wind of Middle-earth. (III, 11, 201)

Looking up they saw the clouds breaking and shredding; and then high in the south the moon glimmered out, riding in the **flying** wrack. (IV, 2, 237)

Then Frodo and Sam staring at the sky, breathing deeply of the fresher air, saw it come: a small cloud **flying** from the accursed hills; a black shadow loosed from Mordor; a vast shape winged and ominous. (IV, 2, 237)

They were very small to look at, yet he knew, somehow, that they were huge, with a vast stretch of pinion, **flying** at a great height. (IV, 3, 253)

Yet the same, or another like to it, a **flying** darkness in the shape of a monstrous bird, passed over Edoras that morning, and all men were shaken with fear. (V, 3, 66)

Even as the Nazgûl had swerved aside from the onset of the White Rider, there came **flying** a deadly dart, and Faramir, as he held at bay a mounted champion of Harad, had fallen to the earth. (V, 4, 94)

The **flying** rain had ceased for a time, and the sun gleamed up above; but all the lower city was still wrapped in a smouldering reek. (V, 8, 134)

Gulls! They are **flying** far inland. (V, 9, 149)

I think this place is being watched. I can't explain it, but well: it feels to me as if one of those foul **flying** Riders was about, up in the blackness where he can't be seen. (VI, 1, 189)

To the Sea, to the Sea! The white gulls are crying,
*The wind is blowing, and the white foam is **flying**.* (VI, 4, 234)

And before the Sun had fallen far from the noon out of the East there came a great Eagle **flying**, and he bore tidings beyond hope from the Lords of the West, crying: (VI, 5, 241)

Hair in the wind

There on the hill-brow she stood beckoning to them: her hair was **flying** loose, and as it caught the sun it shone and shimmered. (I, 8, 146)

He was blowing a great horn, and his yellow hair was **flying** in the wind. (III, 6, 116)

Moving swiftly over the ground

*He heard there oft the **flying** sound*
Of feet as light as linden-leaves, (I, 11, 204)

It was answered; and to the dismay of Frodo and his friends out from the trees and rocks away on the left four other Riders came **flying**. (I, 12, 225)

Gandalf came **flying** down the steps and fell to the ground in the midst of the Company. (II, 5, 340)

Over the plains Shadowfax was **flying**, needing no urging and no guidance. (III, 11, 201)

And out of the darkness the answering neigh of other horses came; and presently the thudding of hoofs was heard, and three riders swept up and passed like **flying** ghosts in the moon and vanished into the West. (V, 1, 20)

Fleeing

He had suddenly realized that **flying** from the Shire would mean more painful partings than merely saying farewell to the familiar comforts of Bag End. (I, 2, 73)

I am **flying** from deadly peril into deadly peril. (I, 5, 114)

But it is no good **flying** blindly this way with the pursuit just behind. (II, 5, 338)

Even as Aragorn and Boromir came **flying** back, the rest of the bridge cracked and fell. (II, 5 345)

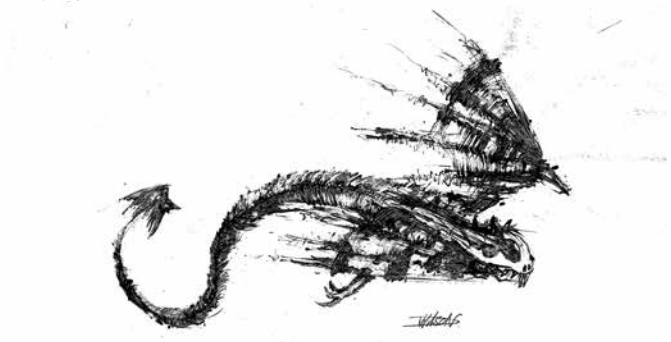
She seemed to be looking inside me and asking me what I would do if she gave me the chance of **flying** back home to the Shire to a nice little hole with-with a bit of garden of my own.(II, 7, 373)

'See! Some of the Southrons have broken from the trap and are **flying** from the road.' (IV, 4, 269)

How Shelob came there, **flying** from ruin, no tale tells, for out of the Dark Years few tales have come. (IV, 9, 332)

Already men were breaking away, **flying** wild and witless here and there, flinging away their weapons, crying out in fear, falling to the ground. (V, 4, 93)

The last word to come from outside the walls was brought by men **flying** down the northward road ere the Gate was shut. (V, 4, 95)



Men are **flying** from the walls and leaving them unmanned. (V, 4, 98)

Men **flying** back from the burning passed him, and some seeing his livery turned and shouted, but he paid no heed. (V, 4, 101)

Well nigh all the northern half of the Pelennor was overrun, and there camps were blazing, orcs were **flying** towards the River like herds before the hunters; and the Rohirrim went hither and thither at their will. (V, 6, 114)

Ere that dark day ended none of the enemy were left to resist us all were drowned, or were **flying** south in the hope to find their own lands upon foot. (V, 9, 152)

Out of the turret-door the smaller orc came **flying**. (VI, 1, 182)

The Captains bowed their heads; and when they looked up again, behold! their enemies were **flying** and the power of Mordor was scattering like dust in the wind. (VI, 4, 227)

Weird metaphor

A short way beyond the way-meeting, after another steep incline, a **flying** bridge of stone leapt over the chasm and bore the road across into the tumbled slopes and glens of the Morgai.(VI,2,193)

The word 'fleeing'

I do not know what they are about: possibly there is some trouble away south from which they are **fleeing**; but I think they are spying out the land. I have also glimpsed many hawks flying high up in the sky. (II, 3, 298)

We do not serve the Power of the Black Land far away, but neither are we yet at open war with him; and if you are **fleeing** from him, then you had best leave this land. (III, 2, 35)

And this also: it would seem by the signs that they were **fleeing** *westward* when they fell. (V, 5, 109)

Reckless we rode among our **fleeing** foes, driving them like leaves, until we came to the shore. (V, 9, 152)

The word *flying* is used to mean 'moving through the air' 19 times, more than any other single meaning, but the word *flying* is used 20 times to mean either 'fleeing' or 'moving swiftly over the ground'. Usage is no help in interpreting the Balrog passage, which remains ambiguous. Our fan might try to argue that Tolkien in the Appendices was generally using more modern language than in his literary text. But this is only special pleading as the text of this portion of the Appendix A, in fact, is written as though adapted from an older document.

Jim Allan is editor of *An Introduction to Elvish: and to Other Tongues and Proper Names and Writing Systems of the Third Age of the Western Lands of Middle-earth as Set Forth in the Published Writings of Professor John Ronald Reuel Tolkien*. He lives in Glenfinnan, Scotland.

RoChelle

MARK RIDGE

Halloween 1967

I was at my cabin by Kentucky Lake in Tennessee in 1997 trying to write and get my relationship with my wife straight in my head when a diary from my old childhood friend, Michael, arrived by special courier. As I sat in the glare of a single light, reading through his adventures, I came across an entry about a time in our youth long forgotten.

From the Diary of Michael J. Bear

Sometimes, friends keep secrets from each other. You and Jase, I am sure, both kept secrets from me. There are just some things that are so personal we cannot help but want to keep them to ourselves. Although Jase was with me for the beginning of this story I never told him, or anyone else, what happened to me later. Hopefully, when you read this, my good friend, you will forgive me, my selfishness, and understand my reasons for remaining silent all these years.

It all began Halloween night in 1967. Jase and I had been out most of the night soaping windows and rolling yards like most teenagers did back then. Just good harmless fun. It was nearing ten o'clock when we found ourselves on Main Street passing by the Nelson Estate. You remember, the estate where that elderly woman lived who we all thought was a witch. Well, as we walked along the sidewalk, thankfully hidden from sight by the tall shrubberies, we heard a lot of racket coming from the mansion.

"What the heck you thin' they're doing up in there tonight?" Jase said, and I thought, a little nervously.

"How should I know?" I may have sounded harsher than I should have, but Jase didn't seem to notice.

"Cause your family is 'o part of that society, that's why."

It's funny how people with money are always thought of as being a part of High Society by people with almost no money, but to tell the truth, there are levels, and then there are secret levels, within High Society. Besides, Old Missus Nelson belonged to that portion of High Society that had no dealings what-so-ever with small timers like my parents. And as far as I knew, Missus Nelson never had dealings with anyone in Noble, being what people call a recluse.

"Jase, just because somebody has money, doesn't mean they get invitations to parties given by people like Missus Nelson. She belongs to the elite. I doubt anyone in Noble is wealthy enough to receive invitations to her parties."

Naturally, this made Jase scratch his head. Remember how he used to do that every time he encountered something he could not comprehend? He would get this highly confused look on his face, and scratch his head.

Anyway, after a moment he says, "Let's git a peek up in thar," reverting to his thick eastern Kentucky accent.

Heck, it was early, so I figured, why not have some real excitement for a change? Man, I wish you had been there. Maybe … but that is the past after all is it not? We are both older now and, after everything we have encountered over the years, wise enough to admit things we could not in our youth.

You know, I never could understand why, if old Missus Nelson had so much money, she never built a wall up around her property. There were just those eight-foot-high bushes that ran along the sidewalk on Main Street, down Center Street, and around the far side and back of the house. As we made our way through one of the little tunnelled openings in the bushes, I thought about the castle where Sleeping Beauty lived surrounded by her thorn bushes, and wondered if Missus Nelson had some young maiden held captive in that spiral tower on the north side of the mansion.

"Sure is a lot of commotion going on. Must be sum big ole party tonight," Jase said, as we lay on the Bermuda grass just beyond the bush line. "Look at all them cars." He whistled low.

"Dang," I whispered, "you notice anything weird about those cars?"

"Nawp." Then he spat and said, "Unless you be talkin' 'bout how theys all black."

"Yeah. Don't you think that's a bit odd? I mean, every guest arriving in a black car?" I was beginning to get one of those spooky feelings you're always going on about.

"Don' rightly know, bud." Jase was watching with fascination as the line of black cars cycled up the paved driveway as they were guided to parking slots in the yard.

I figured if a good rain sprung up that Missus Nelson would have one heck of a messy yard come morning. But the night, as you will remember, was clear. So clear, in fact, that we could see nothing but stars, and that big ole full Moon, hanging right over the top of Missus Nelson's mansion. Or so it seemed.

We stayed there for a long time watching men and women, all dressed in fancy black evening attire, some with capes, exit their cars and stroll up those big stone steps into the mansion. Classical music, Bach, or maybe Wagner, played so loud we could hear it even as far away as we were and there were so many screams and other forms of revelry going on that, in all truth, I felt my hair standing on end. God, I thought I even heard the howl of a couple of wolves.

"Dang! Did you hear that Jase?" I looked over at him. He'd heard. I knew, because his face was white and his eyes looked like they were about to pop out of his head.

"Holy mother in heaven, Michael! What in the world was that?"

"A wolf, I think."

"Maybe it's just a recording playing?" He ventured hopefully, speaking more plainly.

"Maybe." You remember how some people would play those records of spooky sounds at Halloween parties? Well, once we started rationalizing and all, we relaxed a bit. "Yeah.

Has to be a recording."

"Yeah."

Then this man, he must have been six foot or better, walks out onto the veranda into the light and I see he has the whitest face I've ever seen up to that point. His hair was long and black, and his eyes looked red. I say this because, I swear, they glowed! He was dressed in a fancy black tuxedo and cape and carried a black walking stick. Well, he stands there for a bit, scanning the yard as if he is looking for something. I figured there wasn't much he could see what with all those cars and the big old oak and willow trees scattered about with their branches swaying in a breeze that suddenly sprung up.

I looked over at Jase and he was shaking like a leaf in a tornado.

"Look at him, Jase. Now, he is spooky." I whispered, but just barely.

"I think he heard you, man." Jase was scooting backwards into the bushes.

I didn't, at the time, know how he could have; however, he did look in our direction and frown. Then this short woman with bushy brown hair wearing a black dress with what looked like, I'm telling you, silver threads in the form of what I took to be a spider's web comes out a side door. She starts speaking to him, pulling at his arm in a way that suggested, to me, she wanted him to go back inside the house.

As the man complied, the woman turned towards me and winked.

Well, Jase, he about lost it then.

"Wha' the heck was that?" He asked from inside the bushes.

"It was probably just a trick of the light." But I wondered.

After a while, people started coming out and getting into their cars, so I scooted back up inside the bushes with Jase. We watched as the cars, one by one, drove away. When all the guests had departed, I saw all the lights in the mansion start going out, room by room, until only one light up in that tower room was left burning.

Well, Jase, started getting his nerve back and dared me to go up and ring the doorbell.

"Why don't you do it?" I snapped.

"Heck, Michael, what's wrong? No courage?" I thought he was one to talk after the way he'd been shaking most of the night.

"Me? Nothing scares me. I just think if you want to play a trick then you should be the one to do it." I was scared, but was not about to admit that to Jase.

"You run faster than I do," he said, urging me on by stroking my ego.

Now you know as well as I do that Jase was just about the fastest sprinter in our school, besides Sean MacIonorrie. I figured he was just itching to see if I would do it or not. So, I stood up and said, "Fine. If you're such a chicken, I'll do it," I said trotting off towards the nearest oak.

The run from the front door to the bushes I gauged to be around 40 or 50 yards. Five seconds, or so, I figured it would take to close the distance, if my feet didn't betray me and send me tumbling to the ground or smacking into a tree.

Slowly, I made my way from tree to tree until I reached the circular driveway in front of the house. There was this big fountain with three marble angels in the centre pouring water and I ran to it, hunching down below the rim. Peeking around, I saw that everything was still quiet — no people, no sounds and no lights. So I ran and sailed up the steps to the porch. I was breathing heavily, nervous as heck, and sweating. But I gathered my courage and reached out to ring the doorbell.

That's when the heavy oaken French doors flew open and someone grabbed me by the arm!

Jase must have yelled in fright because I heard a high-pitched scream followed by what sounded like feet beating the pavement of the sidewalk out by the bushes. The night was so quiet his feet sounded like sledgehammers hitting cement.

I tried to pull away from who, or whatever, had grabbed me, but their grip was like a steel bear trap around my bicep.

"What do we have here? Rats come nibbling at my door?"

Before I could blink, I was pulled inside and the big doors slammed shut behind me.

You pretty much knew the story up to this point. What happened next is what I have kept secret for all these years. I felt it necessary to refresh your memory, just in case you had forgotten.

Once inside, whoever had a hold of me shut the doors and threw on the light in the foyer. I was so busy struggling and trying to get free that I didn't pay attention to anything else. Then I heard a voice, like clear water coursing down a brook, say, "Relax. You're not in any trouble."

Well, I stopped fighting and looked at my captor. She was beautiful, the kind of woman who inspired the term 'drop-dead gorgeous'. I found myself looking into the eyes of a girl not much older than we were then, with long blonde/white hair that hung in twisting curls down to her waist. But her eyes were even more amazing! Not only were they beautiful, they really did sparkle. They were large, round and bluer than any blue I have ever seen. She let me go and crossed her arms, giving me a look I took to be either approval or annoyance. It was hard to say because of those mystical eyes, and the tiny smile dancing across her full, come-give-me-a-kiss lips.

I was completely mesmerized by her stare that didn't waver. She didn't even blink. She just stood there looking at me, and waiting. Well, I was getting fairly nervous after a couple of minutes, so I finally said, "Look, we only meant to play a harmless prank. You know how it is being Halloween and all."

Her smile widened and she nodded. "Oh yes. It is Halloween isn't it."

She ran her short brown fingers through her hair and let out a laugh that kind of thrilled but scared me all at the same time. Her nails were long and pointed, and painted with a high gloss black polish that reflected the modest light from the lamps.

"Well, I suppose such pranks on this, special night, should

be expected. However," she moved her head ever so slightly so I could see her nice firm neck with smooth brown skin, "no one has been brave enough to disturb my solitude before. Especially, on Halloween."

I swallowed hard, part in fear, part in a rising pressure that was throbbing in my jeans, and part in wonder. My eyes just could not stop taking in her beauty. She was my height and slim, but with really nice pretty breasts that weren't too small or too big. The mid-length black dress she wore had this low cut front that gave me a really good view of her smooth round brown cleavage, and she was wearing a black choker studded with diamonds, that enhanced her natural beauty. The longer I stood there looking at her, the more nervous I became. And you know I don't really get nervous around girls. She must have sensed my feelings because she smiled and laughed again.

"Perhaps we should go into the parlour where you might be more comfortable."

I think my leg was shaking like yours was that night we had dinner with Sabon. She turned, ever so slightly, and seemed to actually float through an archway into the parlour where a fire was crackling away in the fireplace. As she passed me, a bit close I might add, I smelled the sweet scent of peonies on her. Watching her walk with her back to me, her slim hips swaying evenly made my leg twitch more as I hobbled after her.

"Sit, please."

She was sitting on a black velvet divan with her legs crossed, as she indicated a big over-stuffed black leather chair. Wow, she had really nice legs. Slim, athletic and well-toned. I could see they were bare because they were the same shade of light brown as her face and hands, and were smooth, and I thought must feel like satin. On her feet were black patent leather pumps with three-inch heels that had rubies on the buckles. I made an adjustment as I sat, feeling my face turn red.

"Tea?" She asked, as I sat uneasily on the edge of the cushions.

"Umm, sure."

She leaned over and poured me a cup of tea from a silver teakettle that was sitting on the coffee table. The black china cup and saucer she handed me were delicate, and I knew that the entire set must have cost a fortune — a lot more expensive than anything my parents had — which didn't make me feel any more relaxed because I was afraid I would drop and break them. The tea was sweet and hot, with just the hint of a spice I could not identify. As I drank, it coursed through my body making me feel a little tingly.

There wasn't much light in the room, but I could see that it was decorated in an Old Gothic style. In addition, there were suits of armour, weapons of all kinds — swords, axes, lances, maces, shields —from Roman to Medieval European, and Asian bamboo armour from the Ming Dynasty. I knew about such things because I read so much about ancient weaponry and such. The walls were covered with paintings by Van Gogh, da Vinci, Lippi, Dali and several by Rossetti. However, all the themes in the paintings were Gothic in nature, which I thought was a bit strange. There was even a huge German tapestry depicting the hunt and slaughter of, all things, vampires. And one, especially disturbing painting, depicting a beautiful gypsy being ravished by an extremely menacing werewolf. In all truth, I half expected to see a coffin, but didn't.

"How do you like my collection?" She said casually as I gazed around. "Most of the items are rare and one of a kind. As I'm sure you've noticed."

She was beginning to get spookier. I had the idea she could read my mind, then thought, *heck, most people in town know about my research concerning the occult and ancient philosophies, and my perfect memory. Why wouldn't the elite gentry?* I figured she probably knew who I was, and was pulling my leg about the house being hers, probably to teach me a lesson about respecting one's privacy by trying to give me a good scare. Heck, I knew there was no way she could be Missus Nelson.

Then she tilted her head back and laughed, and I shivered. Man, she had shiny white teeth that were perfect, and I mean, perfectly even, except for the canines that I thought were a tad long. Every second I gazed at her, I saw more details that really made my blood pump. I was torn between fear and excitement. So I drank more tea hoping it would relax me a little more. The tea cup vibrated on the saucer as I set it back down.

"Now," she bit her bottom lip and studied me critically with those ever shifting swirls of blue enhanced by black eyeliner and the lightest of blue eye shadow, "what am I to do with you? Hmmm."

I choked on the tea. *Holy cow,* I thought, *she is a witch, or a vampire, and is going to eat me.* Naturally, about as soon as that thought raced through my mind, I knew it wasn't true. She just looked far too young to be Missus Nelson, *but*, I reminded myself, *she did call it her house*. It was about that time that my nervousness abated and I entered my, serious mode. *Bunk*, I thought, *there are no such things as witches, vampires or werewolves. She is just paying me back with a prank of her own, trying to make me think she's Missus Nelson. She's probably some relative or visitor. Those teeth are probably porcelain, she certainly has enough money, whoever she is, to afford such elaborate props.*

"Umm, I did apologize, ma'am, and you did say earlier that I wasn't in any trouble." I tried to make an appeal to reason, hoping she wouldn't call my parents.

"RoChelle, please, and yes, I did say that, but I just can't decide." She was eyeing me pretty closely, so I grabbed my heart and stuffed it back into my chest.

"Decide?" I asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yeees," she drew out her vowels and consonants like Sabon used to when she wanted to emphasize something, "whether or not you're … worthy."

You remember how it was when you were 16 and making out with a pretty girl, and you just knew by the way she kissed and moved that you were about to get laid? Well, that's how I felt.

Sighing, she stood up, and wiggled her fingers at me.

"Come with me please."

I gulped. When I took hold of her hand, a warm excited feeling rushed through my body. Her hand was soft, and cool, but strong. We laced our fingers together and proceeded out of the parlour, down the front hall to a stairway I just knew had to lead to that tower room.

We walked up a dark spiral staircase that emptied out into a circular room painted black. The only piece of furniture in it was this huge black walnut canopy bed with black sheets and several large pillows in black cases. The light came from a giant chandelier made of silver in the design of a pentagram. There were holders on each star point containing long black candles, slowly burning. As I walked into the room, I smelled the thick aroma of cinnamon.

RoChelle turned down the sheets then stood before me, smiling. I was in awe and stunned as she slipped out of her shoes, dropped her dress to her ankles, and slowly stepped out of it. A more exquisite female form I had never, and never have since, seen. Her muscles were firm and tight and her skin was super smooth, not a single imperfection whatso-ever! It was all I could do to contain myself. Just so you know, in a situation like that, reciting mathematical equations in your head helps.

She slipped beneath the sheets and motioned for me to join her.

I'll spare you the details, suffice to say, she did things to me that helped stave off any premature reactions, for hours. How long, I can't say for sure, but the sun was rising by the time we'd finished.

"Okay, it is time for you to leave."

She kissed me, ever so delicately, and walked me to the door.

"One night," she said, opening the door for me, "is all I can give you. But, I trust it has been one you'll remember."

She had that right.

Naturally, I wasn't going to let her get away so easily, so for several days after that night I went by the estate hoping to get a glimpse of her, but I never did. The only person I did see was old Missus Nelson out working in the yard with the flowers or walking along the veranda, her long white hair hanging down in waves past her waist.

I figured that RoChelle must have been a relative or something, and had only been visiting, so I gave up looking for her. But one day in April, when I was passing by, Missus Nelson was near the front entrance planting some peonies and roses by the side of the drive. Her hair was rolled up under this big wide-brimmed straw hat and she was wearing a black dress that revealed enough to show me that she really wasn't as old as we'd all thought. I figured she was around 40 or so, because her face was rather smooth and brown. Truthfully, she probably could have passed for a woman in her late twenties.

As I walked past, eyeing her with curiosity, she looked me, and I thought I saw her blue eyes sparkling as she winked.

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The view from the dark tower: a heresy

LYNN FOREST-HILL

The lord of the Dark Tower sat at leisure on his iron throne. Things were progressing well. A further alliance had been formed with the barbarians of the south, and thanks to the meddling of the blue emissaries of the West, some of the eastern potentates were ready to send men to be trained under the supervision of the Tower. Recognizing her master's complacent mood, his cat prowled serenely out of the shadows and across the black marble floor to stand at his feet looking up expectantly. Her fangs shone red in the light of his scrutiny and she did not quail.

"Ah, Portia," he said to her. "I have been thinking about you. How are your shape-shifting powers?" She demonstrated how easily she could transform from her usual size — able to curl up on his large lap, into a tiny form that could slip into a fold of his cloak, or any cloak, without being noticed. "There's my clever cat!" he told her as she shifted back to her usual size. He bent and stroked her striped fur. She tolerated the hand that fed her, that had taken her from her mother's lair and raised her. "I have a plan that has nothing to do with alliances and battles," he said thoughtfully. "It requires your skills, and you will be my messenger." Portia indicated that she understood, turning her otherwise baleful glance full on his, and awaited instructions.

"An infant is to be born in a distant and hostile land." Portia's fangs seemed to grow longer and redder. "No, no, my pet. Nothing so crude," her master told her. "I want you to take my gift to the unborn infant." She felt his malevolence like a sensation of pressure and the torches burned brighter. He continued: "It shall be a gift that will blight the child's life thereafter, and that of all the fools who may ally with it and set themselves against me. It will continue to work to their harm, no matter what they think they achieve." Portia's eyes glittered, reflecting her master's will.

Far from the Dark Tower, beyond the farthest reaches of its ominous surveillance, under the gloom of sheltering trees in

a dwelling that belied the nobility of its inhabitants, a young woman, fair of face, sat sewing in the light of a bright fire. Gracefully her hands moved across heavy dark green cloth, slowly creating patterns in colours that glowed in the firelight. This was to be a cloak fit for a chieftain. The work was finely detailed and would run as a band along the open edge. It would take many months to complete and demanded concentration, but that was the point of the work. This task kept her hands and her mind occupied while her husband was hunting the enemy in all the wild lands. Although he was the commander of his small band of warriors, they lived little better than outlaws, hiding and moving at need. Their small settlement could not be considered permanent, nor fitting, except that it drew no attention to them. As she stitched methodically the young embroidress pondered, should she take the advice constantly given by their families to move to a place of greater safety now that there was a baby to protect? The longer she left the decision the more danger there would be to the unborn merely in the journey.

The firelight dwindled and her eyes hurt. Her hands, she realized, were growing cold and less nimble. Easing herself carefully from her seat she stood up, stretched, curving her back, and the baby kicked at being disturbed. Patting the unborn bump as if to comfort it she smiled, but at the same moment tears sprang burning into her eyes: "You are safe, little child. Little daughter," she murmured. All the predictions were that she was carrying a son, at which her husband rejoiced, and his followers were glad, but she could not be so glad, when she considered the future and the dangers a son would have to face. So she addressed the unborn as a daughter, as if constant affirmation could make a difference.

There were logs aplenty in the basket by the hearth, and the young woman bent awkwardly to cast some on the fire, sunk now almost to ashes. Sparks flew up from the disturbed embers and she brushed them from the skirts of her russet linen gown. She swept the flurried ash and dust from where it had fallen onto the hearth stone with a long-handled broom that she fetched from its place beside the outer door, being unable to bend enough to use the short-handled hearth brush. She replaced the broom and only then as she turned to go back to her seat and her embroidery did she notice a bright spot in the crib that stood in readiness on the far side of the hearth.

It was a crib of marvellous workmanship, an heirloom of her husband's house, made, so the story went, by an elven craftsman in years so distant that the stars had not yet begun to fade, for an elven princeling, a child of great and terrible lineage. However that might have been, she always thought to herself that it was certainly the most beautiful ancestral bed in which to lay a baby. Its carvings were exquisitely fine and intricate, indeed they were the pattern for her embroidery, and she had worked them in simpler form as embellishments for the soft linen covers newly woven by distant relatives of her husband as gifts for the expected infant. And now a spark from the fire was glowing on the pale grey coverlet!

She hastily took it up and shook it, patted it, shook it again, and as she did so she felt a sting to her left hand "Ouch! A little live ember," she exclaimed, putting the reddening mark to her mouth. "How fortunate I noticed it quickly." She examined the coverlet, fearing that the hole the ember must have made would be beyond repair. But there was no hole. "A virtue of the cloth's rare making," she concluded, and went to lay it back in the crib, and to move the crib a little farther from the fire. A small movement caught her eye as she slid the crib on its fretted rockers. "Shoo, spider!" she laughed, fetching her broom again to sweep it out of the door. But it had disappeared by the time she returned and, having satisfied herself that it was not secreted in the crib, or her embroidery, she sent her love as a wish and a thought to the man she most missed, and sought her empty bed.

The morning came too quickly. She opened her eyes to another dreary, damp day when her back would ache almost as much as her heart. But unusually, she found herself singing softly as she rose, and she patted the bump that had also woken up. "Little warrior! You will need boots as soon as you are born!" she laughed, but no tears came. During the morning an errand-rider came galloping into the settlement. "The men are returning!" he shouted. "Success, success!" Wives and children, sweethearts and parents, left their work to find out more. It was all good news: enemy raiding parties had been routed and destroyed. There would be a time of security, brief maybe, but welcome. "Little child,"murmured the chieftain's young wife, "your father will soon be home, and you will be born in a time of respite. It is a happy day, and a hopeful day!"

Soon after the return of his valiant, victorious father, the child was born, a fine healthy boy, who, everyone said, had an elvish look about him as he lay peacefully sleeping in his crib. His father gave him a suitable name for the nobility of his lineage, but his mother called him 'Hope' because of the time in which he was born, she said. As he grew it was by that name that she would call to him to come in from his games in the forest as the black crows flew off to their roosts.

News of the birth of the infant reached the Dark Tower swiftly. Portia had already reported the successful completion of her mission. "You gave my gift for the child to the chieftain's wife?" her master had demanded. Her red fangs shone again, long and obvious. The news of the naming of the child by his mother confirmed her success. "The fools! The pitiful fools!" her master exulted. "I have given them hope and it shall work slowly, slowly and rot their successes even as they seem most secure. It shall take away their strength and leave them all diminished. It shall prove false and leave them exposed to their own pettiness. In the hour of their triumph, it shall sit in their halls like a spider, shall it not, my Precious?" Again Portia's fangs shone, and the Dark Tower rang with terrible laughter.

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Tolkien fandom and the movies: a highly selective rumination

MAUREEN MANN

"The world is full enough of hurts and mischances without wars to multiply them." With the release of the movie *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (multiply reviewed in this issue) Tolkien's words once again appear apt.

Long anticipated and certainly extensively marketed and advertised, the movie arrived with much hype and many high expectations. It has, unfortunately, renewed the strange pass among Tolkien fans, where some book fans are again objecting to the movie, and some movie fans are once again not caring about what's in the books, and even dedicated book fans are disagreeing quite sharply. Everyone seems unhappy with one other.

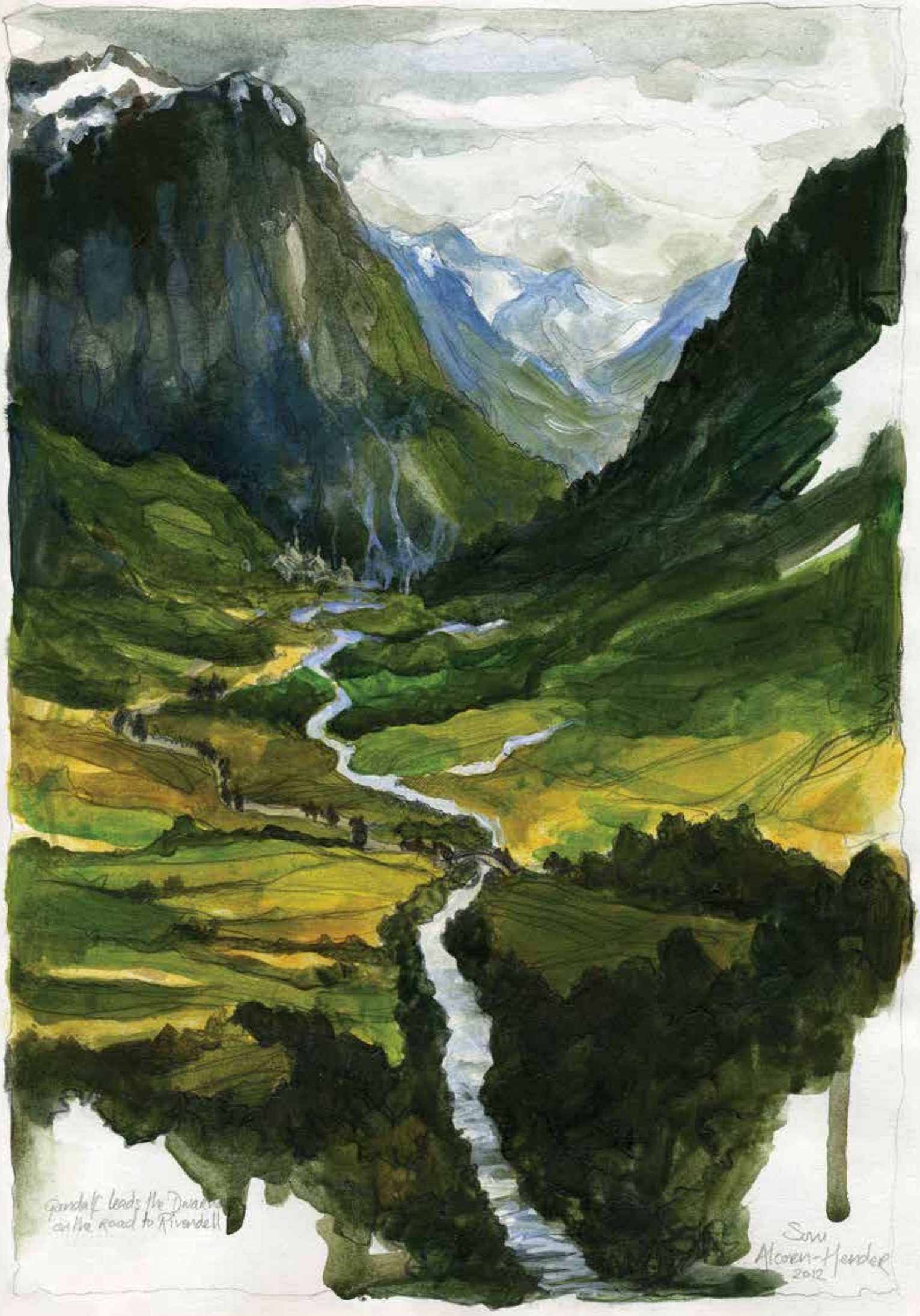
Discussion forums that weathered the first trilogy based on *The Lord of the Rings* have seen previously civil members pitted against one other, as if any criticism of the movies was an assault on the intelligence of members who enjoyed the movie, or any delight in the movies a treasonous act against the original book. Trotted out were old arguments such as Tolkien's authorial intentions and the need for elision in adapting novels. (Very few fans of either the movies or the books seem interested in discussing theories of film adaptation in their argument.)

Somewhat more surprisingly, the latest movie also seems to have engendered a backlash in fans who want to see more of the books on film. I have heard a longtime fan resort to defending the movie and the director by dismissing the work of academic critics (whose analysis allegedly pulls the story apart rather than enhancing it, as the movie does.) More sadly, Tolkien's literary executor, Christopher Tolkien, has come under very sharp and even insulting criticism which questions his legitimate and legal right to refuse to authorize more works for film. An essay on one movie site which was supposed to support Christopher's decision actually spent more words and time articulating movie fans' presumptuous demands, with Christopher, a literary scholar in his own right as well as his father's executor, and someone who grew up intimately involved with the writing of the books, reduced to being merely "a real fan". An impassioned and articulate rebuttal of the particular article spread through the Internet and led to heated discussions on Facebook, blog entries, and much private messaging. Tolkien's Letters were once again quoted as irrevocable divine writ. Words like 'licence' and 'liberty' hung in the air. The rights of individual interpretation were championed along with those of a director's artistic freedom; postmodern relativity got a shake down as well. Lines seemed hardened, with greater hostility towards the movie, which not a few book fans deplored.

It is curious that the delight and happiness that the books have brought to generations of readers have seemingly not been carried through into the movies. They seem to excite animosity both in those who like them and in those who don't. And that, beyond any arguments over interpretation, would probably greatly disappoint J. R. R. Tolkien, who wanted nothing more than for others to share his delight in storytelling.

In the hands of Tolkien, perhaps the enmity would be as humourously debunked as Sir Giles of Ham's battles, but alas I am no Tolkien. All I can do is wonder why it is that the movies turn many on both sides into Lobelia Sackville-Bagginses.

Maureen Mann is a member of the Tolkien Society.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