Mallorn

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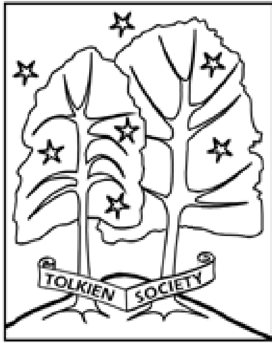

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Issue 57 • Winter 2016

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All enquiries and manuscripts should be sent by email to mallorn@tolkiensociety.org

The Tolkien Society is an international organisation, registered as a charity in England and Wales, dedicated to furthering interest in the life and works of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien CBE (1892–1973). Founded in 1969, Tolkien remains its President in perpetuo and his daughter, Priscilla Tolkien, became its honorary Vice President in 1986. Alongside **Mallorn**, the Society publishes the bimonthly bulletin Amon Hen. In addition to meetings of local groups (known as 'Smials'), the Tolkien Society organises several UK-based events each year: Springmoot (including the AGM and Annual Dinner) in April, the Seminar in July, and Oxonmoot in September. Visit www.tolkiensociety.org for further information.

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Great Literature

Rosalinda (Ro) Haddon
Editor

Critics often disregard the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien and consider them childish, written for children or teens, as fiction, fantasy, fairy tales, or for escapism. Anything but Great Literature. Reading some of the teaching pages or SparkNotes that are rampant on the web claim they are summarizing chapters of Tolkien hoping they are educating readers as to the content of the story. Reading them, I can understand why critics who have never read the books make the claims they do. I often wonder if any of the "instructors" have ever read the books either. They provide a cursory overview of the story with little background and demonstrate even less understanding of the depth and complexity that is Tolkien.

So what is Great Literature? Why don't more Universities teach Tolkien as they would Shakespeare, Melville, Hawthorne, Hemmingway or Salinger? Tolkien's stories certainly contain plot, setting, characterization and theme, all the necessary requirements. Great Literature might also contain expansive language, philosophical discussions, and different styles (Have they read the Council of Elrond?). Some of my colleagues have stated that Great Literature lasts over time and has a large and broad readership. According to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, *The Lord of the Rings* has had nearly one hundred million readers in America alone.

Oh but Lord of the Rings is a fantasy, not real, just a means of temporary escape, it is said. But aren't all books escapist? As readers do we not engage with certain books as if we were part of the story? Do we not see ourselves in every book we read in one way or another? Do we feel the sea spray as we walk the boards of the Pequod as we listen to the ravings of a mad but obsessive captain? Do we not label and tag people because of their color, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or belief system just as Hester Prynne was labeled with her Scarlet letter? Do we not suffer with Santiago as he wrestles with the great fish to take home? Do we not reflect on our very own struggles with family as did Hamlet? Do we not feel guilty at times when we don't apply ourselves and use our assets and talents as did Holden Caulfield?

Do not the journeys of Bilbo and Frodo remind us of our personal journey through life with all the obstacles that we will have to overcome? When we think of Rivendell can we not hear the cascading waters tumbling from the high cliffs or feel the sea breeze as we look out to the west from the Grey Havens? It is a place of repose and reflection. A place where Bilbo could write his Red Book of the Westmarch. A healing place. Do we all not know of such places?

And what about reality? Is Shakespeare real? Is Melville, Hawthorne, Hemmingway or Salinger? Are they not fantasies? Surely they are fiction. In America, most of us read *Hamlet, Moby Dick, The Scarlet Letter, The Old Man and the Sea and the Catcher in the Rye* in high school when we are teenagers. But they are considered Great Literature and yet Tolkien is not. They are considered adventure fiction, romance novels, tragic fiction, but none are listed as teen fantasy. Some consider Tolkien the father of high fantasy because his stories depict an imaginary world, with characters that have an epic nature. There are specific languages, cultures, history and geography. Even so, it is not Great Literature. Why?

Let's not forget nonfiction, particularly biographies. Do we as readers not lose ourselves in reading about people, places and things?

Do we wonder when we are reading about someone's life if we would make the same choices or how it might have been if we lived in a different period of time or place? Do we not dream along with the heroes in books of making something special, making the grand discovery that will change the world. Many of these stories

have become Great Literature. Tolkien is not. At least Tom Shippey considers him the author of the century.

It is said that Great Literature is inspirational. It inspires us to do better for ourselves and the global community, and to apply great concepts in innovative ways. It helps us see the world with a different lens. It helps us question. It helps us contemplate and reflect on what is written and then what is important to us personally. Can anyone deny that Tolkien's works do that? Just look at the articles in this issue. They focus on duality, suicide, creation, language, sorrow, holiness, duality and more. These are all Tolkien inspired. Is this not **Great Literature?**

I am fortunate to live in Middle-earth almost three days a week with my students. They are constantly amazed by the complexity of *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. They often struggle with the depth of the stories and how much they relate to their personal journeys through University and life. They expected simple and childish fantasy. They found meaning and inspiration and much, much more. We rarely discuss the stories. We discuss philosophy, religion, culture, death and deathlessness, good and evil, history, and the creation of Middle-earth with all it entails. They are inspired by the author to write their own stories and to view the world in different ways. They develop a new way of knowing. They contemplate and reflect on the meaning life. Isn't this what the critics claim Great Literature does?

As members of the Tolkien Society, I am probably preaching to the choir, as the saying goes. But when I read articles like the ones in this and past issues of *Mallorn*, I am impressed with just how much we have been and continue to be influenced by J.R.R. Tolkien. I love Great Literature. I also love "living" in and with Middle-earth. I will continue to defend the position that *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* **are** Great Literature, not just for children, but for anyone who wishes to venture out onto the road that goes ever on and on, and out from the door where it began. Great Literature can bring us to live in Middle-earth with all it has to offer and to any reader at any age. I love living in Middle-earth!

Let me know your thoughts about this topic. I'd love to know what you think.

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The Curious Case of Denethor and the Palantír, Once More

TOM SHIPPEY

The suicide of Denethor is one of the most morally significant moments in *The Lord of the Rings*: It is accordingly an important point to determine what we are meant to think actually caused it. In *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* I suggested that it must be Denethor's use of the *palantír*, which enabled him to see Frodo as a prisoner, "in a vision controlled by Sauron".[1] A few years later, in the course of a discussion of the different uses of the *palantíri* made by Tolkien and by Peter Jackson, I went further and wrote: "Surely we are meant to realise that what he has seen in the *palantír* is Frodo … in the hands of Sauron".[2]

There were at least two things wrong with these statements (one each), and they were pointed out by Jessica Yates in her essay "The Curious Case of Denethor and the *Palantír,* in *Mallorn* 47 (Spring 2009, 18, 21-5). Jessica nevertheless accepted the central idea, that it was what he saw in the *palantír* that drove Denethor to suicide. Reviewing Jessica's piece, however, in *Tolkien Studies* 9 (2012), 136, David Bratman suggested that "the entire discussion may be too mechanistic", and furthermore dismissed the whole idea that what Denethor saw in the *palantír* was what caused his suicide as "a (probably mistaken) supposition".

Bratman gives no reason for this dismissal. Since the matter is of considerable importance for the moral interpretation of the whole work, however, I think it is worth going over the evidence, and furthermore taking Jessica's comments and corrections even a stage further.[3] One benefit of this is that (as often) it indicates that Tolkien's conception of events was even subtler, deeper, and more ironic, than I think any of us had realised.

Since it is a contentious matter, however, I will begin with two points which are I believe beyond contention. One is that from the start of *The Two Towers* the characters of the Fellowship are separated into several plotlines, with characters heading off in different directions, recombining and separating again. So much is undeniable.

As undeniable, if not so obvious, is the fact that Tolkien kept close check on the timelines of the separated plots, and added a day-by-day "Chronology" in Appendix B. Tolkien moreover repeatedly showed his characters checking their own chronology and comparing it with others' experience, while he also added careful cross-references between the events which happened in different plot-lines. Limitations on space mean I can give only selected examples of this persistent habit,[4] of which I have counted about forty cases towards the end of Book III, in *The Two Towers*, and especially in the first four chapters of Book V, in *The Return of the King*.

To begin with, the word "ago" is used about 200 times in *The Lord of the Rings*, and just over thirty times, there is a precise count, "x days / night ago." These cluster in the sections just mentioned. They start with Pippin in ch. III/9, "Flotsam and Jetsam". Telling his and Merry's tale to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, he asks, "What day is it?", is told "The fifth of March", counts on his fingers and says they woke up in the orc camp "Only nine days ago" (p. 549).[5] Thereafter characters repeatedly give precise counts, right up to Denethor, who has Boromir's broken horn in his lap when Pippin and Gandalf reach him in Minas Tirith. Denethor says, "I heard it blowing … thirteen days ago" (V/1, pp. 738-9), which is absolutely correct.

Another object which prompts cross-referencing by date is the Red Arrow carried by Hirgon, for which see Pippin's calculation (V/1, p. 731), and eventually Elfhelm's (V/5, p. 817). Moreover, sometimes we have the same event as experienced by people in different plot-lines, such as the lightning flash as the Witch-king breaks the gate of Minas Tirith (V/4, p. 810), heard and seen by Théoden and company on p. 819, V/5, though they do not know what has caused it. In the same way the great cry Gandalf and Pippin hear on p. 837, V/7, is the death of the Nazgûl on p. 824, V/6, heard there by Éowyn and Merry, and by Frodo and Sam on p. 898, VI/2. On this last occasion Tolkien adds a deliberate time-check: "It was the morning of fifteenth March … Théoden lay dying on the Pelennor Fields."

Similarly, it is a critical moment when Ghân-buri-Ghân says "Wind is changing", V/5, p. 817, on the 14th March, and on p. 898 again Sam says – by this time it's the 15th – "the wind's changed. Something's happening. He's not having it all his own way." Another cross-plotline marker is the references to "the Dawnless Day", which is 10th March, noted as Aragorn emerges from the Paths of the Dead (V/2, p. 773), as Merry is woken up to join the Riders (V/3, p. 783), and as Pippin wakes up in Minas Tirith (V/4, p. 788). Finally, there are several explicit connecting references like the one quoted just above, between Pippin and Frodo (V/1, p. 732), between Pippin and Théoden (V/3, p. 774), and between Sam, Aragorn, Merry and Pippin (VI/1, p. 877). On that last occasion Sam wonders if he and Frodo have been forgotten. They have not. No plot line, no character or set of characters is allowed to be forgotten for very long, though this was always a danger in a multi-stranded narration.

In short, Tolkien was clearly working very hard to keep all these plot-strands in line with each other, and to keep reminding us not to fixate on just one, *because events in one affect the others*. It seems to me that since he took so much trouble to draw our attention to the comparative

chronologies, we should respond by doing what he clearly wanted us to do.

Going back, then, to the question, what makes Denethor despair? It seems unmistakable to me, *because of the time-frame so carefully given by Tolkien*, which I now rehearse.

First, Faramir is brought back to Minas Tirith, badly wounded, on 13th March, and we are told that it is rather late in the day, "It drew now to evening by the hour." Denethor then:

> rose and looked on the face of his son and was silent … he himself went up alone into the secret room under the summit of the Tower; and many who looked up thither at that time saw a pale light that gleamed and flickered from the narrow windows for a while, and then flashed and went out. And when Denethor descended again he went to Faramir and sat beside him without speaking, but the face of the Lord was grey, more deathlike than his son's. (V/4, p. 803)

What has Denethor been doing in his secret room, high up? He has been looking in the *palantír*. There have been several hints already that that is what he does, see V/1, pp. 740-41, V/4, p. 801, and Beregond's very suggestive report at V/1, p. 748: "Some say that as he sits alone in his high chamber in the Tower at night … he will at times search even the mind of the Enemy" (V/1, p. 748). Note also Denethor's grey face when he comes down from the Tower. When Aragorn looked in the *palantír* captured from Orthanc, that's what he looked like as well: "Grim was his face, grey-hued and weary" (V/2, p. 761).

I take it as certain then that we are meant to realise that on 13th March Denethor has been looking in the *palantír*. And what has he seen? Again I think the clues are unmistakable. When Pippin tries to cheer him up, he says:

> "The fool's hope has failed. The Enemy has found it, and now his power waxes" (V/4, p. 805)

"Fool's hope" is unambiguous. In the conversation when Faramir reports meeting Frodo and Sam to Denethor and Gandalf (V/4, pp. 795-96), nobody says the word "Ring". Denethor and Gandalf both say "this thing", but Denethor also uses the phrase "fool's hope", by which he means the decision to send the Ring into Mordor. When Pippin asks Gandalf just afterwards if there is any hope for Frodo, he replies, "There never was much hope … Just a fool's hope, as I have been told" (V/4, p. 797).

Denethor further knows that "this thing" is Isildur's Bane. Considerably earlier Gandalf told Pippin that he had given away more in his interrogation by Denethor than he realised: "Denethor has given long thought to the rhyme [in Faramir's dream] and to the words *Isildur's Bane*, since Boromir went away" (V/1, p. 742). There is one scene which makes it absolutely clear that "Isildur's Bane" = the Ring. At the Council of Elrond, Frodo is asked to hold up the Ring, which he does, and Elrond says: "Behold Isildur's Bane!" (II/2, pp. 240-41). Isildur's Bane is mentioned fifteen times in *The Lord of the Rings*, and it *always* means the Ring. And "fool's hope", mentioned only the three times just quoted, *always* means sending Frodo and the Ring into Mordor.[6] So when Denethor says, "The fool's hope has failed", he must mean that sending Frodo to destroy the Ring has failed, and when he says, "The Enemy has found it, and now his power waxes", "it" must mean the Ring. And that is what makes him despair.

So how does he know? It must be a result of looking in the *palantír*. But what has he seen there? Note, Denethor's despair comes on him *late* on 13th March. I repeat that *before* Faramir is brought back wounded, and *before* Denethor retires to his tower, we are told "It drew now to evening by the hour" (V/4, p. 801). At that point, where is Frodo?

The time-scheme with Sam and Frodo is not so clear, because Sam and Frodo are at times literally in the dark. It's said of Sam, quite explicitly:

> even of the days he had quite lost count. He was in a land of darkness where the days of the world seemed forgotten, and where all who entered were forgotten too (VI/1, p. 877)

Sam is wrong, of course, for he and Frodo have not been forgotten at all, and nor have "the days of the world", though one may have to look at Tolkien's "Chronology" to be sure of them. This however says, for the 11th of March, "Gollum visits Shelob, but seeing Frodo asleep nearly repents", and for the 12th, "Gollum leads Frodo into Shelob's lair". The story itself makes matters a little more precise. When Frodo and Sam fall asleep on the Stairs of Cirith Ungol it must be late on the 11th, because Sam later on is not sure whether midnight has passed, asking, "What's the time? Is it today or tomorrow?" Gollum replies, very accurately, "It's tomorrow … or this was tomorrow when hobbits went to sleep" (IV/8, p. 700). So the hobbits fall asleep on the 11th but enter Torech Ungol, Shelob's lair, early on the 12th.

After that matters again become less clear, for when Sam thinks Frodo is dead, he loses consciousness, but he doesn't know how long for (IV/10, p. 714). Later on he collapses a second time outside the gates of Cirith Ungol, and once more:

> "how long he had lain there he did not know … He wondered what the time was. Somewhere between one day and the next, he supposed; but even of the days he had quite lost count" (VI/1, p. 877).

On the same page, however, as Sam sets off to rescue Frodo, we are given the explicit time-check quoted already: "out westward in the world it was drawing to noon upon the 14th day of March" (etc.). So Frodo is in Cirith Ungol as a captive from late on the 12th, or maybe early on the 13th, depending on how long Sam's first period of unconsciousness lasted – the Chronology says, for the 13th, "Frodo captured by the Orcs of Cirith Ungol". He is in captivity until,

very definitely, after noon on the 14th. There can be no doubt, then, that Frodo was a captive at the time Denethor went to look in the *palantír*, which is *late* on the 13th.

I can only conclude, then, that Denethor, using the *palantír* late on the 13th saw Frodo in Cirith Ungol. Denethor then made the same mistake as Sauron before him. Sauron saw Pippin in the Orthanc Stone, assumed he was the hobbit Ring-bearer, and concluded that Saruman had the Ring. Three days later Aragorn deliberately revealed himself to Sauron in the Orthanc Stone, and Sauron concluded, again wrongly, that if Aragorn had the Stone, he must also have the hobbit and the Ring. Gandalf asks himself, on the 11th, what is the cause of Sauron's "haste and fear"? He answers himself, using the characteristic "five days ago" construction, that it must have been Aragorn using the Stone (V/4, p. 797).

Making the same mistake as Sauron, then, Denethor saw Frodo taken prisoner in the Minas Tirith Stone, knew (by putting together what he had heard from Pippin and then from Faramir) that Frodo was the Ring-bearer, and assumed Sauron had the Ring, not knowing – how could he? – that Sam had taken it.

And that is why he despaired. The critical sentences are, obviously, "The fool's hope has failed. The Enemy has found it."

Bratman finds this supposition "probably incorrect". I can only guess at why he thinks that, but two possibilities (pointed out by Jessica) are these. One is that we are told that Denethor looked again in the *palantír* before he died and saw there the Black Fleet approaching (V/7, p. 835). Moreover it's clear that Denethor thinks Faramir is beyond cure and means them to die together (V/4, p. 807, V/7, pp. 834-5). Both these could be taken to have *reinforced* Denethor's decision to commit suicide, but they do *not* account for "The fool's hope has failed. He has found it." And it is just *before* Denethor says those words that it seems to Pippin "as if something had snapped in [Denethor's] proud will". So, it's what happens late on March 13th, not early on March 15th, that makes Denethor lose his nerve.

I turn now to the things Jessica has indicated, quite rightly, as *certainly* incorrect in what I wrote years ago. Briefly, I wrote that Denethor must have seen Frodo "in the hands of Sauron", in "a vision controlled by Sauron". As Jessica has shown, both those statements must be wrong.

First, Frodo was not "in the hands of Sauron", only in the hands of the orcs. And they have not had time to communicate with Sauron, for several reasons. They may presumably have started off by obeying their orders as reported by Shagrat (IV/10, p. 723), but almost the first thing they discover is Frodo's immensely valuable *mithril* coat, and they fall to fighting over it, as reported by Snaga and Shagrat himself (VI/1, p. 885). We know also that the Nazgûl are elsewhere. Furthermore, Sauron at that point is distracted, by the appearance of Aragorn and the build-up to the Battle of the Pelennor Fields on the 15th. In the course of her valuable discussion of Tolkien's drafts, Jessica quotes Tolkien's note to himself in *The Treason of Isengard* (p. 437), "Sauron is busy with war and it takes time for messages to reach him." As a clincher, one has to agree with Jessica (p. 22 of her article) that if Sauron knew a hobbit had been captured trying to enter Mordor he would have taken drastic action – sending a Nazgûl for him, strengthening the guard on Frodo. None of which he did.

Frodo therefore was never "in the hands of Sauron". It seems clear then that neither was Denethor's vision "controlled by Sauron", as I again wrongly proposed. But here one should consider further what we know about *palantíri*, both from *Lord of the Rings* (esp. III/11, pp. 583-4), and from the essay in *Unfinished Tales*, pp. 403-11, of which Jessica made valuable use.

First, there is some element of direction in the *palantíri*. They respond to the user's will, though that will may have to be imposed. Using it furthermore is a strain for anyone, see Aragorn's remark(V/2, p. 763).The essay in *Unfinished Tales* tells us also that, "A viewer could by his will cause the vision of the Stone to *concentrate* on some point, on or near its direct line" (p. 410). The process however, was "very tiring [and] was only undertaken when information was urgently desired" (p. 411). This, presumably, is what Denethor has done. Perturbed by what Faramir has told him, he has looked east and then *concentrated* on the Tower of Cirith Ungol. In other words, Sauron did not send Denethor the vision of Frodo to mislead him, because, as Jessica says (p. 21, my emphasis), "*Sauron did not know Frodo was captured*." Rather, Denethor's vision was self-directed, and he was self-deluded.

Or at least he was *on that particular occasion*, for Gandalf tells us there was some long-term element of control by Sauron over Denethor: "he saw … only those things which that power permitted him to see" (V/7, p. 838). Gandalf suspects that the same has been true of Saruman, whose use of the Stone led increasingly to his domination by Sauron, see IV/11, pp. 583-4. But the Frodo vision, which in my view and Jessica's is the direct cause of Denethor's suicide, was Denethor's own responsibility.

One further thing we know about *palantíri* is that there is in them an element of thought-reading. Gandalf comments again that: "Saruman certainly looked in the Stone since the orc-raid, and more of his secret thought, I do not doubt, has been read than he intended" (III/11, p. 585). A point that Jessica makes is that this means the Minas Tirith Stone was a potential security risk. If Denethor knew about the plan to send Frodo to the Cracks of Doom (which he did), and he was in the habit of wrestling mentally with Sauron (as Beregond believes he was), then every time Denethor used the Stone there was a risk of having his mind read and so betraying the most secret plan of the Western allies to the Enemy.

Jessica accordingly argues that Gandalf showed "extreme negligence in allowing Denethor to know about the quest" (p. 23. I think that this judgement is harsh. Gandalf did not *allow* Denethor to know about the quest, Denethor worked it out for himself (a) by interrogating Pippin (b) by listening

to Faramir, and (c) by considering the issue of Isildur's Bane.

What should Gandalf have done? Jessica suggests several options on p. 23. "[H]e could have forbidden Faramir to have mentioned Frodo". Again, I think not, because Gandalf did not know Faramir had met Frodo till Faramir told Gandalf and Denethor together. Alternatively, "[Gandalf] could have taken command of Minas Tirith".[7] But would he have been obeyed? "Who is the master of Minas Tirith?" asks one of Denethor's guards. "The Lord Denethor or the Grey Wanderer?" (V/4, p. 808). He clearly means, *not* the Grey Wanderer. Finally, Jessica suggests the best response would be for Gandalf to, so to speak, impound the Stone, so Denethor can't use it. But Denethor would surely have reacted to this by treating Gandalf as an enemy, so such a plan might well backfire.

My own feeling is that what is shown by the whole business with Denethor and the Stone and his suicide, is the danger, the physical and moral danger, of basing your decisions on what you see in a Stone, or indeed a Mirror, like the Mirror of Galadriel. As I've argued elsewhere,[8] this is "speculation", both literally – *speculum* is Latin for "mirror", and might be stretched to mean "crystal ball" – and in our ordinary sense, that is to say guessing what other people are doing, or will be doing, or might be doing, and fashioning your own actions to take advantage of this. But that is the wrong way to work, both practically – for speculation often goes wrong – and morally. The right thing to do is to decide what's right, and then trust in Providence.

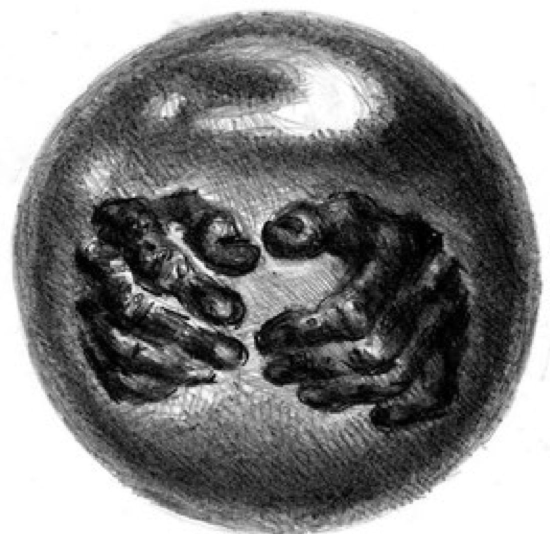
Of course, basing your decisions on guesses about how people will react is what our politicians and financiers do all the time – and little good has it done them. My own feeling is that politicians would do better by trying honestly to work out what is best in the national interest, and then trust in the good sense of the voters. But Tolkien would say in addition, and with much greater philosophical range, we should trust in the ability of Providence to bring good out of evil – as long as we all do our duty. Trying to bend events to our will – that is like trying to make the Stone, or once again Galadriel's Mirror, tell you what to do. The Stones don't lie. But they help you jump to false conclusions. That is what happens to Saruman, who sees the forces massing against him and gives up. It is what happens to Sauron, who sees Pippin and jumps to the wrong conclusion, sees Aragorn and jumps to the wrong conclusion, and as a result launches his assault early and fails to close the path to the Cracks of Doom. It is what happens to Denethor too. His suicide on the brink of victory is deeply ironic.

The Lord of the Rings, I conclude, is a profoundly ironic work, so much so that I do not think we have even yet got to the bottom of its many ironies. I have also, very slowly, and over many years, crawled round to the opinion that a large part of Tolkien's whole purpose (as seen especially in his very complex multi-strand narration) was to demonstrate how Providence works, and to answer the ancient question of how divine omniscience may be reconciled with human free will.[9] Noting the way decisions and plot-lines interact – and especially how individual failings, like Pippin's rash use of the Orthanc *palantír*, yet turn out for the best – is a vital part of this understanding.[10]

Notes

1 P. 172 of the UK / US hardback editions (2000, 2001).
2 Most readily available as Appendix C to *The Road to Middle-earth*, "Peter Jackson's Film Versions", in the expanded HarperCollins edition of 2005, 409-29 (425), reprinted as "Another Road to Middle-earth: Jackson's Movie Trilogy", in *Roots and Branches* (2007), 365-86 (382).
3 Jessica kindly read a draft of this paper and made several valuable observations, as noted below.
4 By agreement with the editor of *Mallorn*, I will put a longer version up on the website www.academia.edu within a few weeks.
5 I give references to LotR by book and chapter, and also by page in the one-volume revised text edition by Houghton Mifflin (1994). Page numbers do at least indicate how close together / far apart quotations are.
6 A fourth case is possibly (but by this time not likely) ambiguous, Denethor telling Pippin, "Follow whom you will, even the Grey Fool, though his hope has failed" (V/4, p. 806).
7 I like this idea. Two or three British disasters in World War 2 might have been prevented if an energetic Chief of Staff had put his defeatist commanding general under close arrest and taken over. But this requires immediate support from the lower ranks (like Beregond, but he is an exception), and prompt ratification from higher ones, neither easy to arrange.
8 See "Peter Jackson's Film Versions", pp. 423-6.
9 See the dialogue between myself and Franco Manni, in *Tolkien and Philosophy,* ed. Roberto Arduini and Claudio A. Testi (2014), pp. 21-71, esp. pp. 59-65.
10 This point is made very strongly in an as-yet unpublished PhD thesis from Trinity College Dublin (2013), Gerard Hynes's *Creation and Sub-Creation: Divine and Human Authorship in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*. On pp. 121-37 he considers "three moments of crisis in the narrative" to show "how the wills of humanity become part of the causality of providence" (125).

Tom Shippey is well known for his three books on Tolkien, the latest being *Roots and Branches* from Walking Tree Press. Now retired, he has taught at six universities, three British and three American, including Oxford and Harvard, and has published widely on medieval literature and on responses to it in the modern world. He currently reviews science fiction and fantasy for *the Wall Street Journal*.



Fertility and Grace in *The Lord of the Rings*

CELIA DEVINE

> "I stand in Minas Anor, the Tower of the Sun," she [Eowyn] said; "and behold! The Shadow has departed! I will be shield maiden no longer, nor vie with the great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren." (Tolkien, Part III p. 262)

The theme of fertility and the openness to and nurturing of new life is one that provides a key to the deep structure of *The Lord of the Rings*. It is important that Sam is a humble gardener; he functions as a seed bearer who literally and figuratively brings about a renewal, healing, and flowering of the Shire. His efforts are, of course, aided by the soil from Galadriel's garden, and the seed from the Mallorn tree. At the most basic level, the Earth's bringing forth vegetation is a kind of grace. A free gift. The Earth is itself, a character in the story. Tolkien's loving and detailed descriptions of the vegetation, the clouds, the weather enrich the story immensely, and nature is constantly described in active terms. For example, the barrow downs "stalk," mountains or forests "march," the wind hisses softly and sadly, the river flings pale shimmering arms around the island just below the gates of Argonauth. But the power to defy Sauron is not in the Earth; Sauron has the power to torture and destroy the very hills. (Tolkien, Part I, p. 298)

When the book opens, Middle-earth is portrayed as a world in decline, even apart from Sauron. Even the dragons are going downhill. Gandalf tells Frodo "It has been said that dragon-fire could melt and consume the rings of power, but there is not now any dragon left on earth in which the old fire is hot enough..." (Tolkien, Part I, p. 67) The crafts are in decline. The Numenoreans by mysterious powers built the tower of Orthanc, sculpted the great statues of the kings on the Gates of Argonauth, and brought and set up the black stone of Erech, for example, marvels that cannot now be replicated. The dwarves have lost many of the secrets of their fathers and can no longer do the kind of fine work they did in the past. The paths of the Ents and the Entwives have become sundered and there are no Entlings. The elves have withdrawn to a few strongholds such as Rivendell and Lothlorien, where they keep alive the stories and traditions of their past. As Treebeard says, Lothlorien used to be called Lauralindorenan, Valley of the Singing Gold. " now they make the name shorter... perhaps they are right; maybe it is fading, not growing,,.. The Dreamflower." (Tolkien, Part II , p. 68) It is no longer creative. Galadriel describes herself and Celeborn as "fighting the long defeat." (Tolkien. Part I, p. 400) Conflicts among the various free folk have weakened their ability to cooperate. Men fear and misdoubt the elves, and there is a long and bitter quarrel between dwarves and elves.

Upon first seeing Minas Tirith, Legolas observes: "there is too little here that grows and is glad." (Part II, p. 152) The men of Gondor hungered after life unending, and "kings made tombs more splendid than houses of the living, and counted old names in the rolls of their descent dearer than the names of sons. Childless lords sat in aged halls musing on heraldry; in secret chambers withered men compounded strong elixers, or in his cold towers asked questions of the start. And the last king of the line of Anarion had no heir." (Tolkien. Part II, p. 322) So the watch on Mordor slept, allowing Sauron to return and re-occupy it.

Sauron represents the radical rejection of grace. He lusts for power and total control. The Barrowwight's incantation over Merry, Pippin and Sam, conveys in a powerful way what this amounts to. It says "In the black wind the stars shall die, and still on gold here let them lie till the dark lord lifts his hand over dead sea and withered land." (Tolkien. Part I, p. 160) The term "withering" serves as the antithesis of fertility. Treebeard, for example, speaks of "the withering of all woods." (Tolkien. Part II, p. 75) Ithilien, garden of Gondor, had been under the dominion of the dark lord only a few years, and was not yet fallen wholly into decay. It had retained a certain "disheveled dryad loveliness." (Tolkien. Part II, p. 289). But as one gets closer to Mordor, vegetation becomes harsh and twisted and finally gives up. Sauron allows nothing to manifest a life of its own, but devours all. He can "torture and destroy the very hills." (Tolkien. Part I, p.298) The desolation that lay before Mordor is described thus:

> Dreadful as the dead marshes had been... more loathsome far was the country that the crawling day now slowly unveiled to his [Frodo's] shrinking eyes. Even to the Mere of the Dead Faces some haggard phantom of green spring would come; but here neither spring nor summer would ever come again. Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness .. A land defiled, diseased beyond all healing – unless the Great Sea should enter in and wash it with oblivion. I feel sick said Sam." (Tolkien. Part II, P. 265-66)

The story, then, is about the breaking in of grace that renews Middle-earth. Sam's development from a comic servant whose masculinity had been undermined by his father to the benign patriarch he becomes is but one strand of this renewal. Eowyn and Faramir go to Ithilien to make of it a garden. And Arwen renounces immortality to wed Aragorn, one of whose names is Evinyat, the renewer; he

re-plants the white tree (which comes from the line of Telperion, Eldest of Trees) in the court of the kings and under his rule things are set in order and healed. "In his time the city was made more fair that it had ever been, even in the days of its first glory; it was filled with trees and with fountains... The houses were filled with men and women and the laughter of children, and no window was blind nor any courtyard empty." (Tolkien. Part III, p. 266)

The flowering of the Shire involves an astonishing outpouring of new life. All the trees, flowers and crops grow as though trying to make one year do for twenty. Young hobbits fairly bathed in strawberries and cream, the yield of leaf was extraordinary, and the barley was so fine that the brew of 1420 became legendary. Everyone was pleased except those who had to mow the grass! There were many weddings and of the many children born or begotten in that year many had a rich golden hair – a trait that had been rare before that.

The most important role in this glorious renewal, of course, is played by Frodo. His acceptance of this role, which Elrond says is appointed for him, occurs just as the noon bell rings. "I will take the ring, although I do not know the way" (Tolkien. Part I, p. 303) and it is as if some other will is using his small voice. For a Catholic, this scene carries strong resonances of the Angelus prayer, traditionally said as the noon bell rings (see, for example, Corot's painting by this name). This prayer celebrates the Annunciation – Mary's acceptance of her mission to become the mother of Jesus. After being told that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit, Mary replies "behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." The fact that the fall of Sauron occurs on March 25, the traditional feast of the Annunciation, then, is not accidental.

The new flowering that follows the fall of Sauron, however, is not universal. As Gandalf says "The evil of Sauron cannot be wholly cured or made as if it had never been," (Tolkien. Part II, p. 169) and many fair things will pass away. Ultimately, Frodo has been too wounded to remain and enjoy the Shire. "The Shire has been saved, he says, but not for me. When things are in danger, someone must give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them." (Tolkien. Part III, p. 338) His departure, allows Sam to no longer be torn in two – "to be one and whole for many years... All that I had and might have had I leave to you." (Tolkien. Part III, p. 337). A new age is dawning in which men will multiply and the elder kindred decline or depart. The Ents are not reunited with the Entwives. As Treebeard says "some dreams are withered untimely." (Tolkien. Part II, p. 92)

The fourth age will be the age of men. Gimli remarks (in the Last Debate chapter) that "There is a frost in Spring or a blight in Summer and they [the things that men begin] fail of their promise." Legolas replies that "seldom do they fail of their seed... that will lie in the dust and rot and spring up again in times and places unlooked for. The deeds of men will outlast us, Gimli." Gimli replies "and yet come to naught in the end but might-have-beens, I guess." And here Legolas has the last word: "To that the elves know not the answer." (Tolkien. Part III, p. 153 for all four of these quotes). I think we can take that to be Tolkien's last word as well. "We must do what we can for the succor of the years wherein we are set," says Gandalf (Tolkien. Part III, p. 160). Throughout *The Lord of the Rings* there is a deep assumption that some higher power is at work bringing good even out of what seem like accidents or mistakes, and we have no reason to believe that this will cease to be the case in the Fourth Age that is dawning. But evils may arise as well. So we are left with hope that that which was good in the Third Age will carry over and enable those in the Fourth Age to flourish and deal with whatever arises. The Shire is a land where gardeners are held in honor. It represents the ordinary side of human nature, full of small pleasures, sometimes petty and narrow, but capable of heroism and sacrifice. As Elrond says of the "deeds that move the wheels of the world" (Tolkien. Part I, p. 302) that small hands do them because they must when the eyes of the great are elsewhere. When the Dark Lord's culture of death threatens all of Middle-earth, it is the heroism of Frodo and his companions that saves it.

May the Shire live forever unwithered!

Works Cited

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The Destiny Of Túrin, or a Dumézilian Approach of The Narn

JEAN CHAUSSE

J.R.R. Tolkien and Georges Dumézil are not often compared by critics. Maybe because the bulk of academic research published on Tolkien comes from the Anglo-Saxon world where Dumézil is less famous than in France. Nevertheless, they have much in common. They were born in the last decade of the XIXth century and so were from the same generation. Both were outstanding linguists and philologists who shared a particular penchant for old languages. Tolkien knew more than ten whilst Dumézil had a perfect command of more than thirty idioms. Tolkien and Dumézil where both keen on mythology. Tolkien chose to specialise in legends from the north of Europe, and although Dumézil had a broader range of interests he too had a particular liking for Northern Mythologies.

If we look at all of these convergences it seems natural to try to compare their works, and especially to make an analysis of Tolkien's novels in the light of Dumézil's structures.

A brief summary of Dumézil's thesis

As a result of his immense erudition in both mythologies and languages, Dumézil soon began to publish works about comparative mythologies but it was only at the end of the thirties with his book "Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus", that he presented his theory of functional tripartition for the first time. Each of his later publications was designed to developing and precising his theory. According to Dumézil, all Indo-European civilisations, and Indo-Europeans only, were organised into three different functions:

- The sovereign and sacerdotal one named the "First Function" whose role is to rule and also to link humanity to the numinous.
- The warrior or "Second Function" which is charged with protection and the maintenance of peace but also paradoxically with bloodshed and violence.
- The "Third Function" was responsible for wealth production. In predominantly agricultural and pastoral societies, in which wealth was mainly due to good crops and fertility of the cattle, this third function is also logically associated with sexuality and fecundity.

The study of the whole legendarium of Middle-earth in the light of functional tripartition is too large a work for a relatively short essay. We would like to focus below on a small book from Dumézil published in 1956: « Heur et malheur du guerrier, aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-européens ». The bulk of this work is dedicated to the "three sins of the Warrior".

To verify if Dumézil's theories related to the Warrior are relevant to the universe created by Tolkien, we first have to identify a true warrior in Middle-earth. Even though Tolkien's books are full of gallant champions who accomplish fantastic deeds on the battle-field finding a true warrior is not that easy. If we look closely we can see that most of them are kings belonging primarily to the First Function rather than the Second. Secondly, they go to war out of duty. Given the choice, they would certainly prefer to take care of their land and people in a time of peace.

Túrin Turambar is an exception and seems a pure warrior:

- He goes to war before being fully grown-up, exactly like Cuchulain, the Irish hero, or Achilles in the Iliad.
- He loves war because "he yearned for brave strokes and battle in the open".[1]

Now let us see if his character matches the structure of an archetypal Indo-European warrior as studied by Georges Dumézil. According to the French Professor, the life of such a hero will follow five main stages. To support his thesis Dumézil uses numerous examples from various civilisations or periods of time, but for the sake of clarity, we will concentrate on only three Indo-European warriors, each one from a totally different body of mythology:

- Heracles, the Greek hero, as he is the most famous warrior of all times.
- Starcatherus, the Scandinavian hero.
- Sisupala, a minor character in the Indian epic "The Mahabharata" but a very interesting one nonetheless.

1. The special enmity of a god.

Archetypal warriors in Indo-European mythologies are always victims of a well-established enmity of a god and are persecuted by such for the duration of their lifetimes.

If we look first at Sisupala, as already mentioned above, he is the reincarnation of a demon and has often in previous lives fought with Visnu. The final encounter between them in the Mahabaratha is just the culmination of this enmity which has endured for millennia. From the very moment of his birth Sisupala's destiny is known because the oracle has predicted that Krsna (an avatar of Visnu) would kill him after a short life full of military deeds of valour..

Considering Starcatherus, he is the subject of a real negotiation between Odin on the one hand who tries to protect the hero (for very mean reason actually) and Thor on the other hand hates him because he can't forget that Starcatherus' grandmother had rejected him. Let us hear the dialogue

between the two gods

> Thor : Starcatherus won't have any children
> Odin : As a compensation he will have a life span three times longer than any man
> Thor: He will commit a loathsome deed in each of those three lives
> Odin: He will always have the best weapons and the richest garments
> Thor: He will never own land or houses
> Odin: He will have plenty of gold
> Thor: This will never satisfy him and he will permanently lust for even more gold
> Odin: He will be victorious in any battle
> Thor: He will be seriously wounded in each battle
> Odin: He will have the gift of poetry
> Thor: He will forget immediately anything he has composed
> Odin: He will be loved by any king
> Thor: Commoners will hate him

All we can say is that the fate of poor Starcatherus is burdened by the grudge of the hammer bearer against him. One could call him "the Accursed of Thor".

Heracles is no luckier really than his northern counterpart. Hera, the lawful wife of Zeus, weary of her husband's numerous affairs takes vengeance by hounding the Greek demigod. Her hatred for Heracles started even before his birth when she decides to spoil the plan of the unfaithful king of the gods and due to a trick of her own she manages to deprive Heracles of the throne he was to inherit.

As far as Túrin is concerned the hostility of Melkor toward him is absolutely obvious. In the preface of his book "The Children of Hurin" Christopher Tolkien reveals to us that his father had initially wanted to entitle his tale "Narn e'Rach Morgoth" which means "the tale of the curse of Morgoth". It was only lately that he decided on "Narn I hin Hurin". This shows without any ambiguity that the theme of a malediction from a preternatural being toward Túrin and his sister was essential in the opinion of Tolkien himself.

In conclusion it seems clear that on the specific point of the enmity of a god, Túrin fits perfectly within the structure of an archetypal Indo-European Hero.

2. A first sin against the First Function

During his life, after accomplishing a few exploits during his youth, the archetypal Indo-European Hero is to commit an offence, or break a taboo, against a member of the First Function.

Before executing Sisupala, Krsna says that he has been offended numerous times by his enemy. He does not give the entire list of these offences but he gives us an example. The father of Krsna, a great king and priest, had prepared a perfect horse for an extremely important sacrifice. On the eve of the ceremony, Sisupala stole this horse and in so doing he not only robbed and offended a priest-king but he also put in jeopardy the very harmony of the cosmos. As a result of this theft Sisupala has twice seriously offended the First Function.

The offence committed by Starcatherus is even worse. At the end of the magical duel between Thor and Odin, the latter demands from the Scandinavian warrior, as a price for his defence, the life of his best friend the king Vikkar. As he is obliged to Odin, Starcatherus agrees to this demand and lures his trusting suzerain into a trap and kills him in a brutal human sacrifice.

Heracles himself also commits a "sin" against the First Function. Well aware of his superior valour and nobility he refuses to obey Eurystee, his king, and decides to kill the king's children. By deciding on this path of action, he not only rebels against a rightful ruler and First Functioner but also against Zeus himself who had, albeit unwillingly, set Eurystee on the throne. As a punishment Heracles is stricken by a crisis of madness and instead of killing the king's children, he slays his own wife Megara and their children. In order to atone for this brutal act of kin slaughter he is sentenced by Eurystee to his famous twelve works which are certainly the most famous part of his adventures.

Now, let us investigate the relationship between Túrin and the First Function. Túrin during his short life has met with several kings but the one he has known best is certainly Thingol, king of Doriath. Thingol is a rightful king and as such is a First Functioner but he is much more than just a simple ruler. His majesty is far above the other Sindars. He has been in Valinor during its bliss, he has seen the light of the two trees.. He has spoken face to face with the Valar. He is also the only elven king to have had the privilege of being married to a Maïa, a preternatural being. This gives Thingol a special spiritual and sacred authority and qualifies him as a perfect representative of the First Function in Middle-earth.

Nevertheless, instead of being grateful to Thingol Túrin chooses to rebel against his benefactor. Later, when Thingol has sent him his best man to tell him that he has been cleared of any guilt, forgiven by the king and invited to reclaim his place in Thingol's hall, he answers full of pride "My hearth was proud as the Elf King [Thingol] said. And so it still is, Beleg Cuthalion. Not yet will it suffer me to go back to Menegroth and bear looks of pity and pardon, as for a wayward boy amended. *I should give pardon, not receive it*".[2] By speaking in this way Túrin shows that he considers himself to be superior to Thingol in terms of nobility and hierarchy. This attitude is similar to the Greek hubris, the worst sin against the First Function for the ancients.

At this stage, it seems clear that Túrin fits perfectly with the notion of a "sin" against the First Function.

3. A second "sin" against the Second Function

After a first offence against the First Function, the archetypal Indo-European Warrior is to commit a second "sin" against the Second Function. In doing so he generally seriously breaches the code of honour of an heroic warrior. Let us consider what Krsna says about Sisupala before he kills his enemy: "having learned that I had left to visit the town of Pragiyostisa, this felon came and torched Davaraka [the city of Krsna] even if he was the king's nephew". [3] It appears that

instead of fighting the army of Davaraka in loyal combat, Sisupala used information he was able to obtain as a member of the family and treacherously attacked the city when it's most formidable champion was absent. For a reader in the XXIst century accustomed to all-out modern war, this may appear to be an efficient strategy, but in the mentality of the Aryans one thousand years BC, it demonstrated pure cowardice and disloyalty.

Starcatherus also behaves like a coward at one point during his "second" life. The incident occurs during a battle between the armies of king Regnaldus and king Sywaldus. Saxo Grammaticus in his "Gesta Danorum", describes the combat: "This battle was notable for the cowardice of the greatest nobles.[.] The chief of these, Starcatherus, had been used to tremble at no fortune, however cruel, and no danger, however great. But some strange terror stole upon him, and he chose to follow the flight of his friends rather than to despise it". [4] There is no ambiguity, Starcatherus despite all his experience and his past exploits fled from the battlefield and in so doing he amplified a panic among the army which caused their defeat and the death of the king he has vowed to protect.

We may believe that Heracles is beyond reproach but this is not the case. When he has atoned for the death of his wife and children with his twelve works, he decides to start afresh and to marry in order to start a new family. He falls in love with princess Iole, daughter of King Eurytos, but the king out of fear that Iole might suffer the same fate as Megara refuses to consent to the marriage. Angered, the hero then kills treacherously Iphitos, Iole's brother. This is his second sin. The guilt is not in the killing (which is consubstantial to the Second Function) but in the betrayal of a friend. In punishment for his treachery Heracles is sentenced to sell himself as a slave to the queen Omphale and to give the money he receives to Iphitos' widow.

So we know that our three heroes, who generally behave flawlessly, have all sinned once through either cowardice or disloyalty. Let us see now if Túrin has also sinned against the moral code of the warrior.

First of all he failed to protect Finduilas from Morgoth's servants even though it was his duty to do so. In fact he cannot manage to defend her because he is under the spell of the Dragon Glaurung but he has nonetheless betrayed the confidence that the elven princess had placed in him. The gravity of this failure is clearly emphasized by Gwindor's last words on the battle field of Thumhalad. With the prescience that comes with being close to death, he tells Túrin "Haste you to Nargothrond, and save Finduilas. And this last I say to you: she alone stands between you and your doom. If you fail her, it shall not fail to find you. Farewell." [5] Thus we know for certain that the inability to save Orodreth's daughter is an unforgivable sin which will lead him irrevocably to his moral decline and sinister doom.

Later, just before his own death, Túrin will commit another crime by slaying, out of wrath, Brandir, a disabled and unarmed man who is absolutely unable to defend himself. This murder is important to Tolkien and he takes care to remind the reader of it a few pages later at the very moment that Túrin takes his own life. Gurthang, his sword, reproaches him bitterly for his crime: "I will drink your blood, that I may forget the blood [.] of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay you swiftly". [6] There is no doubt that Tolkien has chosen to remind us of Túrin's sin such a dramatic moment in order to explain his suicide and death.

4. A last "Sin" against the Third Function

After his first two "sins" against the First and Second Function, the Indo-European archetypal hero has to commit one final offence against the Third Function, either by breaching some sacred law of marriage or by acting out of greed instead of honour.

Sisupala disguises himself and pretends to be the rightful husband of the princess Bhada and then he rapes her. The sin here is in the stratagem. According to ancient tales, heroes are permitted to seduce young women because of their valour and they can even take by force what they want, but they should not stoop so low as to pretending to be someone else in order to dishonour a princess.

Starcatherus succumbs to his lust for gold which he inherited from the curse of Thor at the beginning of his life. He accepts a bribe of one hundred and twenty pounds in solid gold to murder Olo, his king and friend as he lies unharmed in his bath. Well aware of the gravity of his crime "he was smitten with remorse and shame, and lamented his crime so bitterly, that he could not refrain from tears if it happened to be named. Thus his soul, when he came to his senses, blushed for his abominable sin". [7]

Heracles is also guilty. Although he had married Dejanire he later kidnaps his true love Iole and weds her secretly. In doing so he commits the crime of bigamy and breaches the sacred laws of marriage.

As far as Túrin is concerned, his "sin" against the law of marriage is crystal clear. When he weds his own sister he becomes guilty of incest and breaks the most universal of all taboos. As he does not know the identity of Niniel on the day of their marriage perhaps this could be seen as an extenuating circumstance but in the mentality of the ancients this is not the case. For instance Oedipus, when he frees Thebe from the Sphinx and then marries Jocaste, can not know that she is his mother. From our modern point of view Oedipus could be perceived to be innocent, but for the Greeks before Christ things were quite different. Oedipus is guilty and the gods cast a plague on Thebe. Only when Jocaste has hanged herself and Oedipus has put out his own eyes and fled the city as a beggar are the gods satisfied.

In the archaic world of the First Age described in the Silmarilion there is no doubt as to Túrin's guilt.

A death more or less freely accepted

Once he has successively offended all three Functions, the Indo-European warrior has exhausted his "right" to sin and is then doomed to die. He generally accepts this fate willingly and with good grace as a sort of atonement for his past crimes.

Sisupala knows perfectly well that the Oracle has foretold that Krsna will be his killer, but instead of avoiding him in an attempt to delay his brutal end, Sisupala deliberately provokes his foe. It seems obvious that Sisupala was in fact seeking his death in a manner akin to suicide.

Starcatherus was "*now worn out with extreme age,[.] was loth to lose his ancient glory through the fault of eld, and thought it would be a noble thing if he could make a voluntary end, and hasten his death by his own free will*".[8] The state of mind of the Scandinavian hero concerning death is clear. He finally chooses a noble warrior, he considers his equal, and asks the young man to behead him in return for a substantial reward.

As for Heracles, whence he has put on the famous Tunic of Nessus he suffers terrible pains and decides that being burned alive would be less excruciating. In a nearby forest he then fells some pine trees with his bare hands and uses them to build his own pyre. Although the decision of Heracles to hasten his own death is due to an external event, by choosing to do so, the Greek warrior commits a clear suicide.

Túrin also decides to kill himself when he suddenly discovers that his wife is also his sister and that she is dead. Túrin's death is particularly remarkable because suicides are very rare in Middle-earth and they are always considered a sin.

6. A kind of post mortem survival

The Indo European warrior cannot just die an ordinary death. We have already seen that he accepts and often seeks his own death, but there is more. His vital strength is so huge that his life cannot just fade away and quietly disappear. On the contrary, the hero experiences some kind of post mortem adventure, or purely and simply overcomes death to become immortal.

Once he has been beheaded, Sisupala's soul becomes visible in the form of a shining being. This "ghost" first bows down before Krsna, his murderer before being absorbed into his bosom. After several millenniums of wars, through different reincarnations, the slain warrior can at last be united with Vishnu and, by this union of opposites equilibrium can be achieved.

Starcatherus' ending is different. He promises to Hatherus, his executioner, that if he manages to jump between his head and his body, before either touches the ground, he will inherit his strength and become invincible. Hatherus makes no attempt to do so which enrages Starcatherus so much that his severed head snaps viciously as it hits the ground.

The case of Heracles is even more extreme because he does not actually die. At the very last moment he is rescued from the pyre by his father, Zeus, who in a glorious apotheosis makes him an immortal. In Olympus he is at last reconciled with Hera who accepts him as her foster son. He then becomes her champion and the meaning of his name - glory of Hera- is finally justified.

Túrin is also to know a glorious fate after his death. In "The Lost Road", Tolkien wrote "When the world is old and the Powers grow weary, then Morgoth, seeing that the guard sleepeth, shall come back through the Door of Night out of the Timless void; and he shall destroy the Sun and Moon. But Aërendel shall descend upon him as a white and searing flame and drive him from the airs. Then shall the Last Battle be gathered on the fields of Valinor. In that day Tulkas shall strive with Morgoth and on his right hand shall be Fionwë, and on his left Túrin Turambar, son of Hurin, coming from the halls of Mandos; and the black sword of Túrin shall deal unto Morgoth his death and final end; and so the children of Hurin and all Men be avenged". This end making Túrin the killer of Melkor during the eschatological Last Battle is very striking. Christopher Tolkien decided not to include it in the "Silmarilion" or "The unfinished tales" or even in his more recent "The children of Hurin", probably because this reappearance of Túrin after death contradicts the so called theology of Arda where the souls of men are supposed to leave the circles of the world. This final destiny of Túrin imagined once by Tolkien is therefore all the more interesting and fits perfectly with the destiny of an Indo-European archetypal Warrior.

Conclusion

It is fascinating to consider that most of the "Narn" had been written several years before the publication by Georges Dumézil of any of his works about the Three Functions. This demonstrates that Tolkien's knowledge of Indo-European mythologies was so profound and that he had such empathy with them that he managed to accurately reproduce their internal structure subconsciously.

Notes

1. *The Silmarilion*. Chapter 21
2. *The Children of Húrin*. Chapter VI (my emphasis)
3. *Mahabharata*. Book II
4. *Gesta Danorum*. Book VII
5. *The Children of Húrin*. Chapter XI, the Fall of Nargonthrond
6. *The Children of Húrin*. Chapter XVII, the death of Túrin
7. *Gesta Danorum*. Book VIII
8. *Gesta Danorum*. Book VIII

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Laurent Alibert . *L'influence indo-européenne en Arda et ses limites* in *Tolkien trente ans après* under the supervision of Vincent Ferré Christian Bourgois

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Tolkien's Jungian Views on Language

NANCY BUNTING

In *J.RR. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (2000), Tom A. Shippey states that "Tolkien was the holder of several highly personal if not heretical views about language" (xiv). This paper proposes that the source of these "heretical" ideas was Tolkien's adopting Carl Gustav Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. Verlyn Flieger in her article, "Do the Atlantis Story and abandon Eriol-Saga," writes that Tolkien's use of ancestrally based memories in *The Lost Road* and *The Notion Club Papers* must be based on "Jungian psychology and the theory of the collective unconscious" (Flieger 53). An understanding of Tolkien's use of Jung's concept of the collective unconscious will clarify some of his seemingly mysterious statements on language.

When working on his lecture "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien wrote a memo to himself, "Jung Psych of the unconscious" February 25, 1939 (TOFS 129). This cryptic memo is ambiguous. It could refer either to Jung's book, *Psychology of the Unconscious (Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* 1912), or to the Jungian concept of the psychology of the unconscious. While the theory of the personal unconscious is usually associated with Sigmund Freud, Jung's (1875-1961) distinctive contribution to the theory of the unconscious was in his formulation of a collective unconscious. The specific reference here must be determined because Jung's views on the unconscious evolved over time.

Sources

Jung's 1912 book, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, would seem to be the most obvious and likely candidate for Tolkien's memo. However, it cannot be what is referred to in Tolkien's note because the concept of the collective unconscious is not presented in that work. Jung first proposed the theory of the collective unconscious in 1916, initially labeling it as the "suprapersonal unconscious." This was later published in his 1918 article "The Role of the Unconscious" ("*Über den Unbewusste*") (Noll, *The Jung Cult, Origins of a Charismatic Movement* 97). Further, Jung's book, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, was not likely to have been attractive to Tolkien because Jung's assumptions about the historical development of consciousness in that book was derived from Frederic M. Müller's ideas. This is not surprising since Müller (1823-1900) dominated European thought on the subject of comparative mythology for almost fifty years (Noll 116, 343). Müller's views were accorded great importance partly before the publication and acceptance of Charles Darwin's theories, the study of comparative philology was considered the best guide to the study of the origins of the human race (Noll 83).[1]

Then where would Tolkien have learned about the Jungian view of the collective unconscious? The likeliest alternative would be Jung's article "Mind and the Earth" which was published in English in 1928. It was enthusiastically praised by C.S. Lewis in his paper "Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism." While this paper was very critical of Freudian psychoanalysis, Lewis was "enchanted" by Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, adding a caveat that "if it turns out to be bad science it is excellent poetry" (297).[2] Given C.S. Lewis's intense pleasure and approval of Jung's concept, it was likely he discussed its ideas in the Inklings writing group prior to his lecture and his publishing.[3] This paper will only assume that Tolkien was familiar with "Mind and the Earth," which gives a succinct summary of Jung's views on the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious, myths and fairy tales, archetypes, and the effect of soil and climate on "a racial group" (135).

In "Mind and Earth," the collective unconscious is defined by contrasting it to "a superficial, relative, or personal, unconscious" as Freud had advocated (106). "The collective unconscious, being an inheritance of the possibilities of ideas, is not individual but generally human, generally animal even, and represents the real foundations of the individual soul" (110). The collective unconscious as a "timeless and universal mind […] seems to consist of something of the nature of mythological themes or images. For this reason the myths of peoples are the real exponents of the collective unconscious" (111). Archetypes are "mythical motives in general," and "the unconscious, as the totality of all archetypes, is the deposit of all human experience back to its most remote beginnings" (115, 116). Archetypes "are merely the forms that the instincts have assumed […] the very source of the creative impulse" (117). They are the "fundamental elements" and "the roots of the mind [...] through which the mind is linked to nature" (118). Here would be the working definition of the collective unconscious that Tolkien would have used.

Jung's paper would have caught Tolkien's attention not only because of Lewis' effusive endorsement, but also because of Jung's comments about Catholicism. Jung asserts that, as compared to the Jew or the Protestant who have merely an intellectual apprehension, the Catholic believer experiences "a considerable portion of his collective unconscious in tangible reality […] These are always present and available for him. In the sacred precincts of every altar for him there dwells a god" (116). Given Tolkien's mystical experiences as a Catholic, including the mote and the Eucharist, this view may have intrigued him (*Letters* 99, 340).

The essay, "Mind and the Earth," was written by Jung for a book that his friend, Keyserling, edited in 1927 (Noll 95, 97). Count Hermann Keyserling (1880-1947) was famous for writing on how geography shapes the souls of the inhabitants of various lands (Noll 93). He expounded

the mid-nineteenth century concept of Bodenbeschaffenheit: the "formative forces of the soil." The focus of this theory was only on the regional manifestations that gave a particular people or folk (volk) its character, potential, and unity. "Nature was defined as a landscape: those features of the environment peculiar and familiar to the member of one Volk and alien to all others" (Noll, 305). This concept was very much a part of the collection of völkisch ideas that were popular in central Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. The völkisch movement, with the prominent backing of the renowned German scientist, Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), embraced the quasi-Larmarckian notions of Darwinian pangenesis, a theory that the effects of experience could be inherited. These views gave a scientific justification to such environmental influences (Noll 96).[4] Völkisch groups rejected Christianity in favor of a mystical Volk connection and direct initiation into the mysteries of the ancient Aryan peoples, especially the Teutonic tribes. Their interests included nature worship; hiking; nudism; neopagan rituals, like dancing around bonfires and magical ceremonies invoking the Norse or Greek gods; the study of Aryan occult symbolism; idealization of ancient Teutonic warriors like Siegfried and fascination with medieval Grail legend and Parsifal; exaltation of the deed (die Tat) over mere words; and the purity of Aryan blood which entailed anti-Semitism (Noll 77-78). Certainly during the 1920s Jung openly endorsed völkisch mysticism and taught it to Americans and British who did not have the background to understand the Germanic cultural heritage of this philosophy or the political use of its anti-Semitic element to establish the superiority of the Aryan peoples (Noll 99).

Around 1936-37 shortly before his preparation for the"On Fairy-stories" lecture, Tolkien was working on *The Lost Road*, a story of fathers and sons traveling through time by means of "ancestrally transmitted memories of a past they could not have experienced in their own personae" (*Lost Road* 8-9; Flieger 45). Flieger states this concept from *The Lost Road*, which reappears in *The Notion Club Papers*, must be based on "Jungian psychology and the theory of the collective unconscious" (Flieger 53). However, there may be another source of influence on Tolkien's use of Jungian type ideas.

Psychical research was very popular and pervasive in England's culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century culture as can be seen in the involvement of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), the celebrated author of Sherlock Holmes and someone who was regarded as a paragon of skeptical and rational inquiry, in the investigation of Cottingley fairies' photographs which he documented as valid and true in his book, *The Coming of the Fairies* (1922).[5] The Society for Psychical Research in England was founded in 1882, and its interests in dreams, parapsychology, and intuition generated new models of the unconscious mind.[6] The most respected of these models, which grew out of their investigations, was the "subliminal self" proposed by Frederick W.H. Myers of Cambridge (1843-1901) (Noll 32). Myers published throughout the 1880s and 1890s and was a close friend of the American psychologist and lecturer, William James (Noll 310, 196).[7] F.W.H. Myers borrowed the term "mythopoetic" from the philologist Müller to describe the apparent myth-making functions of the subliminal self. This "mythopoetic" or myth-making function was similar to Jung's later conception of a collective unconscious (Noll 343). In fact, Jung cited Myers in his 1902 doctoral dissertation (Noll 32). Working in the French clinical tradition that explored dissociated states, Jung in Basel along with Theodore Flournoy (1854-1920) in Geneva, studied the unconscious mind by analyzing automatic writing and observing spiritualist mediums in trance states (Noll 31). Jung's 1902 dissertation was based on the trance states he induced by means of hypnosis in his 15-year old cousin, Helene Preiswerk, who let 'spiritual' personalities speak through her (Noll 144).

Tolkien famously used the term "mythopoeia," associated with F.W.H. Myers' work, in his poem stemming from a conversation on September 19, 1931, which was instrumental in persuading C.S. Lewis to convert to Christianity (*C&G* 2.159; *TOFS* 113). Tolkien's familiarity with this sense of the word 'mythopoeia' indicates his contact with the widespread ideas coming out of the psychical research of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Finally, Tolkien seemed to have his own idiosyncratic view of the connection or influence of land and mythology. Clyde Kilby cites from an unpublished letter of C.S.Lewis from June, 1930. Lewis reports that Tolkien:

> expounded on home and how the atmosphere of it 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 in a sense *real* (not metaphorical) connections between them and the countryside. What had been earth and air and later corn, and later still bread, really was *in* them. We of course who live on a standardized international diet [...] are artificial beings and have no connection (save in sentiment) with any place on earth. We are synthetic men, uprooted. The strength of the hills is not ours (*Tolkien and The Silmarillion* 70. Italics in the original).

This view of how the produce of the land influences people clearly would apply to Tolkien's mother's family, the Suffields, who had lived for generations in Worcestershire. In these remarks Tolkien was clearly thinking of himself and his family. Tolkien's view seems to be a variant of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. That is, when bread and wine are blessed by a priest they are then carriers of the deity, and the parishioner is joined or becomes one with Christ through what he eats. With this view of the influence of the land, mediated by consumption of the local produce on the inhabitants' perceptions or experiences of spirits or demigods or possibly fairies, Tolkien would have found Jung's presentation and endorsement of Bodenbeschaffenheit in line with his thinking, though proposing a slightly different mechanism of influence.

Applying Jungian Type Views to Language

Tolkien revealed his familiarity with Jung when working on his lecture "On Fairy-stories" in late 1938 and 1939 (*TOFS* 128).[8] He wanted to salvage what "had value" from the 1936-1937 *The Lost Road* and use it in *The Notion Club Papers*, which he was writing around July, 1946 (*Letters* 118). Tolkien's working note of 1945-46 to "Do the Atlantis story and abandon Eriol-Saga, with Loudham, Jeremy, Guildford, and Ramer taking part" refocused the transmission of the past from the oral and written stories by the character, Eriol, to the idea of inherited memories of the past including languages and myths as seen in his members of The Notion Club (*Sauron Defeated* 281; Flieger 44, 46, 51). Flieger notes that now the story or mythology of England would be English "not simply because it was *about* England or because it happened *in* England, but because it was *ingrained in the memory* of countless generations of Englishmen, memory revived, re-experienced, and re-possessed by Loudham [...] through the genetic re-collections of their ancestors." She notes this is based on "Jungian psychology and the theory of the collective unconscious, plus something [...] close to reincarnation" (Flieger 53). Therefore, English history, myth, and mythology, is inborn and "possessed by the English whether they know it or not" (Flieger 53). Flieger notes the parapsychological "spin" in *The Notion Club Papers* with "reincarnation, out-of-body experiences in time and space, the psychic import of dreams, and most important of all, collective unconscious manifest in inherited memory" (Flieger 58).[9] In other words, Tolkien fused the psychical research that he would have known about the contemporary milieu with the compatible ideas of Jung whose views grew out of this same psychical research.

Flieger notes this language on inherited memory is consistent with Tolkien's remarks to W. H. Auden in a letter of June, 1955: "I am a West-midlander by blood (and took to early west-midland Middle English as a known tongue as soon as I set eyes on it)" as opposed to Tolkien's "linguistic conditioning" in Latin, Greek, Gothic, Spanish, and later exposure to Welsh and Finnish (*Letters 213*, Flieger 59). Tolkien adds, "I dare say such linguistic tastes, with due allowance for school-overlay, are as good or better a test of ancestry as blood-groups" (*Letters*, 214). Here is the nexus of inherited memories of language, the influence of the native setting of soil and climate, and the family groups that carried these influences found in Jung's' "Mind and Earth." This view appears in the background of his March, 1941, letter to Michael Tolkien: "I am a Suffield by tastes, talents, and upbringing, and any corner of that country [Worcestershire] (however fair or squalid) is in an indefinable way "home" to me as no other part of the world is" (Letters 54). Also, a January, 1945 letter to Christopher Tolkien sounds the Jungian refrain of linking native soil, race, and language: "it is things of racial and linguistic significance that attract me and stick in my memory." He hopes Christopher will delve in to "the origins of our peculiar people" as "you are a Mercian or Hwiccian" (*Letters* 108).

This Jungian view reappears in Tolkien's idiosyncratic idea of "inherent linguistic predilections" as presented in his lecture "On English and Welsh" given October 21, 1955, and discussed by Dimitra Fimi (*Tolkien, Race, and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits* 80-81). Tolkien stated that each person has a "personal linguistic potential," "a native language. But this is not the language that we speak, our cradle-tongue, the first-learned. Linguistically we all wear ready-made clothes." There is a difference between "the first-learned language, the language of custom and an individual's native language, his inherent linguistic predictions" (*M&C* 190). While Tolkien can recall his various interests and pleasures in languages ranging from Latin, French, Greek, Spanish, Gothic, Finnish, to Welsh, he asserts that the pleasure in Welsh is not "peculiar" to himself, "but lies dormant" in many English, evidently because Welsh may have been the native speech as far east as Wiltshire in the late ninth century (*M&C* 194, 185). Further, "Welsh is of this soil, this island, the senior language of the men of Britain; and Welsh is beautiful" (*M&C* 189). That this is an inherited preference, associated with the local soil and climate of England, is made clear by the remark that "Modern Welsh is not, of course, identical with the predilections of such people," (*M&C* 194). That is, it is the older, medieval Welsh that fits the preference best. "It is the native language to which in unexplored desire we would still go home" (*M&C* 194).

Tom A. Shippey in *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* writes that Tolkien held "several highly personal if not heretical views about language. He thought that people, and perhaps as a result of their confused linguistic history especially English people, could detect historical strata in language without knowing how they did it. They knew that names like Ugthorpe and Stainby were Northern without knowing they were Norse; they knew Winchcombe and Cumrew must be in the West without recognizing that the word cŵm is Welsh" (xiv). That is, the languages spoken in England, just like English history, myth, and mythology, are "possessed by the English whether they know it or not" (Flieger 53). These puzzling views would be consistent with and a function of Tolkien's Jungian views on inheritance and the collective unconscious with its links to geography and language. These views would be "heretical" in light of what we now know about the actual mechanisms of inheritance and the debunking of the theory of Bodenbeschaffenheit. In the same vein, Shippey says that Tolkien believed he had a special understanding of *Beowulf* as "it took someone with the same instincts to explain it. Sympathy furthermore depended on being a descendant, on living in the same country and beneath the same sky, on speaking the same language-being 'native' to that tongue and land" (*Road to Middle-earth*, revised 47).

If one believes in evolution in the twenty-first century, then one understands inheritance in Darwinian terms. Consequently, the modern reader is puzzled, if not confused, by the quasi-Lamarckian assumptions present in the theory of the Jungian collective unconscious that lead Tolkien to such seemingly odd conclusions about language. Once his familiarity with and use of Jungian ideas on the

inheritance of language and mythology, combined with the influence of the local geographical region on this process possibly by means of ingesting the produce of the land as opposed to Jung's Bodenschaffenheit, are known, a number of curious statements about language and the special understanding of the native speaker make sense. Further, these assumptions grew out of and were compatible with contemporary views of parapsychology, which was widespread in the popular culture. Tolkien's use of the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious seems even to have extended to his belief and/or hope that English readers would understand chunks of untranslated Elvish: "Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!" (*TT* IV ix 329). It did turn out to be bad science, but Tolkien saw it as excellent poetry.

Notes

1. Müller was not just a name on a volume which Tolkien was required to read. Müller held the first chair in Comparative Philology at Oxford 1868-1895, and Tolkien's teacher, Joseph Wright (1855-1930), was given a post by Müller in 1888. From 1891 to 1901 Wright was the Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology and then from 1901 to 1925 the Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford. Müller, as the founder of the department and in a sense Tolkien's academic grandfather, would have established the tone and culture of the department at Oxford University. Müller's views were part of Tolkien's everyday academic world, and they had to be reckoned with. It is clear from Tolkien's notes that he found shortcomings in both Müller's theories and those of Andrew Lang concerning the origins of myth and fairy tale (*TOFS* 11, 21-22).
2. This paper was read to a literary society in Westfield College at an unknown time and was afterwards published in 1942 in *Essays and Studies* (Hooper, *Selected Literary Essays* by C.S. Lewis xix).
3. In *Tolkien Cult or Culture?* J.S. Ryan reports that Jungian philosophy and its implications for literature was "a topic known to have been much aired by the Inklings (89). Given this group's interest in myths and the place of the Christian story in relation to myth, this would not be surprising.
4. The Lamarckian theory of inheritance still enjoyed some scientific respectability until the mid-1920s due to weaknesses in the Darwinian theory of inheritance that Darwin himself was well aware of. Specifically, there was the problem that changes could certainly happen much faster than Darwin's theory and the known mechanisms of inheritance would allow. This is part of the reason he created the vague concept of 'pangenesis'. This puzzle was not solved until the late twentieth century with the discovery of the mechanism of epigenesis. However, Lamarckian evolution ceased to be a respectable theory after the scandal detailed in Arthur Koestler's *The Case of the Mid-Wife Toad*.
5. Decades later these photographs were revealed to be the work of children and a hoax.
6. Tolkien's aunt, Edith Mary 'May' Incledon, the sister of Mabel Tolkien, J.R.R.Tolkien's mother, had become an "enthusiastic member" of the International Club for Psychical Research after her husband had forbidden her to attend Roman Catholic services in 1900 (Priestman, *Life and Legend* 36). In her letter of mid-November, 1917, May, who was staying with Edith Tolkien after the birth of their first child, John, addresses the anxious new father, J.R.R. Tolkien, as "Dear old Pet and ancient Lamb." This very sweet greeting conveys an affectionate and warm relationship and is followed by empathic reassurances (Priestman 36). This easy relationship becomes especially evident when this letter is contrasted with the letter from her sister, Aunt (Emily) Jane Neave from October 1, 1937 in which Aunt Jane's imperious tone and trademark punctuation are in full display: "I hasten to all but *demand* instant enlightenment" (Priestman 50 Italics in the original; Bunting, "Tolkien in Love: Pictures from Winter 1912-1913," 7-9). Tolkien was in regular contact with his aunt and the Incledons He would have been familiar with her interests in psychical research as well as her forbidden Catholic sympathies. May died August 24, 1936 from "paralysis agitans" or what we would now call Parkinson's disease. Her death would have followed a period of deterioration during 1936-1937 when Tolkien was writing *The Lost Road*, the time travel story by means of parapsychological methods. Having a family member with active interests in this area would have opened Tolkien to cultural trends that he might not otherwise have investigated. Aunt May was a likely catalyst for this. Awareness of his aunt's deteriorating condition may have led Tolkien to think about her beliefs and made him receptive to any ideas of Jung whose work grew out of the same psychical research background.
7. William James praised Myers' work in "Frederic Myers' Service to Psychology"(1901).
   Beginning as early as 1969 in J.S. Ryan's *Tolkien – Cult or Culture?* the presence of Jungian archetypes in Tolkien's work has been an area of discussion. In particular, the Jungian process of individuation has been explored both by Timothy R. O'Neill in 1979 in relation to *The Lord of the Rings* and by Dorothy Matthews in 1975 in relation to Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit*. More recently, the interpretation of Tolkien's works using archetypes can be found in Grant's "Tolkien: Archetype and Word." However, none of these authors believes that Jung directly influenced Tolkien though he had some familiarity with Jung's theories. This article argues that Tolkien did adopt the concept of the Jungian collective unconscious in relation to his understanding of language.
8. In 1956 Tolkien speaks of only learning "recently" that his son Michael had seemingly inherited Tolkien's "Atlantis" dream (Letters 213). If Tolkien only learned this in the middle-1950s, this information could not have influenced the views put forward in *The Notion Club Papers*. Children of trauma survivors are known to dream their parents' dreams, and siblings of trauma victims can begin to have some of the same fears, behaviors, play, or dreams as their traumatized siblings (Terr 311, 25). We do not know the mechanism of this transmission.

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Creation and Subcreation

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Christian religion played a very important role in Tolkien's life. The basis of his faith was founded in his early childhood by his mother Mabel who, grieved by the sudden death of her husband and John's and his brother's father, was seeking some spiritual help and support in religion. Although born and raised as an Anglican, Mabel found it in Roman Catholicism, and soon she with both her sons converted to it. Tolkien's faith strengthened even more after his mother's death, when he was only twelve years old. He, along with his brother became the wards of Father Francis Morgan, according to Mabel's last Will. He was a priest from the Birmingham Oratory. Father Francis was a close friend of the Tolkiens and he provided assistance to Mabel and her family after her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. At that time the Oratory became J.R.R.T.'s second home and the Catholic religion an everyday part of his life (Carpenter, 2002, pp. 40-51) Even as an adult he regularly attended Catholic masses and his faith was a source of his inner consolidation.

As Tolkien himself noted, "[a]n author cannot remain [...] wholly unaffected by his experience" (Tolkien, 2011, p. xxii). It is conceivable then that he, like many others, incorporated his life's beliefs into his writings. He might have done this unconsciously at first, but soon it turned into a fully conscious and purposeful process, possibly as a result of his self-assessed goal to use his books to better the world.[1] In the later years of his life he concentrated still more and more on the spiritual aspects of his works and their interrelation with religion.

In his essay *On Fairy Stories* he not only established the basic principles of his work, but also explained his insights on the purpose of literature as a means of, and the role of writers as tools for revealing the divine truth. He stated that it is a right of every man as a "sub-creator" to contrive a secondary world that is "derived from Reality, or [...] flowing into it" and so "may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation," (Tolkien, 2001, pp. 37, 71, 73). In other words: "it may be said that the chief purpose of life, for any one of us, is to increase according to our capacity our knowledge of God by all the means we have, and to be moved by it to praise and thanks," (Carpenter, 2006a, p. 400). He believed that man, being created in the image of God, is in his image summoned to create new things of his own, thus contributing to His overall plan of creation. And because "we make still by the law in which we're made" (Tolkien, 2001, p. 55) we should beware misusing our creativity for unholy purposes, but rather aim at promoting goodness and beauty via our work, each according to his capabilities and opportunities.

However, Tolkien distinguishes between the terms creation and sub-creation, the first being exclusive competence of God, because he is the only one who can actually make

things out of nothing, and what's more, he can give them life. Man, on the contrary, is just a sub-creator for he himself is a product of God's creativity; that means that he could not create anything if God had not created him first. Moreover, according to the Christian belief, man can only do what God wants him or allows him to do with respect to the man's free will; much in the same way as characters in a literary work do only what the writer designs them to do.[2] One of the most remarkable interpretations of our total dependence on God's will is that we cannot actually invent anything new and unique, because everything has since ever been in God's mind, so we are only re-inventing or re-discovering his ultimate knowledge.[3] This would justify Tolkien's feeling, that was rather "recording what was already 'there', somewhere: not [...] 'inventing'" (Carpenter, 2006a, p. 145). Nonetheless, in the essay On *Fairy Stories* he explains his understanding of sub-creation in terms of literary art as an ability to make a Secondary World - some kind of alternative reality which, though often altering it and enriching it with fantastic elements, remains true to the laws of the Primary World in which we physically live and is thus believable. In other words, man is called sub-creator, because his creation is subordinate to God's plans.

Returning to the previously mentioned quote with which I began this discussion on sub-creation [4], the most crucial term in the statement is "Reality" which Tolkien understood to be the principal Christian Truth – the story of Jesus Christ. He called this story "the true myth", because it describes a real historical event, but at the same time it "embraces all the essence of fairy-stories" (Tolkien, 2001, p. 72) and qualities of written art as it is indeed a piece of literature. And all the other myths, religious and pagan as well, complement it as in them "God express[ed] Himself through the minds of poets, using the images of their 'mythopoeia' to reveal the fragments of His eternal truth," (Pearce, 1998, p. 59). This view is based exactly on the idea that man, created in God's image, in his essence possesses the ultimate truth, which is, consequently, reflected in his making even though he might not be aware of it. So even the pagan myths are not entirely mistaken, but contain fragments of the true light (Carpenter, 2006b, p. 43).

The relation of myths and fairy-stories to the eternal Truth is, as its primary focus, thoroughly elaborated in the essay *On Fairy Stories*. Indisputably, myths arise from the need to explain the world. The most distinguishable feature of ancient myths is the enormous use of personification, which Tolkien says is a result of the fact, that the first primitive people were much more closely linked to nature and they were more spiritual than modern man is nowadays. They appreciated all living things; fauna and flora, often recognizing them as equally conscious beings, and which embodied natural processes as gods. Yet, the main value of myths was rather to act as teaching and guiding tools on morals, goodness, and social appropriateness. From the Christian point of view, under close inspection we can notice that, although wrong in the execution, myths are often good in their philosophies as they comprise many truthful ideas. The only problem with the veracity of myths is the limited knowledge of their authors of science as well as the true God. Often it happened, that ancient world-views and philosophies seemed somehow incomplete, but after the introduction of Christianity, when the pagan elements were confronted, they suddenly started making sense.[5] Therefore, the pagan myths too complement the glorification of God, as they reveal the ultimate truth in a way and manner corresponding to the level of knowledge of their creators and recipients.

Consequently modern authored stories should do likewise. In concordance with the formerly mentioned purpose of everyone's life, for writers it is almost a must to use their gift of writing to supplement God's creation and so to glorify him. That is how Tolkien viewed his own task and the purpose of his invented mythology, which he privately called the Legendarium - to "[express] his love of God's creation" (Fimi, 2009, p. 45) via his writing. And he chose for it the form of myth because in his opinion it is the form which best suits the human nature. Moreover, myths and fantasy have ever been used to present the truth and teach goodness and morality in an acceptable and unobtrusive way to people who otherwise restrain from any religious content.

Notes:

1. see Garth, 2003, p. 105
2. see Kreeft, 2005, p. 613
3. This is, in fact, very similar to Plato's philosophy of anamnesis. He believed that the process of learning is actually a process of remembering, re-discovering the universal knowledge within us. See Samet, 2008.
4. see Tolkien, 2001, p. 71
5. Something similar can be observed with the ideas of many antique philosophers, for example Aristotle's view that the purpose of life is to search for the ultimate wisdom and beauty, the source of which in Christian understanding is God. See his Nicomachean Ethics.

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Bilbo's Return and the Tichborne Affair

MURRAY SMITH

According to J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins and thirteen dwarves left Bywater on 'one fine morning just before May' (Tolkien 39); and he returned home on 22nd June of the following year, finding it the scene of an auction. Not only were the contents of his home being sold; his cousins the Sackville-Bagginses had inherited it, and 'were, in fact, busy measuring his rooms to see if their own furniture would fit'. The reason for all this was that: 'In short, Bilbo was "Presumed Dead", and not everybody that said so was sorry to find the presumption wrong'. Bilbo's return had legal and social consequences, being 'a great deal more than a nine days' wonder. The legal bother, indeed, lasted for years. It was quite a long time before Mr. Baggins was in fact admitted to be alive again' (282).

Tolkien's portrayal of Bilbo's return and its consequences might have been influenced by the Tichborne Affair (1865-98), an event extremely well-known and influential in its time. It began in 1865 when Thomas Castro, a butcher from Wagga Wagga, in the self-governing UK colony of New South Wales, Australia, claimed to be Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, Baronet, the heir to a title and estate of a long-established, landed English family in Hampshire, who had gone missing, presumed dead, in 1854.

Roger Tichborne and his family:

The Tichborne family was notable for having continued to adhere to the Roman Catholic faith, despite the Reformation. One member, Chidiock Tichborne, was executed for his involvement in a plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I. The first of the family to hold the hereditary title of baronet, Sir Benjamin, Sherriff of Southampton when Elizabeth died in 1603, went immediately to Winchester, and without orders, proclaimed there the accession of King James VI of Scotland to the English crown. That monarch made him a baronet, and his four sons were made knights. His eldest son, Sir Richard, second baronet, was a zealous supporter of the Royalist cause during the Civil Wars of the 1640s (*The Tichborne Claimant* 5-8; *Burke's Peerage* 2231-2; *Debrett's* 845; '*The Tichborne Claimant*' 54: 753-4).

Roger Tichborne was born in Paris on 5th January 1829, the eldest son of James Tichborne and his French wife Harriette-Felicité. He was educated privately and at Stonyhurst College, then joined the British Army. A romance with a cousin was marred by family resistance to their possible marriage due to his drunkenness and smoking. In 1852 the engagement was delayed; he left the army and sailed for South America. Before leaving, he entrusted a sealed document to Vincent Gosford, the steward of the Tichborne estate, later destroyed, but of considerable significance. Roger arrived in Chile, crossed the Andes, and left Rio de Janeiro on the *Bella*, bound for Kingston, Jamaica, on 20th April 1854. Neither the ship nor anyone aboard was seen again. In 1862, his father, who had succeeded as tenth baronet in 1852, died. Roger would have succeeded to the title and estate; but instead both went to his brother Alfred, who bankrupted the estate, causing the lease of Tichborne House, and who was succeeded by his posthumous son, Henry, in 1866. Roger and Alfred's mother, the Dowager Lady Tichborne, still believed Roger to be alive, and in 1863 placed advertisements asking for information on his whereabouts (Annear Chs 2-4; *The Tichborne Claimant* 8-14).

Thomas Castro and his claim:

When Castro came forward in 1865, he claimed he had been rescued by a ship, the *Osprey*, bound for Australia. The name Castro he said he adopted from a man he had met in Melipilla, Chile. His claim was prompted after he was confronted by a local lawyer, William Gibbes–with whom he had business dealings, and whose wife had noted the advertisement placed by the Dowager–remembering that Castro had said he was entitled to property in England (Annear Ch 5; *The Tichborne Claimant* 14-5, 17).

In 1866, Castro wrote to the Dowager, who asked him to return. He did, with a wife and an increasing family, reaching London at the end of the year. He asked for a family called Orton in Wapping, and went to see the Dowager in Paris on 10th January 1867. She recognised him as her son, despite his increased weight, inability to speak French despite it being his native tongue, and having little knowledge of Roger's past. While most of the family believed him to be an imposter, they could do little while the Dowager was alive (Annear Chs 6-13; *The Tichborne Claimant* 15-26).

An examination in Chancery in July 1867 led to the revelation of the sealed document by Gosford, who though he had destroyed it remembered its contents, though he refused to reveal what they were. The Claimant revealed to his legal representatives that he had seduced his cousin and had been told she was pregnant, leaving instructions with Gosford what to do if this was true (Annear Chs 116-21; *The Tichborne Claimant* 26-8).

Enquiries in Australia and South America began to connect him with Arthur Orton, including the family of Thomas Castro, who had no memories of a Roger Tichborne (Annear Chs 23-8; The Tichborne Claimant 28-9, 31-2).

Arthur Orton was born on 20th March 1834, the youngest son of George Orton, a shipping butcher. He had been a sailor, had visited Chile in 1849-51, and in 1852 left for Australia, where he disappeared. The Claimant's attempted visit to the Ortons in 1866 was discovered. While most of that family denied he was a relative, he was identified as such by a former sweetheart (Annear Ch 14; *The Tichborne Claimant* 8, 29-32).

Tichborne v. Lushington and R v. Castro:

In 1868, the Dowager's death cleared the way for legal action. A civil action for ejectment was brought by the Claimant against the lessee of Tichborne House, Colonel Lushington. This case, Tichborne v. Lushington, lasted from 10th May 1871 to 6th March 1872. The case was closely followed, and the contents of the sealed packet were publicly revealed by the Claimant, which turned many against him as a seducer of women at best and a liar at worst. When a former schoolfriend said he had tattooed Roger, with a tattoo the Claimant did not have, the action ended in a non-suit, the Claimant abandoning his case (Annear Chs 29-32; *The Tichborne Claimant* 30, Ch 3).

He was then charged with perjury. Lacking money for legal costs, he toured the country in 1872-3, helped by Liberal MP Guildford Onslow. A huge popular campaign developed, mostly supported by working people, who believed the Claimant's case was representative of the problems people of their class had in obtaining justice from the courts. Subscriptions came in from all over the country, and several Tichborne newspapers appeared to support his cause (Annear Ch 33; *The Tichborne Claimant* Ch 4).

In his criminal case, R v. Castro, he was defended by barrister Edward Kenealy, whose behaviour in the courtroom, including his anti-Catholicism, assisted his defeat. The case lasted from 23rd April 1873 to 28th February 1874, was one of the longest trials in English legal history, and the subject of huge public interest. The summing up by the presiding judge took a month; and the jury found against the Claimant, who was given two sentences of seven years, to be served sequentially. Kenealy's behaviour was also criticised, including his 'violent language and demeanour'; and

he was disbarred for libels in a pro-Tichborne newspaper he founded and edited, the Englishman (Annear Chs 34-7; *The Tichborne Claimant* Ch 5).

He took over the Tichborne movement, created a Magna Carta Association, and was elected an MP in a by-election in 1875, on the strength of the cause, he and his supporters pushing for the Claimant's release. The Claimant was seen as a martyr, and his cause was a subject of great popular agitation. While Kenealy tried to keep the movement under his control, the cause became a vehicle for other radicals. The movement remained strong into the 1880s, and espoused radical causes including opposition to income tax, triennial parliaments, and female suffrage. The religion of the Tichborne family also added a strong anti-Catholic element into the agitation (Annear Ch 38; *The Tichborne Claimant* Chs 6-8).

The Claimant's last years:

Due to good behaviour, the Claimant was released on 11th October 1884. He signed up with a theatrical agent, and had no interest in the Magna Carta Association, which collapsed by 1886. (Kenealy had died in 1880, having lost his seat in the general election of that year, and the leadership of the movement had passed to his son Maurice.) The Claimant appeared in music-halls and circuses around the country in 1885, and went to the United States in 1886 to give lectures, but was unsuccessful, returning home. He and his new wife were reduced to poverty, perhaps why he wrote a confession for the People in 1895 admitting to be Arthur Orton, using the money from this to set up as a tobacconist. However, he immediately retracted the confession after it was published. His business failed; and he was impoverished when he died of heart failure on 1st April 1898; but his death was still noted by the newspapers. They also noted that thousands of spectators came to his funeral, when he was buried in Paddington Cemetery on 6th April. The Tichborne family gave permission for Sir Roger Tichborne's name to be placed on his coffin (Annear Chs 39-40; *The Tichborne Claimant* 167-9, 172-4, 183-5, Ch 14; *Reynold's Newspaper*; *The Daily News*; *The Pall Mall Gazette*; *The Times*).

Legacy:

The cases concerning the Claimant were a significant cultural event in Victorian Britain, opinion being divided on whether he was a villain or a victim of an aristocratic, pro-Catholic conspiracy. A large amount of ephemera about him were produced. His supporters saw his cases as confirming a popular prejudice that the law was corrupt and expensive. While it was seen as inconsistent by some, working people helping one of their own become an aristocrat, in defending his rights they were also defending what they thought were their own. His appearance was also an issue. The Claimant significantly increased in size, due to his liking of food and fine wines, increasing from 18 stone in Christmas 1866, to 21 stone in May 1867, 22 stone in 1868, and 28 stone 4 pounds by 1871 (Annear 115-6; *The Tichborne Claimant* 26). While fat people were figures of fun, his bulk was seen by supporters as a symbol of freedom, like the image of the archetypal Briton, John Bull. He also fitted the image of the 'lost-heir' struggling for his rightful inheritance in nineteenth-century fiction, and that of the pleasure-loving 'toff' who didn't take life seriously (*The Tichborne Claimant* Chs 10-13). Tolkien mentioned early in *The Hobbit* that hobbits 'are inclined to be fat in the stomach', and have dinner 'twice a day when they can get it' (14). The Claimant claimed to be the heir to a Catholic, landed family, and was, like Bilbo, involved in 'legal bother' that lasted for years.

Impossible if part of a work of fiction?

American writer Mark Twain (1835-1910), who had seen the Claimant in London at the time of his trial for perjury, at a party thrown by the latter, later visited Wagga Wagga for that reason, and made this comment on the Affair:

> The fiction-artist could achieve no success with the materials of this splendid Tichborne romance. He would have to drop out the chief characters; the public would say such people are impossible. He would have to drop out a number of the most picaresque incidents; the public would say such things could never happen. And yet the chief characters did exist, and the incidents did happen. (Twain 94-5; *The Tichborne Claimant*, 88-9)

Perhaps Tolkien was influenced by the described Tichborne Affair in his portrayal of Bilbo's return and its consequences. Even if he was not, I believe that the story of the Affair is one worth retelling, one which a great writer like Mark Twain argued would have been called 'impossible' if part of a work of fiction!

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Eucatastrophe: On the Necessity of Sorrow for the Human Person

SKYLER NEBERMAN

Sorrow, loss, sadness, grief; trial and tribulation, are all aspects of the human nature we instantiate and the world we inhabit. To inoculate man against them is to inoculate man from himself. Chesterton observes in his essay "12 Men", that while hearing the case of "a woman who neglected her children, and who looks rather as if somebody or something neglected her" (49):

> There was in this heart a barbaric pity and fear which men have never been able to utter from the beginning, but which is the power behind half the poems of the world. The mood cannot even inadequately be suggested, except faintly by this statement that tragedy is the highest expression of the infinite value of human life. (49)

Tragedy cuts to the heart of things in a way that naught else can; it cuts and convicts us of the sacrosanctity of the human person and shows us truth that cannot be communicated in the same way by any other expression, for with it we can see what is truly good apart from our pettiness and subjectivity. Mere happiness as pleasure and comfort—the "maintenance of well-being" as Mustapha Mond of *Brave New World* declares the "Sovereign Good," (Huxley 177)—cannot compare. And Mond admits it. "Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the overcompensations for misery … Happiness is never grand" (221). But is this even happiness? Are *panem et circenses* the final end of humanity? On the contrary, this extremity of pleasure and comfort that leaves no room whatever for displeasure or discomfort is a nearly insurmountable obstacle to true joy, for it denies the reality of man and the world in which he exists. Both man and his world are broken and tragic, and to deny this is to deny man. Even *A Brave New World* shows this greater sense of happiness or fulfillment when he tells of the parting of ways of Helmholtz, Bernard and the Savage.

> There was a silence. In spite of their sadness—because of it, even; for their sadness was the symptom of their love for one another—the three young men were happy. (242)

The beauty and reality of friendship, even in the sadness of the parting of ways, strengthens the love of that friendship, making it something not just enjoyed, but something suffered for.

It is eminently apparent that mere pleasure and creature comfort become boring all too quickly. As shown in the Twilight Zone episode "A Nice Place to Visit", being instantly gratified with whatever titillation one imagines is quite literally hell. A fantastic example of this is the murderous, child-molesting, rapist-thief Alex from Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex murders, rapes and pillages simply because he "likes to" (40), but come the controversial 21st chapter, Alex grows rather tired of it. His depraved debauchery is just not as titillating anymore. Even such drastic pleasure as unrestrained violence and sex proves ephemeral and eventually fails to satisfy. Oh, we may continue in our old ways, trying to convince ourselves of our unsatisfactory or nonexistent enjoyment, but eventually, if we are honest with ourselves, we face the fact that rape and pillage just ain't doing it anymore. In G.K. Chesterton's *The Ballad of the White Horse*, the Danes sing praise of the lust for women and wine, and fury and hate, but Guthrum, the chief of the Danes, sings in honesty of the futility of these pursuits, for the universe is bereft of meaning, and someday the gods will die. The only comfort is to forget the frigid meaninglessness of the universe in the feverish heat of battle (Bk III), to distract oneself, whether by pleasure or battle, from the omnipotent entropy. But Albert the Great denounces this defeatism, saying he "would rather fall with Adam / [t]han rise with all your gods" (Bk III 13-14):

> Our monks go robed in rain and snow,
> But the heart of flame therein,
> But you go clothed in feasts and flames,
> When all is ice within; (Bk III 349-53)

Such hedonistic escapism is ultimately futile and hopeless. Is it not preferable to happily suffer than to suffer happiness? Human beings are made for more than rape and pillage and popcorn and Netflix. But that is precisely what Mustapha Mond must condition their Brave New People for. They must remake man to be sated by the Hell of instant gratification and hedonism. All in man that is high and heavenly must be reduced out, leaving man a creature of Hell.

This reduction is to accomplish what C.S. Lewis calls "the Abolition of Man" (*The Abolition of Man* 53). Lewis describes the final victory of man over Nature in his victory of his own human nature, creating "Men without Chests," that is, without moral sentiments that are conformed to real, objective value and truth (24-5, 59).

> *Human* nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man. … We shall … be henceforth free to make our species whatever we wish it to be. The battle will indeed be won. But who, precisely, will have won it? (59)

The result is that without the formation of the chest—without grounding in objective goodness and truth—man is left at the mercy of his base appetites (71), made into a subhuman creatures of the hellish "Brave New World" who can aspire to nothing more than endless, hedonistic

appeasement of their animal appetites.

What's largely missing from this ideology is *Sorrow*. Sorrow is essential to true human flourishing because it is a truth of the broken nature of man and the world he inhabits, and so it must be caught up in man's final end, and cannot be ignored in search of that end. J.R.R. Tolkien coins the term "eucatastrophe" to refer to the "sudden and joyous "turn" in a fairy story. "It does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary for the joy of deliverance. It denies … universal final defeat … giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy. Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief" ("On Fairy-stories" 85-6). This cuts to the heart of the matter—joy as poignant as grief, and I would take it the one step further: Grief as precious as joy. Eucatastrophe is larger than the sentiment it inspires, but the sentiment itself is immensely important. Lewis talks of the chest as the seat of rightly ordered emotions and the convergence of the head and the belly, of intellect and appetite (*The Abolition of Man* 24-5). This centrality of the chest is a microcosm of man's place in the universe as the convergence of spirit and matter, and the chest lies at the center of man and his nature. Lacking this all-important sentiment of the consolation arising from the reconciliation of Joy and Sorrow, man is denied the piercing glance of truth that it enables, as well as the hope that it supplies.

One may rightly argue that sorrow cannot finally be its own end, that humans are meant to seek happiness and joy, and this is quite right, but sorrow is so intimately wedded to joy in this world that to abolish the former is to irrevocably damage the latter. Why else should we have the wholly peculiar habit of crying when we are happy? The consolation at the end of Pixar's *UP* is not so because it stands in contradiction over the tragedy of the first act, but because the joy and sorrow therein are wedded, mingled the joy of a new life and a new hope in Carl's fatherhood to Russell with the sorrow of the completion and fulfillment of his life with Ellie. Pixar's *Inside Out* hones this theme by depicting the literal struggle between the personified Sadness and Joy. In the end, Joy is not enough; it is only through the recognition of the unity and necessity of Sadness and Joy that consolation and hope are found. Sorrow is like the sharp lance that wounds us so that joy and hope can enter to heal and console us. As Tolkien writes in *The Return of the King*, "all the host laughed and wept … their hearts, wounded with sweet words, overflowed, and their joy was like swords, and they passed in thought out to regions where pain and delight flow together and tears are the very wine of blessedness" (232). We are so hardened by mere "happiness", the pursuit of pleasure and comfort and the reduction of all displeasure and discomfort, that sorrow is needed to wound us, to cut through our stony hearts so that truth, hope, and joy may enter.

This understanding of joy as being intimately tied up with sorrow can be traced back to as early as the Book of Job. Chesterton says that when—in one of the most dramatic moments of the whole Bible—God answers Job's questioning of the Divine Will with more questions,

> He has been told nothing, but he feels the terrible and tingling atmosphere of something which is too good to be told. The refusal of God to explain His design is itself a burning hint of His design. The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man. (99)

"Job is tormented, not because he is the worst of men, but because he is the best. … This paradox of the best man in the worst fortune" makes Job the truest type of Christ, whose wounds Job prefigures. "It is the lesson of the whole work that man is most comforted by paradoxes" (102). And so this paradox points forwards to what is the central paradox of Christianity, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of the Christ. This is the supreme example of eucatastrophe, as Tolkien says: "the Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation." Each eucatastrophe looks to this "Great Eucatastrophe" ("On Fairy-stories" 88-9). From Job to *Inside Out* to *The Lord of the Rings*, each images the eschatological Joy of the Resurrection that is wedded so completely to the catastrophe of the Crucifixion. This supreme paradox gives rise to Augustine's supreme eucatastrophic exclamation: "O felix culpa", "O, happy fault, that gained for us so glorious a redeemer." In these short lines are contained all the numinous depth of this broken world, and all the heartbreaking joy of its beauty and redemption. Here at last, man finds purpose, consolation, and hope in his brokenness, whether within Christianity or without, whether in Creation or in Fantasy. Here, in the marriage of Sorrow and Joy, man catches a glimpse of the mystery of God, "like light seen for an instant through the cracks of a closed door" (Chesterton, "The Book of Job," 102).

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The Holy Fellowship: Holiness in *The Lord of the Rings*

NICHOLAS J.S. POLK

Before diving into this theological treatment of *The Lord of the Rings* I want to clarify that an argument for allegory is in no way, shape, or form being made here. The aim of this article is to shine a light on the theological implications of patience and holiness in the quest of the Fellowship, which have been directly influenced by Tolkien's Catholicism. Ralph C. Wood is helpful here, "A…far more serious complaint against Tolkien's Christian interpreters is that we are wrong to find any traces of the gospel in his book, since it contains no formal religion… Yet there is a deeper reason for Tolkien's omission of formal religion from his book. He makes the mythical world of Middle-earth non-religious, among other reasons, in order that we might see Christianity reflected in it more clearly if also indirectly." He then quotes from Tolkien's Letters, "'The religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.'"[1] It is my hope that this interpretation assists the reader in painting a more complete picture of who J.R.R. Tolkien was and to determine the value of his writings in order to improve the life of the reader of Tolkien, to encourage her to continually pursue the Good, which is the shared aim of Christianity and the members of the Fellowship.

Throughout history, patience has been considered one of the highest virtues. Extending as far back as the earliest recorded writings of religion and human civilization, it continues to establish its place among modern virtues. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* the manifestation of patience is veiled throughout all three parts. It is not simply a literary theme that runs through Tolkien's writings, but it is evident that patience is a virtue that Tolkien held in high esteem. Patience ripples throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, and his other works such as *Leaf by Niggle*, Tolkien's pseudo-autobiographical short story. Tolkien writes, "He used to spend a long time on a single leaf, trying to catch its shape, and its sheen, and the glistening of dew drops on its edges. Yet he wanted to paint a whole tree, with all of its leaves in the same style, and all of them different." [2] This kind of patience is implicitly related to Tolkien's Orthodox Christian influence and is a key component to understanding *The Lord of the Rings* as a whole.

The most profound student of patience throughout the story is the hobbit, Frodo Baggins. The reader learns early on in *The Fellowship of the Ring* that Frodo is ready to jump into adventure at a moment's notice. Bilbo informs Gandalf after his eleventieth birthday party, "He would come with me, of course, if I asked him. In fact he offered once, just before the party." Readers can relate to Frodo in a similar matter: human beings are eager to run after the next big thing in this life, longing for something to mix up the everyday routine. Initially this kind of longing is harmless, but it can cause one to get in the way of their true identity. Bilbo continues his observation of Frodo, "But he does not really want to, yet. I want to see the wild country again before I die, and the Mountains; but he is still in love with the Shire, with woods and fields and little rivers. He ought to be comfortable here." [3] Bilbo speaks of contentment, even in his own yearning to travel the outside world once more before he dies. A love for home is the primary value for the hobbits of the Shire as well as for all of the good inhabitants of Middle-earth, to live in humility, in smallness. It is this true nature that puts Frodo in touch with his patient side.

It is patience that drives Frodo to continually face the challenges on his journey, and it is patience that ultimately wins the day for the Fellowship. Turning to a biblical understanding of patience as Paul explains it and what is required to be a person of high moral standards (Gal. 5:22), is a key to unlocking the holy life. The ancient Greek for patience is *markothumia* (μακροθυμία). The modern English translation of "patience" does not give full merit to the characteristics of the virtue that Paul explicates upon. While "patience" can leave a bland impression, its content will shine a light onto the progression of Frodo and what Tolkien held to be of extreme importance in approaching Fantasy while also applying to everyday living. In Gerhard Kittel's mammoth *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* he gives insight into what Paul meant by patience, "*markothumia* can never imply irresolution on the part of God, as though he could decide only after a period of waiting…God's patience does not overlook anything. It simply sees further than man. It has the end view. It has the true insight which knows best." [4] It is this surrender to the oversight of the Good in *The Lord of the Rings* that brings all things together and to their fullness. A perfect example is the discourse between Frodo and Gandalf after Frodo confesses his desire for Gollum's death when Bilbo first encountered the creature, "Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need." Gandalf's wisdom never falls short: "Many that live deserve death. And many that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many—yours at least." [5] Gandalf's wise insight into the patient person serves the dual purpose of lesson and foreshadow. Frodo surrenders himself to the will of the good

and finds the patience to pity Gollum and in the end it is the shared pity of Frodo and Bilbo that determines the fate of the Ring and Middle-earth. Frodo extends his gaze beyond himself which in turn aligns him with his true Self.

While holiness embodies a different meaning than patience, they are two sides of the same coin and must be examined together. This is especially the case in observing where the friends of the Fellowship begin and where they ultimately arrive. In similar fashion to approaching Frodo's transformation, a surveillance of Aragorn's personal development shall be in order. Holiness from a biblical understanding is a philosophical way of being and a way of acting. Returning to Tolkien's Catholicism, holiness as understood by Tolkien and absorbed from him by the Fellowship is rooted in the Old Testament. The biblical-Hebrew term for "holy" is the word *qodesh* (קֹדֶשׁ), which translates "to be separated." William Greathouse, a holiness scholar, explicates, "It is here that the ethical aspect becomes dominant. It is essentially a personal concept and becomes the basis for the prophetic call to the ethical requirements of [a] covenant." [6] It is this separateness that sets Aragorn and the remaining members of the Fellowship apart from many of the other noble warriors of Middle-earth, through their vow to destroy the One Ring. Even when Boromir fails to live up to the moral requirements laid upon him at the birth of the Fellowship, Aragorn exemplifies his commitment to ethical duty:

> "'Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed.'
> 'No!' said Aragorn, taking his hand and kissing his brow. 'You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace! Minas Tirith shall not fail!' Boromir smiled." [7]

When someone of righteous character carries out a holy act it holds the potential for contagious and redemptive qualities.

Holiness is not a stagnant reality, however. It is a state of being in which its practitioner is continually reoriented towards the will of the Good despite oneself. Aragorn, among his companions, has every right to dismiss his allegiance to the quest under the shadow of frustration and hopelessness. But it is his undying commitment to the Good that keeps Aragorn steadfast, while at the same time inspiring others to endure hardships in light of hope. It is an awesome quality to possess. Greathouse lays out an all-encompassing definition of holiness, "(1) Awefulness, plenitude of power that evokes dread and a sense of divine wrath; (2) overpoweringness, plenitude of being, absolute unapproachableness; (3) urgency, vitality, will, force, movement, excitement, activity, energy that the mystic experiences as 'consuming fire;' (4) being: the "Wholly Other," different, in a category separate to himself, transcendent, supernatural; and (5) compelling, fascinating, giving rise to spiritual intoxication, rapture, and exaltation." [8] Throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn reveals himself to be terrible, powerful, and pure all at the same time. For example: Aragorn and Eomer's charge on the wildmen rammers in the Battle of Helm's Deep allowed for the men of the Mark to reinforce the iron gate and Aragorn's speech at the Battle at the Black Gate inspired those who had left their hope with the corpses that scattered the fields of Pellenor to give themselves on behalf of a diminishing hope. It is this sacrifice on behalf of this small hope that embodies the ultimate Good in Middle-earth. This comes to its climax in the coronation of Aragorn as King. Aragorn goes on to articulate the custom of the loremasters: that the new king receives the crown from the former king or goes alone to take it from the tomb of his forefather. Putting self-glorifying tradition aside, Aragorn tasks Faramir to fetch the crown. He goes a step further and requests to receive the crown from Frodo

and to be crowned by Gandalf, who he humbly admits that if it were not for their loyalty, he would not have a crown to place on his brow nor a kingdom to rule. This is what the patient person looks like; this is the essence of holiness.

What makes the perseverance of Frodo and the consistent honor of Aragorn so intriguing is their quality of looking beyond themselves. The illusion of power plagued the minds of many a good people of Middle-earth. It is the false promise of long life through the avenue of self-righteousness that drives Isildur to keep the Ring rather than destroy it, and what twists Smeagol into the creature Gollum. Self-righteousness is the highest form of sin in Middle-earth, not for the sake of being a sin, but because it promises something it cannot provide. In fact, it deceives the supposed beneficiary to their demise. The Ring betrays Isildur and takes his life, and it seduces Smeagol from who he was born to be. When one gives into self-lust its effects are immediate. It rushes the person to act on behalf of their own gain, and to do everything necessary to attain greatness. It is much like

looking into a "fun mirror" at a fair or circus. One's stature becomes taller or skinnier when peering into the mirror, but the longer one stares into their false reflection the opposite effect begins to infect the viewer. The image projected in the mirror increases the desired stature, but the inactivity of the true self infects the individual with laziness and isolation because of their obsessive fixation on a picture of themselves that does not even exist. This fixation is what Shadow thrives on and it is its antithesis that I will now turn to.

Patience and holiness go hand-in-hand when attempting to understand Tolkien's values as a Catholic man and author, and their presence in *The Lord of the Rings* as a whole. As these two sides of the coin have been touched on, I will now present the coin itself: humility or smallness. While holiness and patience take part in comprising humility, it is humility itself that encompasses the entirety of *The Lord of the Rings*, the legendarium of Middle-earth, and Tolkien's writings. While the Ring falsely promises power, humility continually brings the individual closer to herself, humanity, and the world. It invites the Good to fill up one's life and guide them to righteousness. Brother David Steindl-Rast states it in this manner, "to be humble means simply to be earthy… If we accept and embrace the earthiness of our human condition we shall find ourselves doing so with humble pride. In our best moments humility is simply pride that is too grateful to look down on anyone." [9] When one is able to embrace humility they are able to embrace what it means to be human. It is what makes Gandalf so wise and Aragorn so worthy of praise, because they deny that these attributes arise out of any individual ambition. Rather, they flower from the desire to surrender to the will of the Good.

Tolkien addressed humility with utmost importance. It was his consistent desire to apply smallness to every aspect of his life, especially in regards to Middle-earth and fantasy. The Professor emphasizes its importance in his essay *On Fairy-Stories*, "He who would enter into the Kingdom of Faërie should have the heart of a little child. For that possession is necessary to all high adventure, into kingdoms both less and greater than Faërie. But humility and innocence—these things 'the heart of a child' must mean in such a context—do not necessarily imply an uncritical wonder, nor indeed an uncritical tenderness." [10] Humility is the key to entering our humanness and the Kingdom of Faërie. To be humble is to surrender to the Good and live to our fullest capacity. As we continue to read Tolkien and persevere through life's journey, may we approach them both with the heart of a child.

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Letters to the Editor

I'm writing to thank you for the excellent issue of Mallorn, and to offer my whole-hearted support for your plans for its development.
Sue

Dear Ms. Haddon,
Congratulations for your work on Mallorn, the articles I have read so far were very interesting.
Eduardo

Dear Ro,
Well, what a wonderful edition of Mallorn, so professionally put together and also with excellent articles...I was particularly drawn to Tolkien's first notebook and the excellent piece by Logan Quigley. The cover was particularly bold and maybe some might find untypical, but I loved it. In my opinion this is what being a member of the TS is about, but I am profoundly aware that many disagree with me. Do carry on the good work and well done.
Mick

LÚTHIEN'S LULLABY FOR DIOR

By Jane Beal

I sing a song for you, my son,
Dior, darling Eluchíl, future King of Doriath!
I sing a song of love for you, my son –

Before you, before me, there was my mother,
Melian the Maia, who lived in Valinor,
and served the Valar, and saw the light of the Two Trees
with her own far-seeing eyes.
In the gardens of lovely Lórien,
she took on the form of the fairest Eldar
and taught the nightingales to sing.
She was standing in a glade open to the stars
when my father, Elwë Singollo, came fast to her,
and took her hand, so that, with that touch,
they were both enchanted and stood for years together
as the trees grew around them and the stars wheeled overhead.

Before you were born, I was born,
in the Kingdom of a Thousand Caves, in mighty Menegroth,
in Beleriand, protected by the Girdle of Melian,
and they called me the fairest of the Children of Eru Iluvatar.
I grew and sang and danced, free in my forest of trees,
to the sound of a secret flute, and there, your father
found me, as my mother knew he would, at moonrise,
but I vanished, even as he called me Tinúviel, daughter of twilight.
By doom and by destiny, oath-bound and enchanted,
we two became one on a journey to do justice:
I shifted shape to set your father free, and he
cut the Silmaril from Morgoth's Iron Crown.

Now I know the future, and the hard sorrow that it holds,
as I look ahead through a veil, like my mother before me,
and I see the wide waterfall of Lanthir Lamath,
and Nimloth, your bride, and Elured and Elurin, your mighty sons,
and Elwing, your darling daughter, the Star-Spray of Night.
I see the defeat of the Dwarves, at your deft hand,
and Nauglamir – ah, Nauglamir! – the necklace you will bring me
to avenge my father's death, shining with the Silmaril
your father cut from Morgoth's Iron Crown,
so that I will wear it and so that the Land of the Dead Who Live,
and even this green isle of Tol Galen,
will be filled, in the new near, with the last light of Yavanna's Two Trees.

One day, your father will die in his last battle,
and I, too, will die, for I have Chosen,
but you will live until you are slain
and descend into the Halls of Mandos.

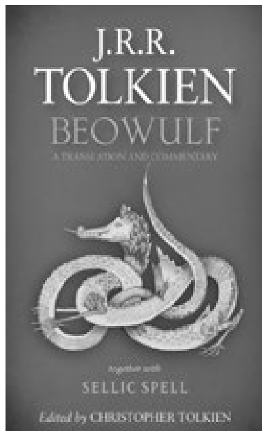
I sing a song for you, my son,
Dior, darling Eluchíl, future King of Doriath!
I sing a song of love for you, my son,
chosen before Time for the triune blood
that flows like a fountain of hope through your veins

from the far-seeing Maiar, the immortal Eldar,
and the swift Edain, your father's people,
the ones who live and die,
for a doom Eru Iluvatar deems,
and I know, my sweet son, lying innocent in my arms,
that you bear within your beautiful body
the whole future of Middle-earth.

Dr. Jane Beal is a poet, literary scholar, and associate researcher at the University of California, Davis. Her writing on J.R.R. Tolkien appears in *This Rough Magic, The Journal of Tolkien Studies*, and *The J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia*. Her poem, "Luthien's Lullaby," is being adapted for musical performance for the Tolkien Society meeting in Kalamazoo, Michigan (May 2016). She is currently writing a monograph on love and redemption in the mythology of Middle-earth. To learn more, see sanctuarypoet.net.

Beowulf

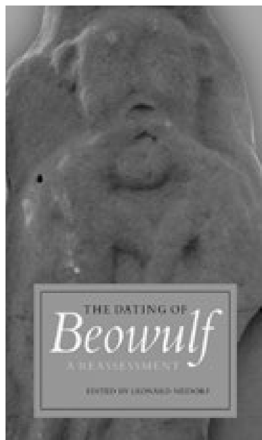
NELSON GOERING



Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary

by J.R.R. Tolkien.

HarperCollins, 2014. Pp. xiv + 425.



The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment

edited by Leonard Neidorf.

D.S. Brewer, 2014. Pp. x + 250.

Every year – indeed, virtually every week – sees its share of scholarly publications on *Beowulf*, that most famous of Old English poems. In the midst of this usual torrent, 2014 saw the appearance of two works which stand out for their inherent interest, and for their concern with the philological and textual side of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. The first of these, in more sense than one, was J.R.R. Tolkien's *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*, which was published posthumously in May. This was followed in August by a collection of scholarly essays entitled *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment*, edited by Leonard Neidorf. Aside from the coincidence of date, these two books each cast light on how *Beowulf* specifically, and Old English literature in general, can be approached in various philological ways, and together provide a partial sketch of the history of linguistic and textual studies in the field during the past 90 years or so.

Matters of intellectual history stand at the fore in *The Dating of Beowulf*, to take the latter first. This is not the first book with this title: it directly echoes a 1981 collection, simply *The Dating of Beowulf* with no subtitle, edited by Colin Chase. This earlier volume grew out of a conference held the year before at the University of Toronto, and was a major factor in casting doubt on the previous consensus that *Beowulf* was an 'early' poem, from the eighth century (in this it was aided by two nearly-contemporary monographs, one by Ashley Crandell Amos from 1980 and the other by Kevin Kiernan from 1981). Though outside of *Beowulf* studies the years 1980-1 may not seem especially portentous, their impact has long been an established part of the mythology of the field.

In his introduction to the 2014 volume, Neidorf summarizes this historical legend, and places it within a more general historiographical context. He sees the decades since 1980-1 as marked not only by debate and agnosticism about the date of *Beowulf*, but also by an increasing attention to philological methods that might be used to date the poem more precisely: evidence of grammar and metre, of palaeography and copying errors, of names and vocabulary, all of which might have chronological implications. Neidorf is at pains to emphasize that these approaches are not simply a return to older philological orthodoxies, but represent a fuller and deeper examination of these questions and bodies of evidence than had ever been undertaken before. The pre-1980's consensus of an eighth-century *Beowulf*, he says, was based first and foremost on scholars' judgement about precisely which time and place in Anglo-Saxon England would have provided the best political, religious, and artistic context for the poem. Early scholars had mostly felt that such suitability was to be found relatively early in this period, perhaps around the time of Bede; several of the arguments presented at Toronto argued that some other time – most popularly that of Alfred the Great or one of his successors – might provide as good a cultural context, or a better.

Neidorf's observation that the 1980's objections to an early date were grounded in more or less the same terms as the earlier consensus gives rise to one of the main threads running through many of the essays in the 2014 volume: that the most interesting question is not so much *when* the poem dates to (though the contributors to this collection are largely in agreement in placing it, once again, in the earlier eighth century), but *why* we should favour one date over another. Philological methodologies are most explicitly discussed by R.D. Fulk in the first essay in the book, which offers a succinct and clear summary of ideas he had presented at greater length in his classic 1992 book, *A History of Old English Meter* (a work which is referenced repeatedly in this volume as a turning point in the dating controversy). Some of the essays go beyond philology, and consider the possible relationship of technical philological approaches to Anglo-Saxon studies in general, and to the literary criticism of Old English poems in particular.

A core set of essays deals head-on with evidence of various sorts for the date of *Beowulf*: Fulk writes on language, Neidorf on scribal errors and the currency of heroic legend,

Hartman and Bredehoft on metrical structure (as opposed to linguistic evidence observed with the help of the metre, discussed by Fulk), Hill on cultural context, and Pascual on the changing semantics of words. Some of the contributions highlight new evidence, such as Pascual's tracking of the shifting meanings of the words *scucca* and *þyrs* from 'monster' to '(Christian) devil', while others bring new emphasis to older ideas. The two metrical essays, by Hartman and Bredehoft, stand out in this regard, with the latter highlighting the dynamism of Old English metre, and the former contrasting the self-conscious archaising of 'later' (tenth-century) poems such as *Judith* and *The Battle of Brunanburh* with the richer and more varied archaic features of *Beowulf*. None of these essays claims to find absolute proof of an 'early' (eighth-century) poem, but it must be admitted that the collection of so many varied approaches does much to exemplify the running theme that the dating of any Old English poem, *Beowulf* included, rests on weighing a wide range of factors.

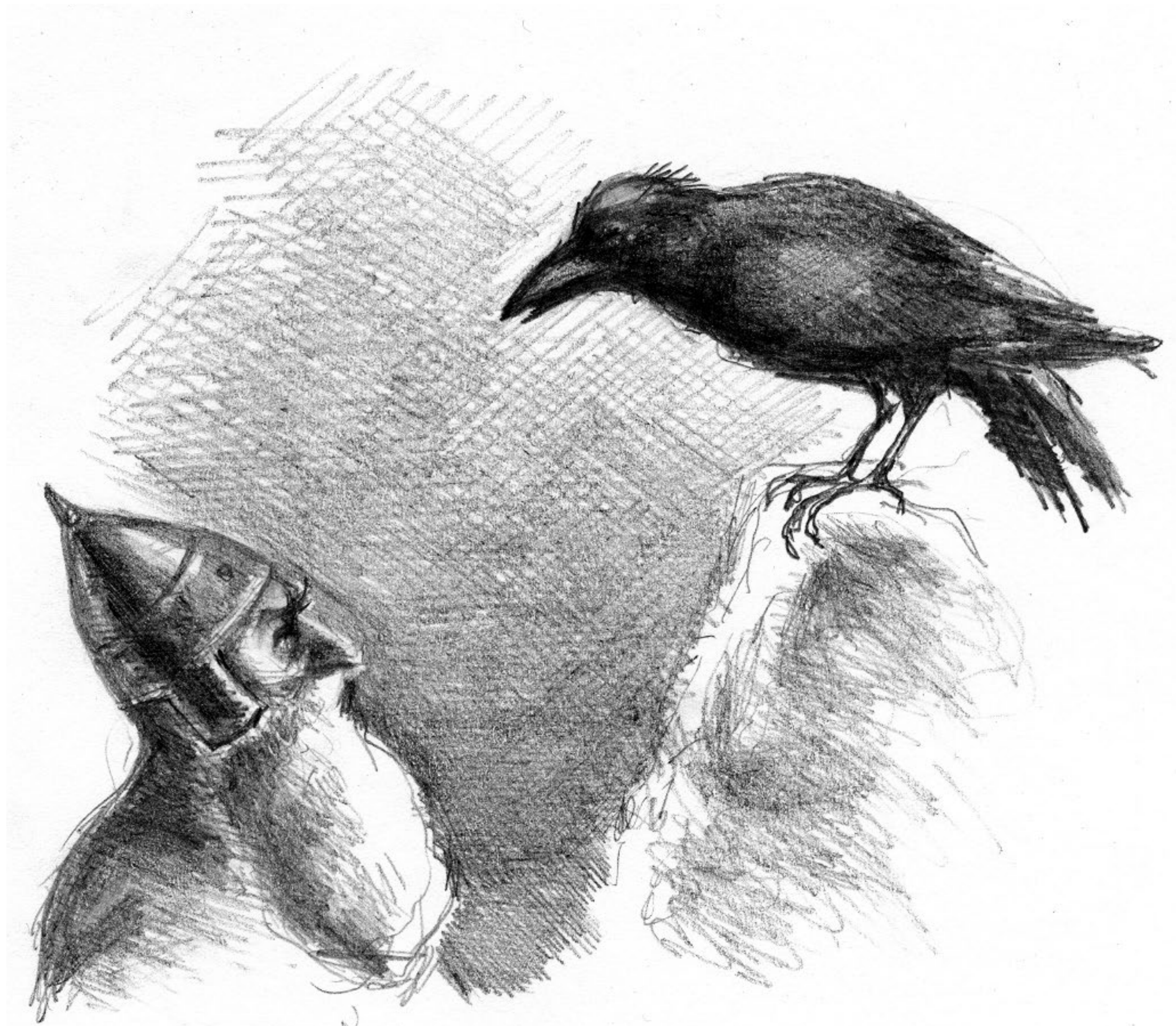
The emphasis of a broad range of factors is in general well-served by the impressive range of background literature cited in many of the essays. Several of the contributions, most notably Neidorf's introduction and the opening chapter by Fulk, are highly retrospective, and should be of great use to a student (or scholar) attempting to get to grips with the by-now vast range of scholarship spawned by the dating controversy. Most unfortunately, these references are only given in footnotes, and there are no collected, alphabetized bibliographies, either for the individual chapters or for the volume as a whole: this is a very serious flaw for a work so deeply embedded in the research of the past several decades. This practical matter aside, this extensive reference to earlier scholarship gives the volume a heft and breadth of content that might not be immediately obvious from its rather slim physical proportions (including the index, the book runs to no more than 250 pages). Taken together, the new articles in this collection and the mass of works cited from the past few decades paint a picture of contemporary philological work on Old English, which, however dusty it may seem to some, remains a vital field, with continuing potential for new and interesting study.

A number of the essays respond to specific issues that have been cited since 1980-1 in favour of a 'late' *Beowulf*. Dennis Cronan, for instance, addresses the much-discussed fact that Scyld, Hrothgar's illustrious ancestor praised so highly in the exordium of *Beowulf*, is also found in the genealogies of the West Saxon kings. Since the first *Dating of Beowulf* volume, this has been seen as a major argument for placing *Beowulf* later, perhaps to the reign of Athelstan: the idea is that the celebrated common ancestor figure of Scyld might have been employed as a politically useful symbol for ideologically assimilating the Danes under the West Saxon hegemony of tenth-century England. Dennis Cronan flips this argument on its head, bringing in evidence that the praise of Scyld as presented in *Beowulf* could only serve to highlight the English kings as the junior branch of this royal line, subordinate to the Danish kings rather than vice versa.

George Clark responds to a more recent phase in the debate. In 2007 Roberta Frank gave a lecture, later published in *Speculum*, which is now well-known as the most recent clear statement against an early dating of the poem; many of the essays in this volume reference this piece, but Clark engages directly with her main arguments. Frank had attempted to dismiss two specific but important types of evidence for an early date: the metrical phenomenon of Kaluza's law, and a particular complex of scribal errors made in the copying out of our sole extant manuscript. Clark does rebut Frank's points effectively enough, but reading his response I could not help but worry that the highly iconic status of these criteria – especially Kaluza's law, a body of linguistic-metrical evidence that suggests the *Beowulf* poet retained the archaic linguistic feature of unstressed vowel length, only possible at a relatively early date – has led to an oversimplification of the philological issues. Frank had dealt with Kaluza's law only in a relatively narrow manner, discussing just one very particular subset of the evidence, and Clark, while raising pertinent objections to her specific claims, follows her in this. This is an unfortunate simplification of a topic that has great potential interest far beyond its implications for dating.

Michael Drout's essay turns from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, focusing on the rhetorical aspects of the debate. Drout sets out in part to investigate whether the 1980 *Dating* conference was 'entirely on the level', and goes on to discuss the rhetorical devices used to challenge the then-prevailing consensus of an 'early' *Beowulf*. In the process, Drout gives the results of a fascinating historiographical study conducted with the help of two of his students, in which he convincingly shows that the 1980 conference did indeed challenge a very widespread consensus. This is perhaps implicitly contrasted with the current volume, which, as already noted, grows out of decades of research. Still, how far a contrast of the two *Dating* volumes along these lines can be taken is probably open to doubt: we can recognize that the 1981 volume was a break with tradition, and that its editor employed various rhetorical strategies to support his views of the import of the conference and collection, without these things necessarily being 'off the level'.

The remaining contributions touch on date more indirectly, focusing on other issues of cultural background and literary interpretation. Joseph Harris, for instance, provides a delightful discussion of a relatively minor point – the existence of a monastery at *Heruteu* 'Heorot Island', now Hartlepool in County Durham – which flourished in the seventh and eighth centuries. Frederick M. Biggs and Tom Shippey both discuss the poet's use of legend and history. Biggs offers a detailed analysis of the one securely historical episode in *Beowulf*, Hygelac's Frisian raid, and uses it as a point of departure to thoughtfully examine the poet's use and adjustment of his or her source material. Shippey's essay deals with, effectively, all the rest: all the legendary elements without such clear historical corroboration. He argues that there are a great many indications that the legendary history employed by the poet was of a well-known and traditional



sort, and may furthermore have a much stronger connection to (pre-)historical events in the fifth and sixth centuries than is generally assumed today. These essays go beyond the question of date – though this is certainly touched on, especially by Shippey – and amount to a defence of a mode of literary interpretation informed by the broader study of Germanic antiquities. In his advocacy for such approaches, Shippey's comments in particular parallel the general view of the changing role of philological method outlined in the introduction: he does not argue for a simple return to the 'old-fashioned' views of the early 20th century, but for a new reconsideration of the relationship between *Beowulf* and archaeological-historical-legendary evidence based on more recent research in these other fields (he cites a healthy sampling of recent developments in these other areas by way of illustration).

The question of literary interpretation is most directly addressed in Allen J. Frantzen's afterword to the volume; the broad implications claimed by this essay for Beowulf studies in general warrant a somewhat more in-depth discussion

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of this final contribution. Franzten's piece is aptly titled '*Beowulf* and Everything Else', and ranges widely from the uses of philology in dating the poem, to the implications of an early date for literary interpretation, to relatively abstract questions of literary-critical approaches in general. The breadth of this discussion is indicative of how emblematic the question of 'date' has become for *Beowulf* studies, standing in not just for specific philological controversies, but for how literary readings of the poem are to be constrained, if at all. Frantzen highlights clearly enough how an early date might constrain the specifics of some literary approaches: for instance, a pre-Viking Age *Beowulf* obviously precludes interpretations deriving any particular aspects of the poem from Athelstan's political projects. But Frantzen could, perhaps, have highlighted how trivial such constraints are in the large view. After all, philological constraints on interpretation are already tacitly accepted by every single scholar of the poem active today. Nobody, to my knowledge, reads *Beowulf* as a product of the age of Chaucer, or as the work of Shakespeare, or as a poem contemporary with the *Iliad*: obvious[1] philological and cultural considerations rule out these possibilities and place *Beowulf* within the span of a few centuries on one relatively small island on the margins of Europe. There are no true agnostics about the date of *Beowulf*. In principle, narrowing the probable span of time in which the poem may have been composed – the central unifying theme of this volume – can only change the limits of critical readings in detail, not in kind.

Frantzen, however, claims that there are in fact more abstract connections between philological method and literary approaches. He praises the probabilistic methodology of much technical philology, and argues that the same principles can and should be applied to literary criticism, in contrast to more unconstrained approaches which 'will continue to multiply possibilities rather than assess probabilities'. The multiplicative views he means are, presumably, the 'ahistoricizing, formalist approaches', particularly 'much feminist, gender, and post-colonial criticism', which he criticizes earlier on. The conversation that Frantzen is here weighing in on is a narrowly literary one, and we should be wary of any attempt to link it too closely to the dating of *Beowulf*, or technical philology in general. Philological and historicizing approaches to *Beowulf* may well be connected by a common interest in the poem as an artefact produced in time, but it is difficult to see just what it is about an eight-century *Beowulf*, or about recognizing the validity of Kaluza's law (including its philological underpinnings), or about taking a more historical literary approach, that makes the poem inherently less conducive to, say, giving critical attention to the poem's gender dynamics. The deeper question Frantzen touches on is whether literary criticism need view the poem historically at all, something on which technical philology has nothing to say: philology is not a game-piece in a literary debate, and accepting philological arguments for an early *Beowulf* does not necessarily entail taking any particular critical approach. Whether or not one shares any of Frantzen's feelings about contemporary literary theory – a matter which would require a week's comment or none, so I set it aside here – ending the entire volume on this note may create a false impression about how the arguments of this book relate to the literary concerns of many working in *Beowulf* studies today.

Although the implications of *The Dating of Beowulf* may not be quite as far reaching as Frantzen suggests, the book is nonetheless significant and successful. Even if there are other ways of approaching the poem, understanding *Beowulf* in a wider cultural context remains an important task, and the date of the poem within the Anglo-Saxon period plays a large role in determining its historical background. This volume makes a very strong case for an 'early' *Beowulf*, with the poem existing in substantially the form we know it already in the eighth century, and does so without, for the most part, the over-wrought rhetoric and polemics that unfortunately at times characterize discussions of the poem's date. This certainly need not see an end to all further discussion of date, but an 'undated' (that is, slightly less narrowly dated) poem no longer appears to be the safe default position it has served as for the past several decades. More generally, the many contributions to this volume highlight the liveliness of philological and historical approaches, regardless of their consequences for dating or anything else. The most important impact this book could have is not in convincing people of the century of *Beowulf*'s composition, but in sparking further interest in linguistics, palaeography, metrics, and historical contexts, and encouraging real discussion of these topics on their own terms.

J.R.R. Tolkien's *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*, which appeared earlier the same year, is a reflection of approaches and concerns of a very different time in *Beowulf* studies. Despite its recent publication, this is not a new book, and consists of a translation first made in 1926 – when Tolkien was 34 years old and just heading into the central portion of his career – followed by a 'commentary' drawn from lecture notes used while teaching at Oxford in the 1930's and '40's. Also included at the end are two shorter creative texts: *Sellic Spell*, a reworking of the first part of *Beowulf* in the style of a folk tale, and *The Lay of Beowulf*, a very short ballad recounting Beowulf's victory over Grendel and his mother. All these texts are selected and edited by Tolkien's son, Christopher Tolkien, who also provides introductions and textual notes to the various parts.

The translation itself is in some ways the least exciting part of this book. It is written in a highly archaising form of modern English, and the syntax in particular is often elaborate, to say the least. It is not that Tolkien merely adheres to the word order of the original: he inverts, for instance, the *þæt wæs gōd cyning* of the poem to *a good king was he*. Readers will also be struck by the sustained 'chivalric' tone of the vocabulary, which is rich in *knights*, *esquires*, *lieges*, *princes*, and the like. Such an approach is very much out of fashion, and even a sympathetic reader may be put off by some aspects of Tolkien's style. That said, the translation as a whole is in no way terrible, and some passages, such as

Wiglaf's speeches, turn out very well indeed. There are also various ornamental elements, such as occasional alliteration and a marked rhythmic quality – though the translation in certainly does not adhere to the strict rules of Old English metre – which give the work a distinctive and not unpleasing tone.

The nature of this translation, stylistically so out of step with current taste, has already generated considerable comment. Some have speculated that Tolkien was even ashamed of this translation, or else that he used it purely as a private crib, an aid for himself in teaching the poem; the implication in both cases being that it should never have been published, and should not be read as a literary translation. As it happens, neither of these claims is supported by such evidence as we have. We do not know for sure why Tolkien wrote this translation in the first place, though an obvious answer would be that he was not entirely satisfied with the translations of others, and wanted to try his own hand at the challenge. What we do know is that Tolkien made attempts to get it published (see Scull and Hammond 2006, p. 85), a move which generally suggests that an author intends a text for more than personal, private use. For better or worse, this translation must stand for itself, without excuse or apology.

More interesting, perhaps, than trying to give Tolkien's translation a rating out of ten is to ask what it says about his reading of the poem. In many ways, this work serves as an exemplification of the approach to translation which Tolkien advocated in his essay 'On Translating *Beowulf*'. This piece was originally published as a preface to C.L. Wrenn's revision of John R. Clark Hall's translation of the poem (and later reprinted in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*). It serves just as well, if not better, as a preface to Tolkien's own translation, even if it was unfortunately not reprinted between the same covers. Tolkien's primary argument, explicit in the essay and implicit in the translation, is that *Beowulf* was archaic in style, full of old words and syntax, and that these are important qualities for a translator to replicate. Many specific features of his translation, such as the prevalence of chivalric terms, find their defence in this essay. Some modern readers may dislike the end result in modern English, but it is worth bearing in mind that this is the product of a principled and well-considered view firmly focused on the original poem, not the folly of a young scholar who had read too much William Morris.

Following the translation is Tolkien's 'commentary', which is in many ways the heart of the book (including literally, placed between the initial translation and the two shorter creative works at the end). It is drawn from Tolkien's teaching notes, which were written as the basis for lectures that went through the poem line by line. These notes range widely across many topics, from observations on specific words or cruces (points where the interpretation of a specific word or passage is in dispute), to questions of theme and outlook, to the discussion of the legendary background of the poem. In the first instance, these present a picture of Tolkien's own views of the poem, giving what the editor calls 'a "portrait" (as it were) of the scholar in his time'. For this alone the commentary is interesting, and certainly of value to students both of Tolkien and of the intellectual history of *Beowulf* studies.

But very often the commentary goes beyond simple historical interest. For one thing, there is a distinct literary value to many of the entries. Tolkien's rendering of Hrothgar's initial words to Beowulf in the style of a mid-twentieth-century English gentlemen is delightful, even as it draws attention to the potential subtext of the scene. And in matters of the legendary background of the poem – a notoriously difficult area where a great deal of labour is needed to come to even partly meaningful conclusions – Tolkien provides vivid and engaging reconstructions. In his notes on the story of Freawaru and Ingeld, for instance, he not only traces out the 'legend of Lejre', but links this further back to older ethnic conflicts and cultural shifts in the western Baltic during the first several centuries AD. One need not agree with Tolkien's reconstructions, in part or in whole, to appreciate the historical drama he adumbrates, or to see the potential value of engaging with the complexly intertextual and interdisciplinary world of early Germanic heroic legend.

Tolkien's commentary is also very much worth reading for many specific points of detail. His comments on textual cruces often stand up remarkably well even today. On several points the very contemporary editors of the standard scholarly edition of the poem, the fourth edition of *Klaeber's Beowulf*, added new notes in line with Tolkien's composed half a century previously. Indeed, at least at one point Tolkien's solution to a long-standing problem seems to be both original (it is not noted in the generally thorough apparatus of *Klaeber's Beowulf*), and at least as good as any other proposal. This crux comes in a description of a warrior's helmet given as Beowulf's band journeys from the coast to Heorot, lines 303b-306a of the original (lines 246-8 of Tolkien's translation; it is an unfortunate editorial decision that the translation is presented with line numbering different from that conventionally used for the original). Tolkien proposes to emend an almost certainly corrupt word, *grummon*, to *grīma*, 'war-mask, vizor'. This is palaeographically somewhat bolder than the emendation to *grīm-mon* 'war-mask-man, helmeted man' favoured in *Klaeber's Beowulf*, but yields considerably better sense. The contrast between the solutions may be seen by comparing Tolkien's translation with that of one of the editors of *Klaeber's Beowulf*, R.D. Fulk. Where Fulk has, in keeping with the text he helped to edit (with the translation of his *grīm-mon* underlined):

> They set out traveling then; the vessel remained still, a wide-girthed ship tied to a rope, fastened to an anchor; boar-images gleamed, covered with gold, over cheek-guards, patterned and fire-hardened; the warlike, helmeted man accorded them safe conduct. The men moved along quickly...

Tolkien gives (with, similarly, *grīma* underlined):

> They went then marching forth. Their fleet vessel remained now still, deep-bosomed ship it rode upon its hawser fast to the

> anchor. Figures of the boar shone above cheek-guards, adorned with gold, glittering, fire-tempered; fierce and challenging war-mask kept guard over life. The men hastened...

Tolkien avoids, at the least, the strangely sudden and momentary reference to the coast warden (the 'helmeted man') in the midst of the physical description of the scene, replacing it with a further elaboration on the helmet of the Geatish warrior just described. Even if one does not accept Tolkien's proposal, it is valuable to consider it as an intelligent response to a difficult reading: which is what Tolkien's commentary generally provides, from the small details to the large themes.

Although it ranges widely in content, the commentary is far from complete. The first thousand lines or so of the poem receive a very full comment (and often touch on matters from later in the text), but then there is a large gap until line 1663 (though Tolkien's very extensive notes on 1063-1159 appeared many years ago in *Finn and Hengest*, edited by Alan Bliss). There follows then a relatively sporadic set of notes from the aftermath of the battle with Grendel's mother until the last comment, on lines 2207ff, which discusses the thief who steals the dragon's cup. On the remainder of the final act of the poem, with its dragon battle and intricate account of the Swedish-Geatish wars, there is nothing: this was a teaching document, and Tolkien's lectures only covered the first two thirds of *Beowulf* assigned to his undergraduates as a set text. Even where we do have Tolkien's commentary, the editor tells us that more technical linguistic and textual discussions have often been abbreviated or left out. This is probably a good decision in a book aimed at a relatively general audience, and will probably come as a relief to many readers who feel that the book contains far too much of this as is, but the (admittedly much smaller) audience with some interest in the language and text of the original will regret their omission. Perhaps some of these philological notes may eventually be published in a lower profile venue, as has happened for many of Tolkien's more 'niche' writings on his invented languages.

Altogether, Tolkien's commentary presents an individual but valuable view of *Beowulf*. Even if these notes were published in full and covered the entirety of the text, they would hardly represent a complete introduction to the study of the poem, and would not have done so even in the 1940's. Rather, we find here a sketch of what one highly intelligent and individual *Beowulf* scholar made of this often dark and elusive poem, shaped, as are the reactions of all scholars, by the background of his times. Today, in the context of the present state of *Beowulf* studies, with its many currents and tensions, this book might appear as little more than a curiosity. But it might also be instructive to view it is a model of sorts. After all, in a day when philological and literary approaches to the poem are presented as in some way opposed (see the discussion above), it may be at least refreshing to see Tolkien's ready combination of linguistics and textual criticism with his deep engagement with the literary concerns of his day, and to see him take, as seems evident, genuine pleasure in all modes of engaging with the *Beowulf* manuscript.

Taken together, Tolkien's *Beowulf* and *The Dating of Beowulf* form interesting companions. Their approaches are in one sense complementary, both demonstrating the potential richness of philological study, and at least hinting at the complex relationship this can have to more strictly literary study. Yet in many other ways they contrast. Tolkien is a single scholar, freely blending observations of various sorts with an explicitly pedagogical goal, while *Dating* more systematically covers a number of topics (and then with an eye, at least in the first instance, to the specific question of date): on the literary side there is no synthesis, but only the suggestion that philology, which has come far recent years, might still prove useful to scholars wrestling with the shadowy and slippery text of *Beowulf*.

Notes

1. At least, obvious to us now. It is worth remembering that Thorkelín, the first editor of the poem, thought it was composed in the fourth century (by an eyewitness to Beowulf's funeral).

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