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Mallorn

The Journal of the Tolkien Society

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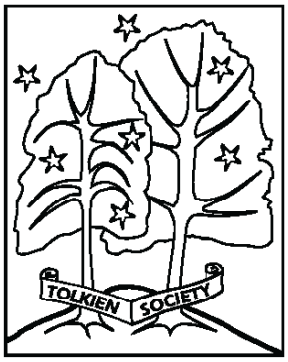

Mallorn

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Mallorn is the journal of The Tolkien Society. Published once a year, it considers reviews, scholarly articles, creative essays, poetry and artwork. Contact the Editor if you are interested in submitting an item for a future issue.
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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So I am appealing to all you eagles out there. Come, save the day. Fly along with us and help us create a Journal that will be both scholarly and aesthetic: a Journal that our audience will love to read and refer to, a Journal dedicated to the furthering of knowledge about J.R.R.Tolkien. Joseph Campbell wrote that myth is the penultimate Truth. The Truth of Middle-earth is that it is filled with incredible stories that need to be told. Won't you consider telling at least one?

Please consider being an eagle. Swoop in and drop off a story for us at *rosalinda.haddon@nau.edu*. I would love to be able to say: "The eagles are coming, the eagles are coming" to save the day and *Mallorn*.

Rosalinda (Ro) Haddon
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Meet our Reviewers:

The following individuals have graciously volunteered to be our Peer Reviewers. I thought it was important for you to know a little about them.

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The Harrowing of Hell Motif in Tolkien's Legendarium

ROBERT STEED

Hell oncneow Crist, ðaða heo forlet hyre hæftlingas ut, þurh ðæs Hælendes hergunge.
"Hell acknowledged Christ when it let its captives out, through the Saviour's harrowing."[1]

Medieval European narratives of "The Harrowing of Hell" were designed to account for the time Christ spent in the tomb. The Nicene Creed states that Jesus was "[c]rucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures…" This statement leads to a particular question: what was Jesus doing in the time between his death on the cross and his resurrection? One answer provided by the Harrowing of Hell narratives depicts Jesus descending to Hell, described as a subterranean fortress-prison[2], to liberate the captive souls of the (usually righteous) dead held captive therein by Satan and his minions. While not generally considered part of dogmatic orthodoxy, accounts of The Harrowing of Hell captured medieval Catholic interest. The basic structure of the motif was gradually embellished and enhanced, with multiple variants appearing over time. For the purposes of this paper, I suggest that the reader may identify the presence of a Harrowing of Hell motif if the narrative passage under consideration shows the following features: 1) a character or group of characters imprisoned in darkness 2) by an overwhelming-seeming evil entity 3) who nevertheless cannot withstand the appearance of a liberating figure or figures 4) associated with light 5) who then proceed(s) to liberate captives from their captivity.

J.R.R. Tolkien (1892 – 1973) draws upon the motif of The Harrowing of Hell for various episodes in his own narrative fiction. While he maintains the integrity of the basic structure of the Harrowing of Hell accounts, he nevertheless creatively adapts it for his own purposes. In doing so, he participates in a form of narrative tradition that stretches back for almost 1500 years and sustains its presence in contemporary literature.

The Harrowing of Hell in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*

And the light that leapt out of Thee, Lucifer it blente, [blinded]
And blew all Thy blessed into the bliss of Paradise! [3]

Tolkien, given his academic background as a medievalist and philologist and his profound identification with Catholicism, no doubt was well aware of the variety of medieval Harrowing of Hell accounts. Furthermore, he showed extreme care and skill in crafting his legendarium. When we perceive Harrowing of Hell-type episodes in his legendarium, it is extremely likely to be due to the fact that he consciously chose to incorporate them with the goal that they be noticed as such. In the process, both Tolkien and the reader of Tolkien would thereby enter into participation with what he called "The Tree of Tales."[4] "The Tree of Tales" is an image Tolkien creates to illustrate his theory of story, which is that most, if not all, stories ultimately are variations ("branches" and "leaves") growing from a common source ("trunk"). It is not my intention in this paper to show all possible Harrowing of Hell episodes in Tolkien's legendarium; rather, the goal is to showcase a few examples of this motif, and to use them as a springboard to explore ways in which Tolkien follows its basic structure while creatively reworking aspects of it to suit his purposes. The four examples to be examined are those of Lúthien's freeing Beren from Sauron's Tower, Tom Bombadil freeing the four Hobbits from the Barrow-wight's barrow, Gandalf freeing Théoden from Saruman's spell, and Samwise freeing Frodo from Shelob's lair[5] and the tower of Cirith Ungol.[6]

Lúthien, Beren, and Sauron

"Of Beren and Lúthien" is in many ways the centerpiece of *The Silmarillion*. The tales in *The Silmarillion* before this chapter all lay a foundation for it, and most of the major characters later in the history are shown to be directly descended from the heroic couple and later stories branch out from the events of the pair's life. It should come as no surprise, then, that several themes that are important to Tolkien should be woven into this story. At the center of Beren and Lúthien's tale, right at the heart of this centrally significant story, is The Harrowing of Hell motif. Tolkien draws our attention to Lúthien's grace-full power in part by showing her liberating captives almost effortlessly. She does so in order to free Beren from his imprisonment in Sauron's[7] guard tower on an island. She and her faithful hound Huan having overcome various obstacles along the way, Lúthien confronts Sauron at the gate of that tower:

> Then Lúthien stood upon the bridge, and declared her power: and the spell was loosed that bound stone to stone, and the gates were thrown down, and the walls opened, and the pits laid bare; and many thralls and captives came forth in wonder and dismay, shielding their eyes against the pale moonlight, for they had lain long in the darkness of Sauron. But Beren came not. Therefore Huan and Lúthien sought him in the isle; and Lúthien found him mourning by Felagund. So deep was his anguish that he lay still, and did not hear her feet. Then thinking him already dead she

> put her arms about him and fell into a dark forgetfulness.[8] But Beren coming back to light out of the pit of despair lifted her up, and they looked again upon one another; and the day rising over dark hills shone upon them.[9]

In this passage we see a kind of double-movement. First, Lúthien, by means of her graceful/grace-full power, casts down the stones that imprison, at which point all of Sauron's captives, dazed even in the dim light of the moon by their unlooked-for freedom, come out, except for Beren. When Lúthien finds Beren, she sinks into grief, thinking him dead, at which point he begins his movement, the second part of the double-movement, freeing Lúthien from her grief as the sun rises.[10]

In her freeing the captives from Sauron's stone prison by the power of her grace, Lúthien is depicted in a way that encourages us to see in her actions a participation in the Harrowing of Hell motif, but with some interesting modifications in keeping with Tolkien's creative re-working of established themes and motifs. Unlike Christ, Lúthien is not completely successful, and gives way to despair for a brief moment. However, this permits Tolkien to show Beren in his Christ-like aspect, as the one who revives from death[11] and by so doing restores those whom he loves. Lúthien, then, is a Christ-figure in her role as liberator, a Marian figure in her role as comforter, as well as a symbol of the Ecclesia (Church) who is the recipient of Christ's love. She does not show herself to be any of these in their fullness, but to a great degree she participates in aspects of all of them.

Tom Bombadil, the Four Hobbits, and the Barrow-wight

Perhaps a less immediately obvious example of Tolkien's re-working of The Harrowing of Hell motif is that of Tom Bombadil's freeing the Four Hobbits from the Barrow-wight's barrow. The hobbits, despite Bombadil's warnings, are lured and captured by the Barrow-wight and imprisoned within his barrow. The Barrow-wight's dark song entrances them, making it difficult for them to move or take any action much beyond lying still, waiting as they gradually transform into barrow-wights themselves. Despite this, Frodo is eventually able to summon enough courage to sing a minor song of power that Tom Bombadil taught to him and thereby summons him to help. Within a few moments, Bombadil arrives and, as Tolkien describes it:

> There was a loud rumbling sound, as of stones rolling and falling, and suddenly light streamed in, real light, the plain light of day. A low door-like opening appeared at the end of the chamber beyond Frodo's feet; and there was Tom's head (hat, feather, and all) framed against the light of the sun rising red behind him. The light fell upon the floor, and upon the faces of the three hobbits lying beside Frodo. They did not stir, but the sickly hue had left them. They looked now as if they were only very deeply asleep.
>
> Tom stooped, removed his hat, and came into the dark chamber, singing:
>
> *Get out, you old Wight! Vanish in the sunlight!*
> *Shrivel like the cold mist, like the winds go wailing,*
> *Out into the barren lands far beyond the mountains!*
> *Come never here again! Leave your barrow empty!*
> *Lost and forgotten be, darker than darkness,*
> *Where gates stand for ever shut, till the world is mended.*
>
> At these words there was a cry and part of the inner end of the chamber fell in with a crash. Then there was a long trailing shriek, fading away into an unguessable distance; and after that silence.

At this point Tom and Frodo carry the others out of the barrow and lay them onto the grass to recover, and then Tom returns to the barrow, apparently destroys whatever remains of the wight, and brings treasures out for all to share, singing:

> *Wake now my merry lads! Wake and hear me calling!*
> *Warm now be heart and limb! The cold stone is fallen;*
> *Dark door is standing wide; dead hand is broken.*
> *Night under Night is flown, and the Gate is open!*
>
> To Frodo's great joy the hobbits stirred, stretched their arms, rubbed their eyes, and then suddenly sprang up. They looked about in amazement, first at Frodo, and then at Tom standing large as life on the barrow-top above them; and then at themselves in their thin white rags, crowned and belted with pale gold, and jingling with trinkets.[12]

The scene continues on for a bit, and the connections to the Harrowing of Hell are deepened as it goes on, but I have presented enough here to establish the connection between this scene and that motif.

Frodo is often described in secondary literature as a kind of Christ-figure, serving as a type[13] for Christ-as-priest or for Christ-as-suffering-servant. However, Frodo has not fully come into those roles here. Instead, he is the one who, even though the most resistant to the Barrow-wight's spell, still needs aid from outside in order to regain his and his friends' freedom. That is, he is not the liberator, but one of the liberated. It is Tom Bombadil who serves as a type for Christ here, being the one who comes in a blaze of (sun) light, throws down the stone gates of the barrow, and easily overcomes the shadowy and derivative power of the Barrow-wight. In some ways, the scene is an even fuller presentation of the Harrowing of Hell motif than Luthien's described above; not only are the captives liberated, they are also clothed in gold, laden with treasures, and freed of their "old rags" as a result of Bombadil having removed the wight's curse from those items. The hobbits have in some way become newly refreshed versions of their former selves as a result of their contact with Bombadil's grace. Tolkien makes an explicit connection between Bombadil and The Harrowing of Hell-Christ in Bombadil's songs, especially the end of the second one, where he sings of the hobbits' liberation and celebrates the open Gate of the dark underground prison.

Frodo receives liberating grace from Bombadil here; perhaps he must first experience the reception of grace before he can develop into a sharer of grace, a role which later he much more clearly fulfills.

Gandalf and Théoden

The examples of The Harrowing of Hell motif drawn from the stories of Beren and Lúthien and Tom Bombadil and the Barrow-wight are clear and not easily missed (as is that of Aragorn and the Paths of the Dead). However, Tolkien crafted other episodes in his works which seem to draw upon this motif in subtler ways that require more sustained attention to recognize. One of these is the narrative sequence of Gandalf's freeing Théoden from his despairing and nearly catatonic state brought about by Wormtongue's, and by extension, Saruman's, and through Saruman's palantir, Sauron's intrigue against him.

When Gandalf and his companions arrive in Meduseld, they find Théoden to be hostile, cold, and unwelcoming. Under Wormtongue's influence, he sees Gandalf as a threatening presence, a bearer of ill news. Gandalf perceives that Théoden's mind is weighed down by care and grief over the recent death of his only heir and heroic son, Théodred, and therefore is highly susceptible to Wormtongue's insinuations of despair. The wizard takes immediate steps to help Théoden cast off those morose shackles. Gandalf addresses him by name as Théoden son of Thengel, reminding him of his place within a longer kingly lineage. Then, he sings a song about the beauty and grace of Galadriel, she who is closely associated with light in the legendarium,[14] drawing upon her grace-full power to aid him in the shadows of Meduseld and in those of Théoden's psyche. After rebuking Wormtongue, Gandalf raises his staff, at which point thunder rolls and the hall falls into darkness, except for the shining figure of Gandalf himself. At this point, Gandalf addresses Théoden, saying:

> 'Now Théoden, son of Thengel, will you hearken to me?' said Gandalf. 'Do you ask for help?' He lifted his staff and pointed to the high window. There the darkness seemed to clear, and through the opening could be seen, high and far, a patch of shining sky. 'Not all is dark. Take courage, Lord of the Mark; for better help you will not find. No counsel have I to give to those that despair. Yet counsel I could give, and words I could speak to you. Will you hear them? They are not for all ears. I bid you come out before your doors and look abroad. Too long have you sat in shadows and trusted to twisted tales and crooked promptings.'
>
> Slowly Théoden left his chair. A faint light grew in the hall again. The woman hastened to the king's side, taking his arm, and with faltering steps the old man came down from the dais and paced softly through the hall. Wormtongue remained lying on the floor. They came to the doors and Gandalf knocked.
>
> 'Open!' he cried. 'The Lord of the Mark comes forth!'
> The doors rolled back and a keen air came whistling in. A wind was blowing on the hill.[15]

It is true that Théoden is not literally dead nor is he being held captive in a literal and physical sense. Still, he *is* a captive, even if it is primarily to his own despair and dark imaginings reinforced by Wormtongue's crafty counsel. He sits in darkness, both that of shut-off Meduseld and that of his mind. When Gandalf comes, he does so as a bolt of lightning that shatters the dark while overturning Wormtongue, and recalls Théoden to remember who he is and to assume his proper glory. He is a Lord of the Mark; Meduseld should be open to the winds of the world, and he should be out in that world of wind and light. Remembering who and what he is with the aid of Gandalf's liberating grace, Théoden is freed and made new. This pattern is that of The Harrowing of Hell motif.

Sam, Frodo, Shelob, and the Tower of Cirith Ungol

This sequence is lengthy, spanning two chapters split between two books. As a result, quoting the entire narrative to highlight the ways in which it fits the Harrowing of Hell motif is impractical. In addition, the motif is shown all of a piece; the elements of it are spread throughout the chapters with many non-motif insertions and interruptions, making it more of a challenge to recognize its presence than in the examples involving the Barrow-wight or Lúthien and Beren. For the purposes of this paper a summary will have to suffice.

Frodo is led into a "shortcut," by Gollum who, under the ruse of seeming to be helpful, actually takes Frodo to the lair of Shelob, a large spider who is a descendent of Ungoliant, who helped Melkor to kill the Two Trees of Valinor in the First Age of the world. Shelob traps Frodo in her webs and stings him, her venom paralyzing and apparently killing him. Sam, who has been separated from Frodo due primarily to Frodo's decreasing ability to think clearly and Gollum's machinations, decides to follow Frodo nonetheless, and when he does so he discovers that Frodo has been captured by Shelob. Sam then engages in a heroic effort to fight off Shelob and recover Frodo's body. Upon doing so, Sam thinks Frodo to be dead and reluctantly takes Frodo's weapon and the Ring to try to continue the quest. Shortly after Sam does this, the orcs find Frodo's body and take it to the tower of Cirith Ungol, and Sam realizes that Frodo is still alive. At this point Sam raids the tower, finds Frodo by singing[16], and carries him out.

This easily may appear to be a typical story of adventure and rescue, and in many ways it is. The trials that Sam must overcome in particular fit that model. However, two things in particular move it from being such a story to one that manifests the Harrowing of Hell motif. The first is the presence of light, especially in the form of the phial of Galadriel. This phial is filled with water from her fountain and pool, which themselves hold the light of Eärendil's star, a Silmaril which holds the light of the Two Trees of Valinor, that radiate the light of Varda, the Star-Kindler of the Valar, whom the elves call Elbereth. Sam uses this phial both to ward off Shelob[17] and later to break through the gate of the Two Watchers at Cirith Ungol:

> They [the Watchers] were like great figures seated upon thrones. Each had three joined bodies, and three heads facing outward, and inward, and across the gateway.[18] The heads had vulture-faces, and on their great knees were laid clawlike hands. They seemed to be carved out of huge blocks of stone, immovable, and yet they were aware: some dreadful spirit of evil vigilance abode in them. They knew an enemy. Visible or invisible none could pass unheeded. They would forbid his entry, or his escape.
>
> Hardening his will Sam thrust forward once again, and halted with a jerk, staggering as if from a blow upon his breast and head. Then greatly daring, because he could think of nothing else to do, answering a sudden thought that came into him, he drew slowly out the phial of Galadriel and held it up. Its white light quickened swiftly, and the shadows under the dark arch fled. The monstrous Watchers sat there cold and still, revealed in all their hideous shape. For a moment Sam caught a glitter in the black stones of their eyes, the very malice of which made him quail; but slowly he felt their will waver and crumble into fear.[19]

Sam's repeated use of the grace-filled light of the Phial of Galadriel moves the narrative to more closely fit a Harrowing of Hell pattern.

The second feature is Frodo's near-resurrection. It is true that he is not fully dead[20] but he appears that way to Sam, and probably *is* near death. Either way, he is beyond hope. When Sam draws near to Frodo, singing about the Sun high above dark towers and bearing the Phial of Galadriel, Frodo begins to revive. He is first liberated from the bonds of death, and later freed from the imprisoning tower of Cirith Ungol. It may be odd to think of Sam as a force whom evil cannot resist; Sam certainly does not see himself in this way. Still, as the narrative develops, that is what he is. Neither monstrous spider, nor orc-warriors, nor supernaturally evil guardians, nor cold stone blocks and iron bars can stop Sam from breaking into the dark places with his light and liberating his friend. Sam is the light-bearing liberator at the center of the Harrowing of Hell motif.

Notes

1 Ælfric's homily for Easter, ca. 990 C.E. Found at http://aclerkofoxford.blogspot.com/2015/04/open-ws-t-eorrn-harrowing-of-hell.html March 2017.
2 Most likely this image of Hell-as-prison-with-gates within Christian narrative tradition derives originally from Matthew 16:18: "And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Douay-Rheims Bible)
3 Langland, *Piers Plowman* lines 495-496.
4 Tolkien, *On Fairy Stories* 18-19.
5 I thank Dr. Patrick Malloy of Hawkeye Community College for pointing this example out to me in a conversation we had in April 2017.
6 Aragorn and the Paths of the Dead would be the most obvious example, but that has already been covered elsewhere.
7 At this point, Sauron is a lieutenant of Melkor/Morgoth's. Sauron's tower is therefore guarding access to deeper regions of Morgoth's domain.
8 This image is strikingly similar to that of a Pietà.
9 *The Silmarillion*, 175.
10 This clearly is Easter/Paschal imagery.
11 Beren revives from apparent death several times and actual death once, repeatedly being depicted as a type for Christ.
12 *The Lord of the Rings*, 156-159.
13 That is, a typological "type" in which the character may be understood as a refraction or lesser "double" for another character who fulfills the paradigm of the type. Thus, in one direction Moses, Isaac, Elijah and Elisha are all types for Christ in the Bible, from a Christian perspective, and St. Francis of Assisi also serves as a type for Christ in Christian tradition. Types are not limited by time-frame.
14 Tolkien repeatedly and with great variety associates Galadriel with light, the most obvious examples being her luminous hair, the phial of light she bestows upon Sam, and Tolkien's descriptions of Lórien, her land, as being one over which no shadows lay.
15 *The Lord of the Rings*, 536-537.
16 This echoes Beren and Lúthien's tale, in which at one point they locate each other by singing.
17 Shelob, like her forbear Ungoliant, is associated with darkness and unlight and serves as a foil for Galadriel, the luminous one.
18 These images bear a striking similarity to the Greek deity Hecate, who is associated with the underworld, terror, and magic and bore in one of her forms three faces; my thanks to Haydee Comparán-Steed for alerting me to this point.
19 *The Lord of the Rings*, 937.
20 Which a great sage has pointed out means he is slightly alive.

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All Tales May Come True: Tolkien's Creative Mysticism

JOHN CARSWELL

> It is only (as yet) an incompletely imagined world, a rudimentary 'secondary' world; but if it pleased the Creator to give it (in a corrected form) Reality on any plane, then you would just have to enter it and begin studying its different biology, that is all. (*Letters* 189)

In all of Tolkien's works, this may be a favorite line: "All tales may come true…" (*Tree* 73). They begin the final sentence of "On Fairy-Stories", Tolkien's 1939 essay on the value of fantasy literature. I do not simply love these words for their aesthetical value, nor do I call them "wonderful" in a merely sentimental or whimsical way. I indeed mean that they both delight and perplex me, excite and confound me. For years, they have aroused within me a deep curiosity. Just what could Tolkien have possibly meant by them? How, exactly, could he say that "All tales may come true"?

When I first read *The Lord of the Rings*, I was captivated by its heroic and pastoral beauty. Here was a world of true friendship and clear purpose, of great adventure and exquisite beauty, of transcendent good and horrifying evil. Indeed, here was a world of obvious fantasy that *seemed real*. As I journeyed deeper into Tolkien's other works, I began to discover a fascinating philosophy lurking in the shadows, humbly suggesting that maybe, just maybe, our creative works are destined for a glorious final reality, just as Tolkien's Catholic faith taught that human beings are.

In this article, I argue that Tolkien's main body of work sets forth a creative mysticism grounded in his Catholic faith. The pillars of this creative mysticism can be most clearly discerned from a close reading of three works that have been grouped together in the book *Tree and Leaf*: the poem "Mythopoeia"; the afore-mentioned essay "On Fairy-stories"; and the short-story "Leaf By Niggle." These works supply the three primary dimensions of Tolkien's Creative Mysticism. "Mythopoeia" hints at the mysterious origins of our musings; "On Fairy-Stories" connects human creativity with the eternal perspective of Christianity; and "Leaf By Niggle" presents Tolkien's view as to the glorious destiny of our creative works.

Mysticism: To Discover Hidden Realities

The term "mysticism" encompasses a wide variety of phenomena. Etymologically, it is related to the more common term "mystery", both words springing from the Greek *mystikos*, which has to do with introduction to or initiation into an otherwise hidden thing (*Wikipedia*, "Mysticism"). Traditionally, the word "mysticism" has had an explicitly supernatural and religious connotation. The "hidden things" the mystic gains access to tend to be divine, or at the very least concern greater realities transcending the material realm.

Concerning Tolkien's own faith and spiritual practice, Catholicism contains a long and rich history of mysticism. Indeed, one might argue that Catholicism is a thoroughly mystical religion, grounded as it is in doctrines concerning greater realities masked by lesser ones. One need only consider the centrality of the Eucharist in Catholicism to realize that, from a young age, Tolkien's mind was shaped to regard the deeper and hidden meaning in things. Catholic doctrine teaches that the Eucharist, under the *appearance* of common bread and wine, becomes, through the consecrating action of the priest, the glorified body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Tolkien's own love for and devotion to the mystery of the Eucharist is quite evident as a 1941 letter to his son Michael attests:

> Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament . . . . There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth, and more than that: Death: by the divine paradox, that which ends life, and demands the surrender of all, and yet by the taste (or foretaste) of which alone what you seek in your earthly relationships (love, faithfulness, joy) be maintained, or take on that complexion of reality, of eternal endurance, which every man's heart desires. (*Letters* 53-4)

What we find here is not merely religious love and devotion, but evidence of Tolkien's own mystical views concerning his Catholic faith. Though Tolkien was no cloistered contemplative, he set forth a mystical web of thought having to do with ultimate human destiny and with greater realities hidden from plain sight.

Thus, I define Tolkien's Creative Mysticism as the idea that one's creative works are inspirations of supernatural origin destined for a final perfection beyond the creator's devising and vision.

The first aspect of this definition (regarding *inspiration*) can be seen in "Mythopoeia", where Tolkien claims, of ancient men, "Great power they slowly brought out of themselves, and looking backward they beheld the elves that wrought on cunning forges in the mind", and furthermore "The heart of man is not compound of lies, but draws some wisdom from the only Wise, and still recalls him" (*Tree and Leaf* 86-7). We see in these passages Tolkien advocating for an inspiration of supernatural origin. On one hand, the

ancients looked backwards and beheld "the elves", or "fairies", working on their minds. On the other hand, "the heart of man", and specifically the creative and fantastical aspect of his heart, does not spew forth lies, but "wisdom from the only Wise."

The second aspect (regarding final perfection) can be seen in numerous places, even in personal correspondence, as in Tolkien's 1954 letter to Peter Hastings: "[B]ut if it pleased the Creator to give it (in a corrected form) Reality on any plane, then you would just have to enter it and begin studying its different biology, that is all" (*Letters* 189). Tolkien says this so matter-of-factly it appears that he has been completely comfortable with the idea for some time. This particular idea will be examined through the works "On Fairy-Stories" and "Leaf By Niggle."

Mythopoeia: Hints and Inspirations

Though of the three primary works of concern "Mythopoeia" was published last (it was not included in the original *Tree and Leaf* published in 1964, but added in 1988), it precedes the other works in conception, and is perhaps the first strong evidence of Tolkien's Creative Mysticism. Composed in response to a 1931 conversation between Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Hugo Dyson, "Mythopoeia" serves as a short manifesto for Tolkien's creative worldview.

Responding to Lewis' assertion that myths are "lies breathed through silver", Tolkien constructs a view of mankind's creative aspirations that he would eventually come to call *subcreation* (*Tree and Leaf* vii/85). As previously noted, Tolkien contends that "The heart of man is not composed of lies / but draws some wisdom from the only Wise." In other words, mankind draws imaginative influence from the original work of the Creator, and through his imagination begins to see in the things of creation the world as the Creator intended it to be seen. The process of *subcreating* then is not one of creating something entirely original, but rather of developing and drawing forth the inspired vision from within a previously created thing.

For Tolkien, this act of subcreating is of vital importance to human nature: "Yes! 'wish-fulfilment dreams!' we spin to cheat / our timid hearts and ugly Fact defeat!" (*Tree and Leaf* 87). Through subcreating and myth-making, mankind does battle in creative (rather than destructive) ways against the philosophies that degrade us and the rest of creation. Tolkien is establishing the primacy of subcreative action, claiming it as vitally important, for in the middle section of the poem, he lays out three beatitudes ("Blessed are…") rendering creativity in various forms as acts of resistance against different evils.

Though as consequence of the Fall, mankind is "disgraced" (and thus his subcreations can be a mixture of moral good and moral evil), he is nevertheless not "dethroned"

from the great position in which he has been placed: that of apprenticeship to the master Creator. Indeed, it is in this apprenticeship that we come to see things "as they were meant to be seen" (as Tolkien later puts it in "On Fairy-Stories"): stars as "living silver", the sky as a "jeweled tent", the earth as "the mother's womb." As we create, we learn how to see things in proper fashion. This is of vital importance for Tolkien's mysticism, for it is by this action that "ugly Fact", the sickly and anemic view of reality, is defeated.

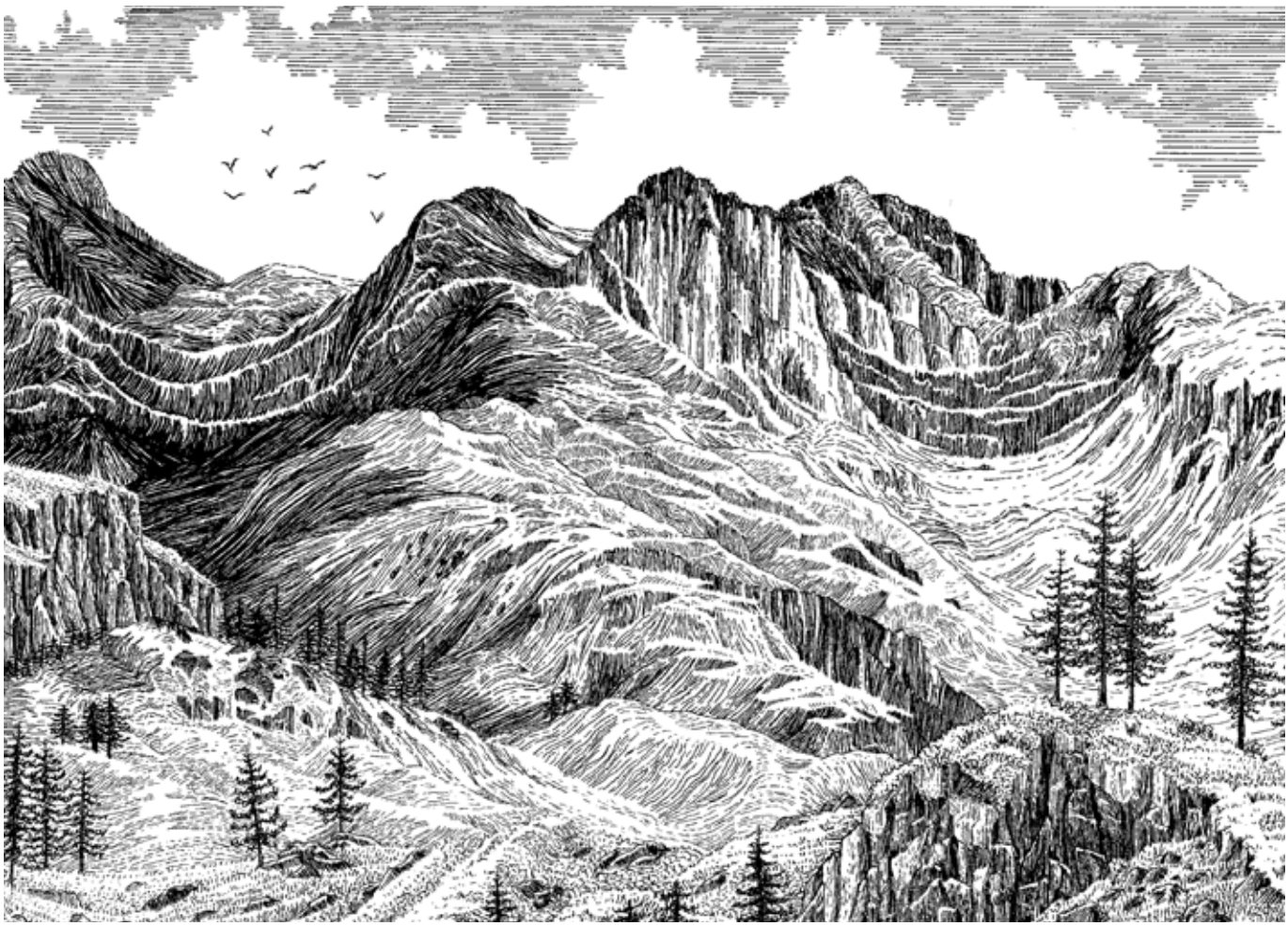
On Fairy-Stories: The Spiritual Purpose of Fantasy

If "Mythopoeia" was Tolkien's first significant attempt to elucidate his mystical views, it was also an intellectual stepping stone that would achieve greater clarity in "On Fairy-Stories." Tolkien begins his classic essay by taking issue with several errors that plague the study of fantasy literature. Modern scholarship, he contends, has an utterly condescending and anachronistic perspective on fantastical storytelling: condescending because it wants to relegate it to the nursery; anachronistic because it fails to first appreciate it as its original and intended audience would.

Instead, Tolkien argues, one must approach such works as the products of great and insightful creative minds. He argues that fantasy literature helps us to see things not "as they are" but "as we are (or were) meant to see them" (*Tree and Leaf* 58). This is of course an utterly mystical notion, for what human can say just how things are *meant* to be seen? Certainly, for Tolkien, this would be a Divine function, for it is to the creator of some artifact that the right of ascribing meaning primarily belongs. However, Tolkien would contend that through sub-creative process, human beings gain deeper insight into the nature and reality of a thing.

Tolkien also dealt with one of the perennial charges levelled against fantasy: that it is *escapist*. In a Chestertonian rhetorical move, Tolkien embraces the vice as virtue, arguing that it is like unto the prisoner of war escaping from the enemy's prison (*Tree and Leaf* 60). He goes on to flesh out *Escape* as an attribute of good fantasy, chiding fantasy's critics for being like guards who try to convince their prisoners that nothing good exists beyond the prison walls. Tolkien explicitly connects all of this to Christianity, establishing it as the transcendent and true fairy-story encompassing human history and enabling the escape from death. Tolkien held the central claim of Christianity (the Resurrection of Jesus Christ) to be real and factual, and for him Christianity was the philosophy that ultimately endowed our creative endeavors with real and lasting value.

Through the process of sub-creating, Tolkien contends, we become primary contributors to the "effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation" (*Tree and Leaf* 73). "Effoliation" has to do with the removal or fall of leaves from a plant. One has the image of a gardener pruning a great shrub to make it more viable and beautiful. Thus, to "effoliate" creation is to labor upon something so as to further beautify and glorify it.



It is the work of the Elvish architect striving for Lothlórien.

In the "multiple enrichment of creation", one beholds exponential possibility. The work of the subcreator is an additive work, not parasitic, fully intended and appreciated by the original Creator. The subcreator, by the supernatural vision mysteriously granted to him, works to beautify and glorify the world before him, to realize the greater realities that only they can see by their mind's eye.

Leaf By Niggle: To Dwell In One's Own Creation

Nowhere does Tolkien flesh all this out so well as he does in the short story "Leaf By Niggle." Composed quickly in a fit of waking inspiration in the early 1940's, looking back Tolkien attested to its autobiographical nature in a 1957 letter to Caroline Everett:

> Leaf by Niggle arose suddenly and almost complete. It was written down almost at a sitting, and very nearly in the form in which it now appears. Looking at it myself now from a distance I should say that, in addition to my tree-love (it was originally called The Tree), it arose from my own pre-occupation with *The Lord of the Rings*, the knowledge that it would be finished in great detail or not at all, and the fear (near certainty) that it would be 'not at all'. (*Letters* 257)

Niggle is the story of a painter obsessed with one painting. More specifically, he is obsessed with *finishing* the painting, but he cannot determine how to finish it, nor can he find the time to achieve its completion to his satisfaction. In the process of the story, he is taken away from his painting and, after a series of trials, eventually comes to dwell in a land that we learn is the full realization of his original, unfinished work:

> Before him stood the Tree, his Tree, finished. If you could say that of a Tree that was alive, its leaves opening, its branches growing and bending in the wind that Niggle had so often felt or guessed, and had so often failed to catch . . . All the leaves he had ever laboured at were there, as he had imagined them rather than as he had made them; and there were others that had only budded in his mind, and many that might have budded, if only he had had time. (*Tree and Leaf* 110)

Here we find a central tenet of Tolkien's Creative Mysticism: that one's creative works will take on *actual* reality. Indeed, the very completion sought by Niggle is not of his own doing at all but is, in his own words, "a gift!" (*Tree and Leaf* 110).

Over the course of the story, Niggle runs afoul of the local authorities and is eventually sent to a labor camp. Concerning his painting, the authorities are antagonistic and condescending, finding no practical value in it whatsoever. Though a fragment of it is preserved for a short while in this world, the full reality of it in the lasting and eternal world becomes a place of true joy and happiness. Though Tolkien would go on to have far more success in this world than Niggle did, nothing, not even something as indelibly memorable as *The Lord of the Rings*, has the capability of lasting forever in our present reality. However, in Niggle's eternity, even the simplest of landscape paintings takes on a glorious, real, and lasting reality.

Conclusion

In all of this, we again hear echoes of the mystical dimensions of Christianity. Just as Niggle lives in a humble village but comes to dwell in a glorious and perfected version of his handiwork, the trajectory of the biblical story is from a garden solely created by God to an eternal city ultimately fashioned by God but created in conjunction with the saints. Again, when we learn that Niggle was destined for "the high pasturages . . . to look at a wider sky, and walk ever further and further toward the Mountains, always uphill" (*Tree and Leaf* 115), we hear echoes of an ancient mystical name for Christ: "the desire of the everlasting hills."

Furthermore, these notions are all quite bound up with what Tolkien sought to achieve in his Middle-earth tales. Indeed, the entire metaphysical boundary of Middle-earth is laid out similarly with "Ainulindalë", where reality begins with the ultimate Divinity creating and inspiring lesser divinities in order to fashion a world which He allows them to glimpse in a beautiful and glorious vision. Their world too goes wrong, and war ensues, but we are assured that, in the end, all will reach its intended perfection. As to the Elves themselves, they are of course Tolkien's great race of subcreators, and warriors all the same.

The facets of Tolkien's Creative Mysticism are not easy to speak of nor to comprehend, for they surpass our present reality, the things we behold every day. Yet even so, in the contemplation of the things before us, we often see hints of these greater possibilities, whether it be the humble caterpillar and his transformation into the glorious butterfly, the acorn's dying to rise again as the powerful oak tree, or the abilities of human beings to transform dirt into great art or raw sound into transcendent and moving song. Even now, we dwell in a place of shadows, dimly hinting at everlasting realities. Tolkien's life work blazed a trail by which we may arrive at the knowledge of the eternal purpose of our works, the great and glorious destiny of our inspirations.

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'Servant, indeed!': Bilbo Baggins, independent contractor

MURRAY SMITH

While, in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins was hired by Thorin and Company under a contract, this did not mean that he was their employee, or owed any allegiance to Thorin Oakenshield. Rather, he was self employed, or an independent contractor. After giving some background, I will show that this was a crucial element of the story, giving Bilbo the independence to freely pick the Arkenstone as his reward, then to freely give it away to try and make peace. This independence was reinforced by his wealth and social standing.

An advertisement and a contract:

It all began with an advertisement. Gandalf, at the book's beginning, scratched 'a queer sign' on Bilbo's door. (*The Hobbit* 18) Gloin later explained that this mark was '*Burglar wants a good job, plenty of Excitement and reasonable Reward*, that's how it is usually read. You can say *Expert Treasure-hunter* instead of *Burglar* if you like'. (28)

Next was the contract itself. A letter to Bilbo, signed by 'Thorin & Co. [mpany]', contained this most crucial part:

> Terms: cash on delivery, up to and not exceeding one fourteenth of total profits (if any); all travelling expenses guaranteed in any event; funeral expenses to be defrayed by us or our representatives, if occasion arises and the matter is not otherwise arranged for. (38)

Much later, when the Lonely Mountain was reached, and the secret entrance found, Thorin pointed out about Bilbo, whom he called 'a good companion on our long road', that 'now is the time for him [Bilbo] to perform the service for which he was included in our Company; now is the time for him to earn his Reward.' Bilbo was a little indignant; because he had, at great risk to himself, already rescued the dwarves from the spiders and the Elvenking's cells, acting as their leader: 'I have got you out of two messes already, which were *hardly in the original bargain*, so that I am, I think, *already owed some reward*'. (203) (My italics)

After Bilbo, using his magic ring, went down alone to the hall, brought a cup back, and listened to the congratulations of the dwarves, all then had to hide from an awake and very angry Smaug. The dwarves 'began to grumble at the hobbit', blaming him for what had happened. Bilbo was angry at this, pointing out that he had done exactly what he had agreed to do: 'I was *not engaged to kill dragons*, that is warrior's work, *but to steal treasure*. I made the best beginning I could. Did you expect me to trot back with the whole hoard of Thror on my back?' (210) (My italics)

After going down alone a second time, talking to Smaug, and getting out alive, Bilbo was made the following promise by Thorin: 'you shall choose your own fourteenth [share], as soon as we have anything to divide'. (219) With this, Thorin added a new term to the agreement, in Bilbo's favour, allowing him to pick *any part of the treasure* as his agreed share.

After Smaug was found to be gone, Bilbo found the Arkenstone and hid it. He justified his decision by saying 'They [the dwarves] did say I could pick and choose my own share; and I think I would choose this, if they took all the rest!' But he did have 'an uncomfortable feeling that the picking and choosing had not been really meant' to include that gem, and that 'trouble would yet come of it'. (225) Later, however, he gave away his share, to resolve the conflict with the Lake-men and Wood-elves. He used the ring to slip into their camp; and he was revealed by his indignant reply to some elves, who called him 'that queer little creature that is said to be their servant'. Bilbo snorted 'Servant, indeed!' in reply, took his ring off, and called himself the 'companion of Thorin'. (253-4) He also later called himself the 'companion of Thorin', after the Battle of Five Armies. (269)

Bilbo, in discussing things with Bard and the Elvenking, in 'his best business manner', pointed out that he had an interest in the matter, taking out of a jacket pocket 'crumpled and much folded, Thorin's letter' to him. He pointed out that it was a fourteenth share 'in the *profits*, mind you', saying that he was 'only too ready to consider all your claims carefully, and deduct what is right from the total before putting in my own claim'. (Bilbo's italics)

Bilbo gave Bard and the Elvenking the Arkenstone, which will 'aid you in your bargaining'. When asked by Bard how it was his to give, Bilbo replied that he was 'willing to let it stand against all my claim,….I may be a burglar – or so they say: personally I never really felt like one – but I am an honest one, I hope, more or less'. When the Elvenking advised Bilbo to stay with them, Bilbo refused, on the grounds that he didn't think he 'ought to leave my friends like this, after all we have gone through together'. He had also promised to wake Bombur at midnight! (255-6) When Thorin later found what Bilbo had done, he was going to throw the latter down from a wall, before being dissuaded by Gandalf, and then abused him. Bilbo pointed out that Thorin said 'that I might choose my *own* fourteenth share!...Take it that I have disposed of my share as I wished, and let it go at that!' (My italics)

Thorin, after saying that he was 'betrayed', said that to redeem the Arkenstone, 'I will give one fourteenth share of the hoard in silver and gold, setting aside the gems'; but the sting in the tail was that this share 'shall be accounted the

promised share of this traitor [Bilbo], and with that reward he shall depart, and you can divide it as you will'. (259-60)

English law and an interesting New Zealand case:

The legal basis for employment in English law remains the contract of employment between the employer and the employee. This began from the 1870s on, when employer and employee were put on an equal legal footing. But because of the large and growing discrepancy of bargaining power between employer and employee, a large amount of legislative intervention in favour of the latter has taken place up to the present day.

Halsbury's Laws of England points out that while employment law 'originated in what was termed the law of master and servant', the modern terminology is that of 'employer' and 'employee', while 'contract of employment' is used rather than the older 'contract of service'. A person in business on his own is an 'independent contractor' or a 'self employed person', who traditionally works under a 'contract for services'. (*Halsbury* 17)

Because of the intervention in favour of employees, employers have tried to classify many as independent contractors or self employed, in order to lessen their legal obligations. Courts have therefore looked behind the written agreement, to see if what actually happens corresponds to it.

At the time John Rateliff estimated The Hobbit was written (1930-33), (Rateliff xi-xx) the main test English courts used to calculate whether a person was an employee or self employed was the 'control' test. (Sargeant and Lewis 20-1) If one party exercised a sufficient degree of control over a second, the relationship of employer and employee existed. This can be seen in the case of *Walker v. The Crystal Palace Football Club Ltd*. [1910] 1 KB 87, where this test was used to determine that a professional football player was an employee.

Due to the changing nature of employment, the control test has ceased to be the only one used by the courts in England and elsewhere, others being used as well, including the integration, economic reality, multiple factor and mutuality of obligation tests. (21-5)

To jump forward, an interesting example can be seen in the New Zealand Supreme Court case of *James Bryson v. Three Foot Six Ltd*. [2005] NZSC 34. Mr. Bryson did work for that company in its miniatures unit, which was filming special effects for Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings film project. When made redundant, he took a case for unfair dismissal; but as he could not do so unless he had been an employee, the case centred around whether he was an employee or independent contractor, the latter claimed by the firm. Looking at the facts, and applying a number of tests, including the control one, and taking into account the fact that he was not given a written contract when he began work, the court found that he was an employee.

The Bryson case was used as a reason for the then New Zealand government to bring in a statute, the Employment Relations (Film Production Work) Amendment Act 2010, nicknamed the 'Hobbit Law', which came into force on 30th October 2010. Section 4 of this act amended a major piece of employment legislation, the Employment Relations Act 2000, by having section 6 of the older act's definition of 'employee' not include persons involved in film production work, unless any such person is 'a party to, or covered by, a

written employment agreement that provides that the person is an employee'.

The Minister of Labour introducing the legislation, Kate Wilkinson, claimed in the parliamentary debate about it on 28th October 2010 that it would 'provide film producers with the confidence they need to make movies in New Zealand', including the two [later increased to three] *Hobbit* films, by introducing 'clarity and certainty at the outset' regarding people employed in film production work. Disputes about the employment status of people 'creates uncertainty for film producers', she said. (*Hansard* 14940)

In support of his colleague, the Minister for Economic Development, Gerry Brownlee, said that the Bryson judgement 'proved to be very, very expensive for the production company', something the bill was designed to deal with, to 'make it abundantly clear that if someone is employed—or, should I say, contracted—for services on these films, and others, then that person will be treated as a contractor with no right to go and have that status questioned'. (14944)

Bilbo an independent contractor:

I mention this New Zealand case and the resulting 'Hobbit Law', as well as the English law on the test of who is self employed or not; because it is my belief that Bilbo Baggins was an independent contractor. If one looks at the control test used when *The Hobbit* was being written, the dwarves and Thorin did not treat Bilbo as an employee. Indeed, Bilbo on two occasions led the dwarves, first in escaping from the spiders, and second in escaping from the Elvenking's cells. Thorin later referred to Bilbo as their 'companion'; and when he went into the Mountain, none of the dwarves accompanied him to confront Smaug, he being seen as sufficiently professional to do the job himself, using his own equipment, a magic ring found by him. Also, when the elves later referred to Bilbo as the 'servant' of the dwarves, the old term for 'employee', Bilbo indignantly replied, 'Servant, indeed!' He also referred to himself twice as the 'companion' of Thorin.

As Bilbo is not an employee, and owes no allegiance to Thorin, he is not constrained by any feelings of loyalty felt by some of the dwarves, who might have otherwise been critical of Thorin, but who might feel that such criticism was not proper, when their newly restored kingdom was under threat. Bilbo, however, had no such loyalty; and was free to go to Bard and the Elvenking to give away his reward. When he did this, he was legally free to stay; because, the contract had been completed, he having done the work he was hired to do, and taken his specified reward. He only returned to the dwarves out of a sense of moral obligation.

Bilbo's wealth and social standing:

Not only did Bilbo have the legal freedom to make his deal, he also had the financial and social freedom to do so. In financial terms, Bilbo did not need any of the treasure. After *The Hobbit* was published, Tolkien wrote a letter to *The Observer*, published by it on 20th February 1938, in which he called Bilbo 'a prosperous, well-fed young bachelor of independent means'. (*Letters* 25) This is no surprise to readers of the book; because Bag-End is described in very extensive terms, including having 'whole rooms devoted to clothes', which assumes that Bilbo must possess a considerable income to keep up such a premises.

The question then arises about the source of this considerable income, which leads to the matter of Bilbo's social standing. The Baggins family had, according to the book, 'lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind'. They were considered 'very respectable' not just because most were rich, but 'also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him'. By contrast, Bilbo's mother's relatives, the Tooks, while 'undoubtedly richer' were 'not as respectable', due to the fact that 'once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures'. (*The Hobbit* 13-4)

My own view is that the Baggins family are a particular form of 'gentry': landowners who live off the rents of tenants of their lands, in English terms a class of people below the nobility, though still part of the upper class. While not as rich as the nobility, though in many cases related to them, many of such gentry would feel so long established and confident of themselves that they do not feel inferior, quite the contrary. The Baggins family is held in higher social regard than the Took family, despite the latter being richer, because the former is respectable, and does not get involved in adventures.

Conclusion:

Bilbo Baggins, I believe, is self employed, not an independent contractor, in business for himself, not an employee of Thorin and Company. This was crucial to the story; because not only did this leave him free to take the Arkenstone as the reward for his services; he was also free to give it away to try and make peace. While he was then free from his contract, having done the work and been paid, he decided to return to the dwarves out of a sense of moral obligation. This legal freedom was, I believe, reinforced by his wealth and social standing in the Shire.

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Tolkien, Eucatastrophe, and the Rewriting of Medieval Legend

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Studying J.R.R. Tolkien and his rewriting of medieval legend in his own original work, I have perceived that Tolkien sometimes disliked aspects of the stories he encountered – especially their endings. In several cases, over the years, he chose to rewrite medieval poems that he loved, but with certain elements transformed. His concept of *eucatastrophe* informs his rewriting to such a degree, and so consistently, that I have concluded that there is in fact a "principle of eucatastrophe" that guided Tolkien's re-visionary processes.

Tolkien invented the term "eucatastrophe" in an essay, in which he defined it as the *opposite* of tragedy. He further defined it as the opposite of the "dyscatastrophe" of sorrow and failure, which, Tolkien admits, may be "necessary to the joy of deliverance" (Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories," in *Tales from the Perilous Realm,* 384) For the philologist, eucatastrophe is a *good* catastrophe, the consolation of a happy ending, and "the eucatstrophic tale is the true form of fairy-tale – and its highest function" (384).

In this comparative literary analysis, I will examine three case studies from Tolkien's oeuvre, in which Tolkien practiced eucatastrophic rewriting: his folk-tale, "Sellic Spell," in which he rewrites the Old English poem *Beowulf*; his poem, "Princess Mee," in which he re-envisions aspects of the myth of Narcissus and the Middle English dream vision poem, *Pearl*; and his character of Éowyn from *The Lord of the Rings*, in whom he re-imagines the fate of Brynhild, a shield-maiden and valkyrie from the Völsunga Saga. In each case, Tolkien rewrites the original so that sorrow is transformed into happiness in Tolkien's new versions. When exploring these transformations, I also will consider possible psychological motivations behind Tolkien's artistic choices.

Eucatastrophic Rewriting of *Beowulf* in "Sellic Spell"

Tolkien's life-long fascination with the Old English poem *Beowulf* is well known, particularly from his landmark essay, "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics." Tolkien viewed the poem not as an epic, as it is most commonly regarded, but as a "heroic elegy" because the story advances through its focus on one hero, Beowulf, and the trials that lead up to his eventual death and funeral commemoration at the end of the poem. Less well known is Tolkien's essentialized, folktale version of the epic, "Sellic Spell." Christopher Tolkien's publication of his father's prose translation of *Beowulf*, together with "Sellic Spell" in 2014, along with Dimitri Fimi's commentary published in *Mallorn* in the same year, however, has recently brought both to the attention of a larger audience. A brief comparison of key differences between these two works reveals how Tolkien's principle of eucatastrope affected his rewriting.

Tolkien completed his prose translation of *Beowulf*, along with a commentary on the poem, in 1926, but did not write "Sellic Spell" until the early 1940s. He wrote his story in both modern English and in Old English, and he wrote a related text, a poem called "The Lay of Beowulf" as well as various notes on these original compositions. Tolkien's title for his story, "Sellic Spell," comes from line 2109 of the *Beowulf*: *hwílum syllic spell rehte aefter rihte rúmheort cyning* ("or again, greathearted king, some wondrous tale rehearsed in order due" [Tolkien, *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*, 358]). His story title means "wondrous (or marvelous) tale." Tolkien expressed his intentions for his story in a note later preserved and published by his son:

> This version is *a* story, not *the* story. It is only to a limited extent an attempt to reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon tale that lies behind the folktale elements in *Beowulf* – in many points it is not possible to do that with certainty; in some points (e.g. the omission of the journey of Grendel's dam) my tale is not quite the same. (Tolkien, *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*, 355).

In fact, Tolkien's folktale version differs significantly from the original poem. The differences demonstrate how the concept of "eucatastrophe," a sudden joyous turn of events, inspired Tolkien's imaginative rewriting of the *Beowulf* story.

Although written in England, sometime between the 7th and the 10th centuries, *Beowulf* is set in Scandinavia. The plot of the Old English poem develops through a sequence of three fight scenes in which the hero, Beowulf, combats three supernatural foes: Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a dragon. The historical sub-plot of the poem concerns feuds between medieval Scandinavian tribes: Geats, Swedes, Danes, Heathobards, and Frisians. (A chronology of the development of these feuds is clearly laid out in Marijane Osborn's *Beowulf: A Guide to Study*, 38-41). Interwoven with the main plot and the historical sub-plot are several lyrical digressions recalled by the poet-narrator and/or sung by a *scop*, a maker-poet and harper-singer within the story, some of which reveal the stories of women: Hildeburgh, Hygd, and Modthryth. Wealtheow, queen of the Danes, features importantly in the poem as does a Geatish woman who wails out the hero's funeral oration at the poem's end.

In contrast, in composing "Sellic Spell," Tolkien deliberately cut out the historical sub-plot in order to focus on the main plot and poetic narrative of *Beowulf*. In Tolkien's folk-tale version, Beowulf becomes Beewolf; Hrothgar, the King of the Golden Hall (i.e., Heorot); Brecca, against whom the hero competes in a swimming contest on the monster-infested deep, Breaker; Unferth, his "flyting" opponent,

Unfriend; Grendel, Grinder; and so on. Beewolf is raised an orphan who acts much like a bear and lacks courteous speech, but eventually succeeds as a warrior, defeating Grinder and his "dam" – as Tolkien calls her, comparing her to the female parent of an animal, such as a horse. The Old English poem actually calls Grendel's mother a *brimwulf* or "sea-wolf."

Yet even with this focus on the main plot, Tolkien's rewriting of *Beowulf* in his folktale version is dramatically different from the original writing. Notably, he entirely drops the final fight with the dragon, and he introduces new characters, Handshoe, whose magical gloves enable him to move aside or tear apart great stones, and Ashwood, who carries a powerful spear. The addition of these characters may suggest that Tolkien was aiming to create a variant of the "skillful companions" type of folktale, but inverting its usual narrative results: instead of helping, Bee-wolf's companions and their skills actually hinder his progress until he overcomes them.

But perhaps the most notable change Tolkien makes comes at the end of his story. Whereas *Beowulf* ends with the death of the hero, "Sellic Spell" ends with his marriage. This is announced in the second half in a single sentence: "A great lord he became, with broad lands and many rings; and he wedded the King's only daughter" (Tolkien, "Sellic Spell" in *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*, 385). Even without further elaboration on this marriage, suddenly, the story is no longer a heroic elegy: it is a fairy-tale. Tolkien has applied his principle of eucatastrophe, and now *Beowulf*, as rewritten in "Sellic Spell," has a "sudden joyous turn of events": a royal marriage.

The audience knows that this marriage contributes to the hero's social advancement and reputation, to a good life and later victories, for the story concludes by observing, "And after the King's day was done, Beewolf became king in his stead, and lived long in glory. As long as he lived, he loved honey dearly, and the mead in his hall was ever of the best" (385). This is a happy ending, even a fairy-tale ending. *Beowulf* is no longer an elegy. It has been transformed by the eucatastrophic joy of marriage.

Tolkien knowledge of folk-tale certainly inspired his rewriting. But perhaps so too did his own good marriage to Edith, his sweetheart, whom he had met as a teenager. Her role in Tolkien's life, his mythology, and, indeed, all of his eucatastrophic rewriting is highly significant. Indeed, this influence can be further considered in Tolkien's poem, "Princess Mee."

Eucatastrophic Rewriting of the Myth of Narcissus and *Pearl* in "Princess Mee"

"Princess Mee" is a longer version of a shorter poem called "Princess Ni," which Tolkien originally published in *Leeds University Verse, 1914-1924* (Shippey, "Poems by Tolkien," 515-17). In 1961, Tolkien aunt, Jane Neave (his mother's younger sister), asked him to write a collection of verse with Tom Bombadil "at the heart of it." Tolkien subsequently published *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and Other Poems from the Red Book* (1962), nearly all of them had been published previously and then revised – including the fourth poem in the collection, "Princess Ni," now entitled "Princess Mee." In this poem, Tolkien used his principle of eucatastrophe to rewrite aspects of both the myth of Narcissus and the Middle English dream vision poem, *Pearl*.

According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Narcissus was a beautiful and vain young man, adored by both men and women. A girl, Echo, fell in love with him and wasted away from longing while he spurned her – only able to repeat the words he himself said to her. When almost nothing was left of her but her voice, she asked the gods for vengeance, and they granted it to her: when Narcissus saw his own reflection in a pool of water, he fell in love with himself, without realizing he was looking at a mirror-image he could never have or hold. His love-sick state caused him to waste away in turn, until finally, the gods took pity on him and turned him into a flower: the narcissus flower.

In "Princess Mee," Tolkien is apparently intent upon rewriting the myth of Narcissus, changing the lead character from a man to a woman (and from a human to an elf) and changing the narrative from a sad tale of self-absorption and paralysis to a delightful story about self-awareness and free movement. For in "Princess Mee," the protagonist of the poem does not reject a lover (as Narcissus does Echo) nor fall in love with herself (as Narcissus does when he sees his own reflection) nor waste away from longing for her own reflection (as Narcissus does until the gods take pity on him and transform him into a flower). Instead, the princess accepts herself, without becoming obsessed with herself, and indeed appears to have great delight in seeing the reflection of her own existence.

"Princess Mee" is a simple narrative poem about a lovely, little elven princess. It describes the physical appearance of the princess and how she dances with her reflection in a pool of water. The imagery associated with the princess is similar to that associated with the Maiden who appears in the late-fourteenth century, Middle English dream vision *Pearl*: "pearls in her hair / all threaded fair; / of gossamer shot with gold / was her kerchief made" (Tolkien, "Princess Mee," in *Tales from the Perilous Realm*, 196, lines 4-7). Like pearls, the colors white and gold (standing for purity and holiness) are clearly associated with both the Maiden and the Princess. Tolkien refers to the pearls of this princess no less that three times (lines 4, 67, 74), including in the very last line of the poem, making the pearls a significant visual element in her description and a symbol of her identity. Other repeated elements, her "kirtle fair" and "slippers frail / Of fishes' mail" are clearly significant as well.

Pearl begins with a man in a garden, where the man has lost a precious pearl and, upon falling asleep, the man's "spirit sprang" into space (Tolkien, "Pearl," 125). He wanders in a bejeweled paradise until he encounters a stream he cannot cross; on the other side of it stands his beloved Pearl-Maiden. They converse at length about his sorrow over losing her until she reveals that she has asked for him to be shown a vision. He beholds the New Jerusalem and

the Lamb of God, bleeding from his side, yet with a joyous countenance. At first, the man is moved by this, but then he is distracted when he sees his Pearl-Maiden in procession with other virgins following the Lamb. He starts toward the water, desiring to cross it and be with the Pearl-Maiden, but before he can set one foot therein, he is startled awake to consider the significance of this dream.

In "Princess Mee," Tolkien makes eucatastrophic changes to *Pearl* intended to introduce a fairy-tale element of happiness in the rewriting for the protagonists. First, Tolkien appears to cut out everyone and almost everything from *Pearl* except for the Princess (Maiden) and her dancing-pool (the stream), characterizing her as "alone" (198). But she only seems to be so. In fact, the writer-reader-viewer is watching her – and so is in the role of the Dreamer.

Notably, the Pearl-Maiden transformed into Princess Mee is not static, but dynamic, literally dancing for joy. She is not a strict teacher, but a happy learner. She can look at herself, at the reflection of "Mee," and the writer-reader-viewer can behold her to his heart's content without ever contending with a suffering Lamb's contrary will. The fact that Tolkien has the Princess looking at "Mee" in the pool is surely a play on words: it is not only her name, but also "me." It is as if the Princess is the writer-reader-viewer's *anima*.

Significantly, the Princess also has similarities to Lúthien, being dressed in a gray mantle with a blue hood as she is, and being so very beautiful in her dancing. This picture of a beautiful, fairy-woman dancing alone in a wood is iconic in Tolkien's imagination, inspired by a day when his own wife danced for him. It is most fully realized in his versions of the legend of Beren and Lúthien, in which Beren sees Lúthien dancing and desires her: the beginning of their love-story. In "Princess Mee," the parallel character for Beren (or for Tolkien) is the writer-reader-viewer.

This imaginative participation of writer and reader in the viewing of Princess Mee, a woman ostensibly dancing alone with her reflection, recalls the Dreamer's gaze upon the Pearl-Maiden – and Beren's on Lúthien. The *Pearl*-poet subtly critiques the Dreamer's preoccupation with what he sees, especially because the Dreamer apparently values it over what he hears (and thus over the divine truth the Pearl-Maiden is trying to speak to him), but Tolkien's take on Beren's gaze is more sympathetic. While Tolkien, like the *Pearl*-poet, does critique men who see Luthien's beauty and wish to possess Luthien as a object – men like her father Thingol, her lover Beren, her enemy Thu/Sauron (especially in the verse version published in *The Lays of Beleriand*) – he also, ultimately, makes his legend a great love-story, the goal of which is not renunciation, but consummation for the greater good of Middle-earth. For ultimately, the descendents of Beren and Lúthien will help to eradicate evil from the good lands.

The existence of "Princess Mee" suggests the complex ways in which Tolkien's imagination interacted with his sources and experiences from his own life, elements from his legendarium, and details from *Pearl* highlighted in his translation and commentary (that is, the introductory essay). "Princess Mee" is surprisingly complex in content, and in transmission history (developing as it does over time from "Princess Ni" and in relation to both the Pearl-Maiden and Lúthien, not to mention Tolkien's wife, Edith, who inspired the character of Lúthien), in a way not implied by the way the author characterizes it along with other poems in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* in a preface, saying: "a better example of their general character would be the scribble …"

The very dismissiveness implied by such characterization, compared to the intensive re-writing Tolkien did of these poems, compels us to reconsider Tolkien's intentions in these poems in relation to his larger legendarium. In "Princess Mee," Tolkien rewrites classical and medieval legend to emphasize the eucatastrophic joy of healthy self-love and the acceptable, fulfilling gaze of the lover upon the beloved. These changes, like the marriage of Beewolf in "Sellic Spell," appear to be motivated by Tolkien's own love-story and by the woman central to it, his beloved wife, Edith. Her influence may also be perceived in the character of Éowyn.

Eucatastrophic Rewriting of Brynhild's Fate in Éowyn's Character in *The Lord of the Rings*

Tolkien re-wrote the Old Norse poem variously known as the Völsunga Saga, the Elder Edda or the Poetic Edda in his own narrative poem, "The New Lay of the Völsungs." In 2009, Tolkien's son and posthumous editor, Christopher Tolkien, published the "New Lay" with other materials as *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*. In the foreword, Christopher estimates that his father completed this poem in the early 1930s, after laying aside the Lay of Leithian, concerning Beren and Lúthien (5). Tolkien made a number of striking changes to the Völsunga Saga in his "New Lay," which Christopher discusses in his commentary (183-249), but Tolkien took his re-writing of at least one aspect of the medieval Old Norse legend to a eucatastrophic level. Specifically, Tolkien's character of Brynhild in his "New Lay" bears remarkable resemblance to the character of Éowyn in *The Lord of the Rings*, in key respects (some of which are discussed by Leslie Donovan in "The Valkyrie Reflex"), but the fates of the two shield-maidens are distinctly different.

In the "New Lay," as in the Völsunga Saga, Brynhild is a shield-maiden and a valkyrie. The Old Icelandic word *valkyrie* means "chooser of the slain," which reflects the role valkyries play in Old Norse mythology: as the handmaidens of the god Odin, they choose fallen warriors from battlefields and convey them to Valhalla. Brynhild first appears in Tolkien's poem when the hero Sigurd sees a war-clad warrior he thinks is a man lying on the ground with a sword. Sigurd literally discovers her when he lifts her helmet and sees her shining hair: a woman! (139). This recalls Éowyn's decision to disguise herself as Dernhelm and her later discovery on the battlefield by her brother, Éomer, and subsequently, in Gondor's Houses of Healing, by Aragorn, who awakens her as Sigurd awakened Brynhild.

In the Norse myth, Brynhild has been cursed by Odin to wed, but she has taken a vow to marry only a fearless man. In Tolkien's version, Brynhild's desire is for Sigurd because

he is the "World's Chosen" and the "serpent-slayer" of the dragon Fáfnir (121). They pledge their troth to be married, but Brynhild wants to wait until Sigurd becomes a king before wedding. In the interim, Brynhild becomes a great queen, but Sigurd breaks his vow and marries Gudrún. Brynhild is later tricked by Sigurd into marrying his friend, his wife's brother, Gunnar. This betrayal leads Brynhild to desire vengeance when she realizes it. She urges Gunnar to kill Sigurd, and Gunnar in turn urges his brother to do the deed for him. So Sigurd is murdered, and Brynhild later kills herself: a tragedy, and from Tolkien's perspective, apparently, one in need of a eucatastrophe.

Like Brynhild, Éowyn is a shield-maiden (though not a valkyrie). She is also under some external pressure and internal expectation that she marry when Aragorn arrives in Rohan, and she desires him because of his greatness: a motive she shares with Brynhild. Éowyn, as already noted, also disguises herself in man's battle-gear. She then fights against the forces of Mordor besieging Gondor, where she slays both a wraith and his winged steed, but is herself badly wounded in the encounter. It is at this point that Tolkien applies his principle of eucatastrophe to change the tragic fate of Brynhild in the happier experience of Éowyn.

Éowyn's Gunnar is not a deceiver, but the honorable Faramir of Rohan who wishes to wed her. Éowyn, unlike Brynhild, chooses to surrender the ways of a shield-maiden, marry Faramir, and become a healer. The marriage is approved and blessed (not forced or finagled) by King Aragorn, and Éowyn dwells in Ithilien with Faramir happily thereafter.

It is notable that Tolkien wrote that, of all his characters, he felt himself to be like Faramir (Tolkien, *Letters* #180, 232). This being so, it is natural to wonder if Faramir's relationship to his beloved Éowyn is in some way like Tolkien's relationship to his beloved Edith. It would seem that Tolkien transformed Brynhild's tragic fate to Eowyn's happy ending, emphasizing the eucatastrophic joy of healing after a terrible experience of battle with a demonic power. Ennobling Éowyn's character so that she chooses a good marriage to a man who loves her, rather than insisting out of pride on a match to a man famous for his greatness, fits with Tolkien's implied ideal behind all eucatastrophe: that honorable character, despite all intervening suffering, will eventually result in a good destiny.

Conclusions

J.R.R. Tolkien's principle of eucatastrophe led him to transform medieval legends when he rewrote them. He rewrote the ending of *Beowulf* in "Sellic Spell" to emphasize the joy of marriage. He re-envisioned the myth of Narcissus and the dream vision *Pearl* in "Princess Mee" to reveal the joy of healthy self-love and the acceptable, fulfilling gaze of the lover upon the beloved. He re-imagined the fate of Brynhild in the character of Éowyn, doing way with the tragedy of a lover's murder and the beloved's suicide in favor of a shield-maiden's physical and psychological healing from a wraith's demonic attack on her life. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Éowyn's joy continues to grow in her marriage to Faramir and their purposeful work together in Ithilien. In each case, these eucatastrophic transformations appear to be tied to Tolkien's own personal love-story and to the inspiration of his beloved wife, Edith, which shows the interplay between Tolkien's knowledge of medieval literature and his real-life experience of loving and being loved.

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The Voice of Beorn: How Language Moralizes the Monstrous

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Most of the strange and wonderful creatures in *The Hobbit* have limited to no voice, so they are presented to the reader mainly through their actions. Although, Tolkien's fictional world, much like the real world, is complex and populated by morally ambiguous characters, this narrative is a classic story of good verse evil. Thus, the reader is forced to judge which side the characters are on based principally on the observed behavior. For example, the trolls and the spiders only have brief moments of dialogue, but through their actions are "primarily understood as exhibitions of moral vices" (Fawcett, 2014). However, in some unique situations, Tolkien grants full voices to the monsters to ensure that the reader understands their rightful place on the side of the morally right, regardless of how objectively horrible their actions may be to an outside observer. This article will investigate this use of full language to moralize a monstrous character by examining the case of Beorn.

Beorn, the skin-changer, is usually referred to as a berserker with "a fiery temper and a suspicious nature," and would be a terrifying figure if he did not speak to reveal his fierce loyalty and good heart.[1] He is a character who exists at the boundary between civility and wildness. This inherent complexity of Beorn's nature is immediately apparent from his name, which is an Anglo-Saxon word for warrior, but can also mean bear; additionally, it is a cognate with the Old Norse word for bear, björn (Tolkien & Douglas, 2020). Beorn is both a huge bear and a huge man, and even the great Gandalf is unsure about his true origins. If Beorn, a hero of the Battle of the Five Armies, is judged solely based on his actions, in isolation from his full dialog, an objective jury would be forced to find that he is no more moral than the actual villains of *The Hobbit*, the goblins. To see this, let us document the cruelties of the goblins on one side of the ledger, and Beorn's on the other. This comparison will reveal Beorn's expanded use of language, in contrast to the goblins, provides him a means of framing this murderous behavior as a just war and thus making him seem moral to the reader.

First, let's account for the observed behavior of Middle-earth's perpetual evil-doers. Tolkien grants the goblins a larger voice than most of the other monsters in this story, but it is still rather limited. Right from the start Tolkien's description of them as, "great ugly-looking … [with] horrible stony voices," marks the goblins as vile (*Hobbit* 59-60). The goblins are in the business of kidnapping and enslaving travelers. They take great delight in chaining and whipping their captives, and work their prisoners and slaves to death. The goblins merrily inform new prisoners of their expectations in song: "Work! Nor dare to shirk! While Goblins quaff, and Goblins laugh" (*Hobbit* 61). It is also suggested by the narrator that the goblins "make no beautiful things," and are responsible for the invention of clever "instruments of torture and devices for killing large number of people at once" (*Hobbit* 62).

The goblins are further "dehumanized into a representation of evil" through their lust for vengeance (Stine 1). Upon finding Thorin and company up trees surrounded by wargs, they "sat down and laughed" (*Hobbit* 104). The goblins devised a scheme to punish the dwarves for their killing of the Great Goblin; even going so far as to taunt their trapped enemies when the dwarves' doom seemed at hand. Additionally, as a race, goblins are reported to hate everyone and everything, especially the prosperous, whose wealth and power they lust over. This greed is put on display in the large army of goblins that march to the Lonely Mountain after the death of Smaug to undeservedly claim the treasure for themselves. When one simply looks at events described in *The Hobbit*, this is the sum of the wicked activity that can be assigned to the goblins. However, clearly good characters like the wood elves of Mirkwood, at times behave eerily similar. The elves imprison the dwarves for trespassing, they are fierce enemies of the spiders whom they hate and hunt, and they also march on the Lonely Mountain after the death of Smaug to claim some of the unprotected wealth. But since the goblins are given little voice to justify themselves, so there is a strong case for the goblins as wicked and immoral characters.

On the other hand, Beorn is first introduced, very ominously, as an unnamed "Somebody," similarly to Harry Potter's 'He Who Must Not Be Known' (*Hobbit* 115). Beorn is known to be "somebody that everyone must take great care not to annoy… or heavens what will happen" (*Hobbit* 115). Beorn himself emphasizes his dangerous nature, even in his seemingly safe house, by warning the dwarves and Bilbo "not to stray outside until the sun is up, at [their] own peril" (*Hobbit* 127). Furthermore, it is made clear that he has a significant bloodlust for the slaughter, applauding Gandalf's use of lightening to kill a goblin. Beorn's own valuation of the worth of wizardry as a profession comes down to its ability to kill goblins. It is pretty safe to say that Beorn would not be impressed with The Old Took's enchanted diamond cufflinks. He remarks, "it is some good to be a wizard then," given that it improves your goblin killing capacity (*Hobbit* 122). Further along this line, Beorn tells Gandalf that he "would have given [the goblins and wargs] more than fireworks" in the wolf glade (*Hobbit* 123). Indeed, he wishes he was there to participate in the battle to properly eliminate them, not simply to drive them away.

Additionally, after confirming the validity of the dwarves' story of escaping the goblins' cave and killing the Great Goblin, Beorn's mirth is barely containable. The company's esteem goes up a good deal in the eyes of their host due to their combat with the goblins and wargs, especially the killing of the Great Goblin.[2] Beorn, it seems, takes great delight in the act of killing, and enjoys showing off afterwards. He tortures and mutilates a goblin and warg, not only for information, but also to create trophies to put on display. Beorn proudly invites his guest to come out and see his handy work. At this the narrative merely remarks that, "Beorn was a fierce enemy" (*Hobbit* 131).

For most of Bilbo's contact with Beorn, Bilbo is truly frightened of his host, taking Gandalf's stern warnings quite seriously. He actually "dived under the blankets and hid his head" on the first night, greatly concerned that Beorn, in bear shape, will burst in and kill them all (*Hobbit* 128). The next day, after being served by Beorn's wondrous animals all day, Gandalf mentions that he found bear tracks leading to the Misty Mountains, and Bilbo immediately assumes that Beorn will lead the goblins and wargs back to the house to kill them. Even after being scolded by Gandalf that Beorn is a friend, the nightly "scraping, scuffing, snuffing, and growling" is still quite unsettling and frightening to Bilbo (*Hobbit* 131). While inaccurate, Bilbo's reaction, as our representative in this world, is important and insightful. Biblo's "error is perfectly reasonable" as Beorn has not done "much to dispel his guests' fears" (Olsen, 2013). This initial fear of Beorn is an objective assessment of the uncouth behavior of the monstrous carnivore that is housing Bilbo and the dwarves.

When the actions of the goblins and Beorn are viewed side by side, it is clearly seen that the two are surprisingly more similar then at initial approximation. Beorn and the goblins are both vengeful and suspicious of outsiders, while being merciless to those that they deem their enemy. Furthermore, the goblins and Beorn are documented killers with well-earned dangerous reputations; both merrily laugh and take pleasure at the death of their foes. If Beorn was as limited as the goblins' use of language, his actions would surely condemn him with the goblins as a wicked and violent creature. However, it is precisely that Beorn is granted full language that he is able to express his more civilized tendencies and justify these actions. The compensating factors and motivations can be revealed to the reader so Beorn is shown to belong firmly on the side of the moral.

At the same time that the reader is told of Beorn's poor temperament, being "extremely dangerous and unpredictable," as well as being quick to anger, the reader is told of his intense compassion for his animals. Beorn "loves his animals as his children" and has the ability to talk to them (*Hobbit* 136). Moreover, he does not eat or even hunt animals. Beorn "lives mostly on cream and honey," products that can be collected without harming his animals (*Hobbit* 116). Additionally, Beorn's presence even has a strongly humanizing effect on his animals, who serve him in the same capacity as human butlers and maids. Although he lives solely with his animals[3], he does not live like one. As seen by Tolkien's own illustration, Beorn's hall is a grand gathering place similar in style to Norse mead halls, a place that Beowulf would have been right at home (Hammond & Scull, 2012). It is further illustrated that, unlike the eagles, that only enjoy cheating the goblins of sport and do not often take notice of them, Beorn is a fully committed enemy of the wicked goblins and wargs. While he is "not overly fond of dwarves," Beorn accepts Thorin and company since they are enemies of the goblins, which shows his commitment to the side of good.

Thus, when the moral accounting is done, the narrative has compelling evidence to safely conclude that Beorn, even with his violent behavior, is a moral character while the goblins are wicked and evil. Beorn is a blend of savagery and loving devotion, a "bad enemy," but a faithful friend (*Hobbit* 131). There is no ambiguity about his morality because his ability to voice the motivations and rationale for his otherwise violent and deplorable behavior. Just as beauty depends upon one's perspective, through the use of language, Tolkien illustrates that "monstrosity is [also] in the eye of the beholder" (Fawcett, 2014).

Notes

1. See Tyler (2004) and Foster (2003) character references.
2. " 'Killed the Great Goblin, killed the Great Goblin!' [Beorn] chuckled fiercely to himself" (*Hobbit* 131).
3. In *The Hobbit*, Beorn lives in isolation without wife or kin, and general avoids having company over. "He never invited people into his house, if he could help it" (*Hobbit* 124).

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On Tolkien's Presentation of Distributism through the Shire

JAY ATKINS

In creating a mythology for England, J.R.R. Tolkien sets up an entire, self-sustaining universe. He writes a creation story, establishes moral constructs, and creates a moon cycle that dates back to the beginning of time. Down to the minutest detail, Tolkien constructs a good universe. Tolkien presents readers with a variety of cultures with differing economic models or practices: Lothlorien, Gondor, Khazad-dum, Isengard, and even Mordor. Of these models, the Shire's agrarian-based society is an example of harmonious Distributism; the citizens are simple, and do not regard material gain as a goal. Consequently, when industrialism takes over the Shire, it loses its unique culture and sense of camaraderie. Through the Shire's corruption in "The Scouring of the Shire," Tolkien critiques industrialism, Socialism, and Capitalism. These economic forms, he claims, decimate the environment and absorb small, family-owned businesses and farms. A vivid example is the Sandymans' mill; though it was once locally owned and cooperative with nature, it becomes a factory for weapons after Saruman tyrannizes the Shire. Using these elements, Tolkien critiques the dangers of Socialism and Capitalism.

Distributism was G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc's response to the notion that big government and big business are the keys to a healthy society; they wanted to combat this early twentieth-century political movement's destructive tendencies. Distributism is the economic system that emphasizes the widespread distribution of property among a populace, such that a determining number of families own land and the means of production. They found Capitalism and Socialism, the two prominent economic forms, to be straining the commoner's individuality. Corporations or governments that own more land than the people who abide in it disrupt the culture from the populace; in addition, industrialism, the economic vehicle of Socialism and Capitalism, severs its population's connection to the land. Belloc's thesis in *The Servile State* is that, "Industrial society as we know it will tend toward the re-establishment of slavery" (6). Because power is overwhelmingly concentrated and disconnected from local communities in both Socialism and Capitalism, the populace may be exploited. Those in power turn away from locality and, consequently, the community suffers. Socialism and Capitalism detract from the citizens dignity, the environment, and the culture with the use of industrialism. Chesterton shows in *The Outline of Sanity* that concentrating ownership of property into the hands of a "relatively small" class of capitalists "necessitates a very large majority serving those capitalists for a wage (42-43). Part of a dignified human life involves making one's property excellent and beautiful, so if one does not have property, they miss out on this good. The Distributist questions industrialism's moving ownership into a few individuals rather than the majority. Matthew P. Akers, a contributor for the St. Austin Review, argues: "Distributists connect industrialism and imperialism, arguing that the former encourages the latter" (3).

Belloc's famous definition from the essay *Economics for Helen* is fundamental to understanding Distributism: Distributism is "a state of society in which the families composing it are, in a determining number, owners of the land and the means of production as well as themselves the agents of production (that is, the people who by their human energy produce wealth with the means of production)" (102). The distributist values smaller, localized industries managed by families and community members. However, it is worth noting that Belloc does not think that all families in a community need to own land and the means of production, but only a "determining number." The determining number is the number of families that makes a community decisively distributist, which does not even have to be a majority. Furthermore, Belloc and Chesterton both note that Distributism is the most sustainable and oldest economic form available, and that it puts more power into the hands of members of the community. Rather than putting land in the hand of outsiders, the distributist invests in the community and encourages local production.

Belloc and Chesterton worked together to create an economic form built on Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. Here Leo addresses the "yoke little better than that of slavery itself" set upon the "teeming masses" by the "comparatively few" (3). Leo argues that it is both good and natural for members of a society to own property. Socialism and Capitalism both remove property, and make citizens wage-earners or dependent upon the government. Because property is a vital good for the poor giving them something to invest their wealth into, the state's acquiring a majority of the property primarily withdraws from the well-being of the poor. Belloc and Chesterton adapt Leo's ideas into a new movement. Edward Shapiro, modern distributist writer from Steton Hall University, writes that ownership ought to be spread out over the populace: "According to the Distributists, a healthy social order required the widespread distribution of property" (211). Shapiro argues that, "Only if property was widely distributed could a society avoid the private economic collectivism of plutocracy on the right and the public economic collectivism of socialism… on the left" (211). The distributist claims that if many people own land, then power will not be focused on one point. Tolkien employs many of these principles in the Shire.

Peter Kreeft states it clearly, "Tolkien's political philosophy had a name: Distributism" (164). Tolkien adapts

Distributism and focuses it in the Shire. The hobbits of the Shire hold a simplistic view toward economics; by and large, they are an agrarian society built on self-sufficiency. Tolkien introduces farmers and gardeners, Farmer Maggot, Sam Gamgee and his father, the Gaffer, and Farmer Cotton who all have active roles in the story. The Shire imports or exports very little, engaging primarily in the export of their renowned and culturally unique Pipeweed. Tolkien hints that the Shire has very little security; travelers are free to enter the Shire as they please. Furthermore, the Shire lacks widely developed industry, showing that the populace values simple gardening over a mass production. The Sandymans' mill is the only thing that could be perceived as industrial. This mill is used for the ends of the local community, rather than for extensive export. In "A Long Expected Party," the Gaffer sits with several companions at a local inn, The Ivy Bush, and tells of his response to Sam's ambitious nature: "Elves and Dragons… Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you" (24). Furthermore, Bilbo has the power and opportunity to begin a business and become even richer, but he chooses to live simply in the Shire. The Shire's distributist views are more than economic ideology; they are a unique way of life that its populace cherishes.

The Shire's Distributism stems from adhering to natural law. The hobbits live according to a higher moral order, which guides all races in Middle-earth. Peter Kreeft comments on this phenomenon: "Men differ in talents, so there are natural hierarchies as well as unnatural and oppressive hierarchies" (165). The hobbits recognize that they are an agrarian society; this is the skill set they have to offer. Hierarchic conceptions of good and evil are prevalent in Tolkien. For example, evil works by abusing those who are lower on a hierarchic scale. Evil tries to gain power and dominate others, creating disharmony among natural order. In *The Two Towers* when Aragorn and Legolas are searching for the Halflings, Eomer asks Aragorn how one ought to judge good from evil, Aragorn responds, "As he has ever judged… good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among men" (Tolkien 438). Tolkien rejects moral relativism, offering world with an objective morality. This being the case, why would Tolkien use Distributist ideas in an orderly society? C.S. Lewis comments on a disordered government in the essay "Willing Slaves of the Welfare State:"

> I believe that man is happier, and happier in a richer way, if he has "the free born mind." But I doubt whether he can have this without economic independence, which new society is abolishing. For economic independence allows an education now controlled by the government… Admittedly, when man was untamed such liberty belonged to the few. I know. Hence the horrible suspicion that our only choice is between societies with few freemen and societies with none. (Lewis 338)

Lewis thinks that if all power is attributed to the government, such as education and labor, then no one will have the mind to criticize it. This is an example of hierarchic injustice, for the government holds the power and forces many to comply. Chesterton comments that in Socialism, "the Government provides everything; and it is absurd to ask a Government to *provide* an opposition" (44). Tolkien offers Distributism as a way for those who are low on a scale of power to still have security and justice done them. Through its emphasis on guilds and fair, commutative justice, Distributism offers society safeguards from one individual's attaining too much power or acquiring too much property.

It is helpful here to think of guilds as economic safeguards within the Distributist system. Guilds ensure that no one individual gains too much economic power. The idea is simple: each member of a guild is a free working tradesman, working against the other tradesmen of the guild, so that there is competition. However, this completion is limited, because there are agreements in place to ensure no one competes "past a certain point" or competes dishonestly. Chesterton observes that guilds have "competition, but it is deliberately limited competition… or artificially limited competition" ("The Guild Idea" 100). The agreements are in place to ensure that competition remains in place, not a combine with one individual gaining more than the others. If competition is not regulated, then "one shop swallows all the rest… or one man swallows all the rest" (100-101). In having limited economic power the hobbits of the Shire respect one another and respect their cultural traditions. Their agrarian culture unites them with the environmental concern of the Elves.

Agrarianism and a concern for the earth are high forms of good in Middle-earth. Not only are they exemplified in the ordinary dealings of the Shire, but they are also deeply engrained in Galadriel's character. Being the wisest and most elegant of Middle-earth, her concern for the environment shows its substantial nature in Tolkien's universe. The hobbits' concern for the environment is uniquely agrarian, while Galadriel's is transcendent. However, the two are deeply connected. For example, she gives Sam the Elvish soil: "'Here is set G for Galadriel… but it may stand for garden in your tongue'"(Tolkien 375). She goes on to tell Sam that this soil will heal his home and that "there will be few gardens in Middle-earth that will bloom like your garden" (375). Signifying that "G" means Galadriel, as well as garden, automatically associates the two.

Lothlorien is a vision of what something like Eden may have looked like. This is a place unmarked by the tarnish of industry or of agricultural misuse: "No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lorien there was no stain" (Tolkien 351). This place is both transcendent and holy. However, it is important to note that the elves that dwell here work with nature rather than against it. They live in flets elevated in trees. Rather than destroying or manipulating the environment for gains and ends, they treat it as an end in itself. Galadriel says explicitly that her mirror is not magic, as the hobbits understand it. Magic is the bending of nature to make things that are not natural. Respecting the

environment not only gives the land a heavenly glow, but promotes the Lothlorien culture as well.

The Distributist believes that admiration of nature is vital to a culture. Tolkien and the Distributists "believed that respect for the land and love of nature were essential components of their… traditional beliefs in the family and in the arts" (Akers 2). Tolkien, like the Distributist, thinks that a rich culture is "based upon agriculture and a close relationship with nature" (2). Lothlorien and the Shire reveal their own enduring cultures; they both have a unique way of life that characterizes their values. What they have in common is a deep admiration and concern for nature. However, the Shire seems far from the transcendent quiddity of Lothlorien; it does not capture nature in the way Lorien does. This is a result of the hobbits' simplicity; they do not know nature in the same way Galadriel and Lorien do. Frodo experiences an overwhelming natural aesthetic in Lothlorien: "He felt a delight in wood and the touch of it… it was the delight of the living tree itself" (Tolkien 351). Although the Shire is simple in comparison to Lothlorien, they both share goodness.

Tolkien agrees with the Distributist that an agrarian attitude is beneficial to culture; they also agree that industrialism causes disorder and evil. Akers argues: "Tolkien identifies industrialism with war-fare, and agrarianism with peace" (2). Throughout *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien foreshadows the industrialized Shire to which Frodo and Sam return. For example, at the beginning, in "The Shadow of the Past" Sam tells Ted Sandyman, "You can't deny that others besides our Halfast have seen queer folk crossing the Shire-crossing it, mind you: there are more that are turned back at the borders" (45). Sam says this at the outset of the novel, giving readers a clear idea about the way things typically are in the Shire. Sam's notion of "the way things ought to be" is explicitly how they are, so he becomes the voice of what is expected in the Shire. His declaration offers readers a source of information: first, there are strangers coming into the Shire, and second, the Shire has few border regulations. The state of the Shire's borders shows that they have little regard to danger; they are naïve and innocent. An innocent Shire's accompanied by naivety is better than a knowledgeable, yet corrupted Shire.

Readers are given yet another image from Sam's vision at Galadriel's mirror, for he sees the deconstruction of the Shire. He sees Ted Sandyman cutting down many of the Shire's trees and the installation of a chimney in the new mill. Later in *The Two Towers*, Merry and Pippin find a barrel of pipe-weed in Isengard. Someone has exported the Shire's unique and exclusive product. Aragorn finds this questionable: "Leaf from the Southfarthing in Isengard. The more I consider it, the more curious I find it… Saruman had secret dealing with someone in the Shire" (Tolkien 575). Most of the gardeners and farmers of the Shire would not have the capabilities, or the desire to do something like this. Yet, "Wormtongues may be found in other houses than King Théoden's" (575). Sandyman's exploitation of nature, exportation, and mechanization are counter to Distributism. Tolkien offers much foreshadowing throughout the novel to prepare the reader for what is to come.

Having an economy based on export tends to exploit the local community comparatively more than an economy based on local production. For example, when Merry asks Hob if the reason that hobbits cannot have extra food is because of a bad year of harvest, Hob Hayward answers, "Well no, the year's been good enough… We grow a lot of food, but we don't rightly know what becomes of it" (999). The reader finds out that the food is being "carried off to storage" (999). The hobbits are then informed that there is not any pipe-weed left, and that "wagon loads of it went away down the old road out of South-farthing" (1000). Even when the Shire has had a good year, the hobbits are going with minimal amounts of food. Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans assert that, "Healthy communities eat locally grown food, which feeds not only local people but also the local community and its economy" (207). Dickerson and Mathews argues that there are two problems with Sharkey's dominion: "The ownership of too much land by one person, and the move from using farmland to grow for the local market toward using it for larger-scale production of export cash crops" (208). Rather than using the land to support the Shire, Sharkey uses the land as a means for cash crops and export. He manipulates the hobbits with "progressive rhetoric" (208) such as "gatherers" and "sharers" (Tolkien 999). Sharkey's exploitation of the Shire mimics industrialism's infiltration to communities by way of big government or big business.

Upon returning, the hobbit company finds the "sad and forlorn" Shire very "un-Shirelike" (Tolkien 998) as it is transformed into what Akers calls a "small Isengard" (3). The motives of the populace turn from hard work and love to fear and loathing. Sharkey, the new ruler of the Shire, administers orders to the "ruffians" who, in turn, give orders to commoners. This militarized hierarchy disconnects Sharkey from the local culture, which Tolkien finds dangerous. Sharkey's primary form of leadership comes from a sense of cruelty and usury; he has very little regard for the will of others and desires to dominate them. Farmer Cotton finds Mr. Lotho, Sharkey's partner, to be "funny" because he "wanted to own everything, and then order other folk about" (Tolkien 1012). Sharkey's greed moves the Shire from a basis of ownership to what Hilaire Belloc calls a proletariat basis: the Shire "had already become a society" of one individual "possessed of the means of production on the one hand, and a majority dispossessed of those means on the other" (39). The hobbits find excessive power to be an odd concept because of their own simple culture. It is not common in their Distributist society to want any more than one already has. Modesty and uniformity are the virtues of Distributism: "The Scouring of the Shire" is Tolkien's critique of the industrialism present in both Capitalism and Socialism. Sharkey is Saruman, the menacing wizard from Isengard. At the point in the story where he takes over the Shire, he is so corrupted by the desire for power that he is barely a person. He has become so obsessed with his own conquest that he is willing to exploit the Shire for his own

ends. Because he comes from the outside, he does not know about how the Shire functions, and so he is abstracted from their culture. Consequently, he is apathetic exporting their rightfully owned crops. Gandalf foreshadows Saruman's character change in *The Hobbit*: "Some believe it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. It is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love" (Tolkien 42). It is the hobbits that are, in part, keeping evil at bay, because their culture is an example of what Gandalf is speaking about.

The modest and widely apportioned ownership of private property is a key component of Distributism. So when Ted Sandyman sells his corn-grinding mill to Pimple and Sharkey, it detrimentally withdraws from the Shire's economic independence and saturates the property into fewer hands. Pimple and Sharkey gain their power by buying up property and then using it for industrial purposes. Dickerson and Evans show that the problem is that "too much land is owned by one person" (208). Furthermore, Tolkien offers several images to contrast industrialism and Distributism. One is that the mill is originally water-powered. After Sharkey tears down the small hobbit-sized mill, he constructs a larger, more productive one. This new mill is powered by fire and coal rather than water. "They're always a-hammering and a-letting out a smoke and a stench, and there isn't no peace even at night in Hobbiton," Farmer Cotton comments (Tolkien 1013). Furthermore, the old corn-grinding mill now makes weapons for war. The mill, once a symbol of sustainability and preservation, becomes a tool for creating destruction and chaos. Tolkien juxtaposes the life giving qualities of Distributism with the mechanisms of industrialism. Matthew P. Akers explains the Shire "Formerly produced life through agrarianism… now produces death through industrialism" (2).

The function of the functioning of the Sandymans' water powered mill and the Shire's agricultural society parallel that of Lothlorien culture. Both of these things work together with nature, rather than against it. The water wheel cooperates with the river to grind corn. The hobbits also live in the earth; they do not detach themselves from the environment in their lifestyle. The elves in Lothlorien, however, are unfallen creatures; their existence among the land brings about its serenity. The environment is elevated by their presence: "In Lothlorien, the ancient things lived on in the waking world… on the land of Lothlorien no shadow lay" (Tolkien 349). Though unlike the Elves, the hobbits maintain reverence toward the environment, which lets them partake in goodness and creates in them an enriching existence and a noble history. The hobbit sense of history is a key element in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Knowledge and love of one's history is important to Middle-earth. Throughout the novel characters sing songs to recall significant events; Tom Bombadil, Treebeard, and Legolas all chronicle their history. Ted Sandyman has his own connection to the past, but chooses not to respect it. He is first introduced as incredibly practical, and he is skeptical of Sam's admiration toward Bilbo and Frodo. "Oh, they're both cracked… If that's where you get your news from, you'll never want for moonshine" (45). Ted's lack of regard for a bigger world disconnects him from his community and his mill. The mill is Sandyman owned and operated; Ted inherited it from his father. The fact that Ted has a hand in the destruction of the mill shows his disconnection from the land and his family history. "Ted… works there cleaning the wheels for the Men, where his dad was the Miller and his own master" (1013). Ted compromises his family's integrity to play a part in the Shire's destruction. His father chose not to pursue wealth but to be a leader for his community through managing his mill; however, Ted chooses an abusive, servile relationship with Sharkey to become rich. Tolkien claims that Capitalism disconnects one from their culture and their history through greed; it then attributes them a petty and uniform task, forcing them to be submissive.

Saruman and Lotho both have aliases to keep their identities hidden. In doing this they are fundamentally disconnected from the community. Where the hobbits could talk to Ted Sandyman if they had a problem with the mill, they cannot talk to Sharkey or Pimple because they are not a part of the Shire's agrarian community. It is interesting to note that Lotho has a dual appellation; he goes by Pimple and, on a more general basis, the "Chief." Though the hobbits know who these individuals are, Tolkien leaves it a mystery for the readers. Sharkey and Lotho's servants do not even know who they actually are. Consequently, Saruman and Lotho become names rather than persons, creating an abstraction of their true identities and disconnecting them from the Shire's community. Between their abstraction and need for power, the ruffians are oblivious to their existence, but still follow orders accordingly: "'I'm sorry, Master Merry, but we have orders.' 'Whose orders?' 'The Chief's up at Bag End.' 'Chief? Chief? Do you mean Mr. Lotho?' 'I suppose so… we just have to say "the Chief" nowadays'" (Tolkien 998). Later Sam and Frodo talk to Hob Hayward, one of the hobbits under Sharkey and Pimple, who is punished for letting the Chief's identity slip: "'That Lotho—' 'Now shut up Hob Hayward…you know talk o' that sort isn't allowed'" (Tolkien 1000). This kind of disconnection from the Shire's community parallels the way Socialism and Capitalism work; not many know the true identities of those who lead their economy or their government. As the power of the few expands over a more vast land, the identities of the empowered become increasingly vague. Distributism's answer is to keep the power on a local level.

Sharkey has a controlling and inordinate sense of power; consequently, he creates overbearing institutions and a military-like command system. Tolkien claims in his letters that empowerment is inhuman, "The most improper job of any man… is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity" (Kreeft 166). Tolkien's attitude toward this improper job is shown through Sam's encounter with the Ring. Sam thinks of using the ring to lead an agrarian revolution against Mordor and

then to turn it into a massive garden. However, he reasons that, "The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command" (Tolkien 901). Unlike Sam, Sharky looks to control others. He has little regard for the will of others; through manipulation and violence, he moves his inferiors. All of those that Frodo and Sam encounter are motivated by orders. This function may work well in the military, but by creating a militarized culture, Sharkey deadens the Shire's natural way of life. Furthermore, Sharkey creates a police force to suppress those that could potentially overthrow him. Being told what he cannot do frustrates Sam: "If I hear *not allowed* much oftener… I'm going to get angry" (Tolkien 1002). The former Shire needed little institution because hobbits made simple yet moral decisions. Institution is being manipulated to further

Sharkey's empowerment, not to look out for the populace. Analogously, Socialism and Capitalism keep the power and property in the hands of a few individuals either in big government or big business. Sharkey and Lotho are the owners of the determining amount of the Shire and abuse those who do not hold ownership. When greedy people abuse these systems, they can look eerily similar to "The Scouring of the Shire."

"The Scouring of the Shire" also touches explicitly upon Socialism. Equality is one of the cornerstones of Socialist ideology. However, it is unjust to define equality as minimally rationing goods to a populace in order to maximize profits. Matthew Akers elaborates on how exportation hurts the Shire: "The formerly self-sufficient economy that was focused on localism and on providing what was needed to maintain its own citizens becomes a 'global market' that seeks consumers outside its boundaries and leaves those within hungry" (2). Welfare and rationing are a disguise for the suppression of the Shire-folk. Farmer Cotton offers a brief history of the socialization of the Shire: "Things went from bad to worse. There was little smoke left, save for the Men… Everything except Rules got shorter and shorter, unless one could hide a bit of one's own when the ruffians went round gathering stuff up 'for fair distribution': which meant they got it and we didn't" (1012). Individuals are not allowed to hold their own crop; Sharkey takes away the hobbit's property and their incentive to do good work. Tolkien offers readers another example: "There was no beer and very little food, but with what the travellers brought and shared out they all made a fair meal; and Pippin broke Rule 4 by putting most of the next day's allowance of wood on the fire" (1000). The Rules are instated to moderate how much of a product the populace can use. However, this quote juxtaposes what fairness genuinely looks like with Sharkey's misuse of it. By coming together sharing a meal, the hobbits experience a strong sense of community, rather than a suppressed one. Through this image Tolkien foreshadows that the Shire is not beyond repair.

Although Sharkey is defeated, he leaves a detrimental impression on the agriculture of the Shire. "For at Sharkey's bidding [trees] had been cut down recklessly far and wide over the Shire" (Tolkien 1022). Sam is the most heartbroken of all over the destruction. He thinks, "This hurt would take long to heal, and only his great-grandchildren… would see the Shire as it ought to be" (1022). However, he remembers to use the soil given to him by Galadriel. Before he knows it the gardens grow greater than anything he could imagine: "Spring surpassed his wildest hopes… the fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits nearly bathed in strawberries and cream… there was so much corn that at Harvest every barn was stuffed" (1023-1024). Akers comments that, "This provides hope that even the worst environmental destruction can be reversed, and that the land, when treated properly, can be coaxed into producing beauty and life once again" (3). Though imperialism and industrialism destroy cultures and lands, there is nothing that cannot be fixed. The Shire is restored into a more paradisiacal place than it was originally.

Once the hobbits band together to defeat Sharkey and Pimple, they repair the Shire. Tolkien implies in many places that the Shire grows much stronger after its industrialization. The community grows tighter over Yule: "There was a great deal better cheer that Yule than anyone had hoped for" (Tolkien 1022). Furthermore, Gaffer comments that Sharkey's hardship has only made the Shire a better place, "All's well that ends better" (1022). A new Row is constructed to replace the tarnished hobbit holes; many think this new Row is the very best. It was suggested that it be called *Better Smials*, but is given the name *New Row*. The Shire becomes a stronger, more enriching place once evil is defeated; their gardens are no exception.

Like those in the Shire, "Distributists think small rather than big, and believe that the seeds of ideas need to be planted at a local level" (Akers 3). The Shire works vividly as an example of Distributist ideals: their lack of exportation, their simplicity, their skepticism toward materialism, and their agrarianism. Tolkien offers readers support of Distributism as well as a critique of Capitalism, Socialism and the industrialism associated with the two. In addition, he shows that even the worst damage caused by the imperialist can be defeated by the good of agrarianism and simplicity. Overall, Distributism works to enrich the lives of those who live in communities. Akers tells us that Distributists, "Seek to change people's hearts, which is where a Distributist restoration- like the one in the Shire- must begin" (4).

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THE JOURNEY

By Julia Baranova

The night is coming to an end,
Our journey now is over.
We're going home now, dear friend
But why are you walking slower?
The Ring's destroyed, Dark Lord is gone,
Lit up what once was black!
And yet when I wake up at dawn
I see you looking back.
I see your eyes are turning blind,
Thoughts raging in your head –
You think of those you left behind
Both living and the dead.
You wonder if you'll fight again
With Strider side by side,
O will you look beside and then
You see wise Gandalf smile?
You think of Gimli, Legolas,
Young Hobbits that you knew;
You dream Elrond has granted pass
Through Rivendell for you

But elves have left the Rivendell
To sail to western lands;
Your friends have bid their farewell,
Our fellowship now ends.
You feel that it's a cruel game –
Return from where you started
But how your life can be the same
When you and them are parted?
Not after things that we've been through,
Not when we changed the future,
Not after we got wise and grew,
Not after this adventure!

I see it all in you, and I –
I feel the same inside
I know, it's so hard to say goodbye
To things that changed your life.

… And What about Zanzibar? Or An Adult Fairy Tale Concerning Tolkien's Biographical Legend[1]

NANCY BUNTING

The story of Mabel Tolkien serving as a missionary in Zanzibar before her marriage first appeared in William Ready's 1968 *The Tolkien Relation: A Personal Enquiry* (6). Christina Scull and Wayne Hammond find four inaccuracies in Ready's book: two dates, an Oxford pub name, and Tolkien's mother's missionary work in Zanzibar (*C&G* 2.110). They surmise that Ready had a "mishearing" of the name of the Bird and Baby pub, and Ready did not take any notes so it is not surprising he confused dates (*C&G* 2.110). That leaves the story of Mabel Tolkien's missionary work in Zanzibar, a name so unusual that it is not likely to be misheard or mis-remembered.

Tolkien: Cult or Culture?, a similar effort to place Tolkien in the context of his literary and personal history by John S. Ryan, appeared in 1969. Ryan writes that his essays "often contain ... a measure of personal knowledge derived from my close acquaintance with J.R.R. Tolkien when I was a student very close to him in the School of English within the university of Oxford" (*In the Nameless Wood, Explorations in the Philological Hinterland of Tolkien's Literary Creations* ix). This was in the late 1950s, and Ryan later became a professor of folklore and heritage in the School of Arts at the University of New England in New South Wales, Australia. Being a well-trained academic, Ryan carefully notes his sources and from whom he draws quotations. At the beginning of his chapter "Tolkien, the Man and the Scholar," he reports what Tolkien told him about his father, Arthur Tolkien. Ryan continues with: "His mother, equally of West Midland descent, had before her marriage worked as Mabel Suffield with her sisters as a missionary among the women of the Sultan of Zanzibar. She seems to have been a teller of tales" (9). That is, Ryan heard this story directly from Tolkien. On the same page he carefully quotes from a Tolkien newspaper interview and from Ready's book. He independently confirms Ready and also the report of the Zanzibar story in Daniel Grotta-Kurska's 1976 Tolkien biography, *J.R.R. Tolkien, Architect of Middle Earth* based on his interviewing Tolkien in probably 1966 (15). Further, Ryan maintains this same presentation in the 2012 second edition of *Tolkien: Cult or Culture?*[3]

Scull and Hammond indicate their familiarity with Ryan's 1969 edition by a number of citations, e.g. *C&G* 1.527, 1.780, 2.371-372, 2.652. If Ryan is a good-enough source for the other quotations in *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*, then he should be considered an accurate and reliable informant when reporting this story.

Ready's book appeared in 1968. If the record needed to be amended, the official biography of 1977 would have done that. Humphrey Carpenter was very likely to have known that Tolkien was displeased with the report about his mother. One of the functions and/or purposes of a commissioned biography is to correct previous records. However, Carpenter does not deny or contradict Ready's report. He says nothing and leaves the reader dangling with his description of Mabel Tolkien as "remarkable." While one can certainly have reservations about the sensational "women of the sultan of Zanzibar," saying that someone was a missionary is hardly scurrilous or a defamation of character.

Ryan's remark that Mabel Tolkien was "a teller of tales" may indicate either Ryan's and/or Tolkien's reservations about the factual basis of this story. This would be consistent with Scull and Hammond's view that the story of Mabel (Tolkien's) service in Zanzibar is "a story wholly without foundation." But whether it is based on fact or not, at least two, if not three, independent reports, all by people who admired Tolkien and in no way wanted to injure his reputation, document that Tolkien told this story.[5] This essay addresses the context of the Zanzibar story and what it tells us about the interesting and complicated Mabel Suffield Tolkien.

The Fairy Tale

Once upon a time – in the year 1896 - in a little village - its name was Sarehole – there lived a beautiful young widow. Perhaps you have seen her picture in Hilary Tolkien's *Black and White Ogre Country* (65)? Clearly, in her youth she might have turned heads in the street. And she had two adorable, tow-headed, preschool boys with curly hair: double trouble. She lived in housing provided by one of her brothers-in-law, a Thomas Mitton, and she received some spending money from another brother-in-law, Walter Incledon, so she maintained a life style of "genteel poverty" (Bunting, "5 Gracewell, Sarehole" [Sarehole] 8; Carpenter *J.R.R. Tolkien, A Biography* [*Bio*]24; Grotta Kurska 17).

Such a beautiful woman, living by herself with two small children, would have been the talk of the neighborhood, if not the next three villages, as anyone who has lived in a small town would know. She was educated and cultured, played the piano, knew foreign languages, and had participated in the popular Victorian past time of acting in plays (Gorelik 7; Carpenter 22; Bunting, "Roverandom, an Autobiographical Reading" 4). Obviously, such a woman was in need of a reliable man to take care of her, provide for her, and take a firm hand with her two young sons whom she allowed to wander

seemingly at will and unsupervised (*Bio* 21). Moreover, she might be - as Elvis put it so well - lonely.

Mabel Tolkien was very likely to have followed the strict Victorian etiquette of wearing black for mourning for 2 years after her husband's death plus 6 months of 'half mourning', i.e. the black dress could have more trim and in certain colors like gray or mauve (http://www.fashion-era.com/mourning- fashion.htm-8/27/2016). During the first two years of mourning her only expected social activity was church attendance (http://listverse.com/2013/02/07/10-fascinating-death-facts-from-the-victorian-era). Queen Victoria set the standard for mourning, and Mabel Tolkien could have continued to wear black like the Queen. Many widows continue to wear their wedding rings. The two years of mourning would have ended in February, 1898, and only then or possibly in August would any gentleman callers appear. Unfortunately, they did not take one thing into their reckoning: they failed to take Mabel Tolkien into account.

We have anecdotes that tell us about some important aspects of Mabel Tolkien's character. She was willful and independent in her courtship with her future husband. She circumvented strict Victorian protocol by exchanging secret letters with her fiancé, Arthur Tolkien, by means of having her younger sister, Jane, pass letters to him on the New Street Station platform in Birmingham (*Bio* 9).[3] Given that Mabel was eighteen and her sister was sixteen, they could not have kept this secret for long from their father who was approximately 55. In fact, this exchanging of billet doux only lasted "a few months" (*C&G* 2.1009). Just as Father Francis, Tolkien's guardian, learned of the carefully disguised rendezvous of the teen-aged J.R.R. Tolkien and Edith Bratt, his future wife, in the fall of 1909, it would have been difficult to conceal this clandestine communication from the scrutiny and gossip of Victorian society (*Bio* 41).

The likely outcome of what would have been seen as Mabel's rebellious and defiant behavior that verged on scandal was predictable. John Suffield, her Victorian father, must have acted. He first forbade a formal engagement for two years. But Mabel's flaunting of convention would have fueled gossip and ridicule that would affect the family's reputation and her father's business. No one in the middle-class society of 1888 would have thought this prettily 'romantic', as the fear of pregnancy would have been hovering very near. One has only to think of Edith Bratt's mother, who was seduced by her employer while working as a governess, to know that this was a very likely scenario (*C&G* 2.1012). Similarly, in 1882, an impoverished medical student, Sigmund Freud, and the 20-year old Martha Bernays arranged a secret engagement. When Martha's widowed mother learned of this, within the year the Bernays family decamped from Vienna to the hinterlands of Wandsbek near Hamburg (Burke, 47). Mrs. Bernays was not going to have rumor, innuendo, or the vagaries of hormones besmirch her family and Martha's future. Membership in the middle-class of the nineteenth century was fragile and dependent on good health, hard work, self-discipline, and some luck. An out-of- wedlock pregnancy was one of the fastest tickets out. To end this John Suffield would have separated the pair just like both Father Morgan, Tolkien's guardian, and Edith Bratt's guardian separated J.R.R. Tolkien and the object of his affection. The proud Mabel Tolkien would have found herself packed off to some relative and out of harm's way. This might have been her older brother, Roland, in Manchester (Morton and Hayes, Gedling 14).[7] By 1889 Arthur Tolkien had left for South Africa to further his career at Lloyd's Bank, and his own displeased family would have been relieved of any reminders of his indiscretion and surreptitious behavior. It would also allow Mabel to return to her family (*C&G* 2.1009). Further, John Suffield, Mabel's father, would have congratulated himself when Mabel sailed to South Africa to be married in April, 1891. There could be no knowing winks, sly smiles, or noddings of heads when J.R.R. Tolkien was born early in January, 1892. Though the baby was premature, he was not the result of any extra-curricular activities.

While on the 1895 family visit to England, Mabel Tolkien learned of her husband's unexpected death. She was not going to continue to stay under her father's roof and have him set limits or otherwise tell her what to do, especially if there had been the likely humiliation of being shipped off to avoid scandal. It was all very well to stay for a visit, but she quickly arranged for independent quarters with her brother-in-law, T.E. Mitton. With a little extra spending money from Walter Incledon, another brother-in-law, she could splurge on the fancy clothes she preferred for the boys: "the finery of the day: short black velvet coats and knee-length trousers, large round hats with draw-strings, frilly white satin shirts with wide collars and huge red bow ribbons loosely tied at the neck" (Grotta-Kurska 17).

While Mabel Tolkien's means of financial support might be slender, she understood what Virginia Woolf knew: the massive gap between the popular image of the powerful woman in literature and the everyday reality of women's experience:[5] Woolf wrote:

> If woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men … one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance … but this is a woman in fiction. In fact … she was locked up, beaten and flung about the room. Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant … She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger ... in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband (*A Room of One's Own* 46-47).

Mabel Tolkien might live in "genteel poverty," but she was legally independent. No one could now tell her what to do. During her marriage, her husband appeared to dote on her and accommodate her as much as he could (*Bio* 12). She might not be so lucky again. She had no need to compromise her legal status, and whatever the men might think, she was in no rush to marry again.

However, what was she to do? It was the year 1898, and she could not tell a number of men, who presented themselves

as thinking only of her best interests, to "go jump in the lake." She must think of another way and present a socially acceptable excuse that would rid her of these nuisances and their unwanted attention.

Mabel's ability to handle another predicament is relevant to how she might have handled this inconvenient situation. She had previously been quite resourceful when faced with another socially awkward embarrassment when she lived in South Africa. When J.R.R. Tolkien was three-years old, the house boy, Isaak, "borrowed" Tolkien "for several days" taking him to his native kraal or village so that Isaak could "proudly show" off the tow-headed, blue eyed boy (Grotta-Kurska 15-16, *Bio* 15). Both Grotta-Kurska and Carpenter report the family was "panic-stricken" and in "turmoil" when they discovered that little J.R.R. Tolkien was gone.

Grotta-Kurska reports that Tolkien remembered this story "with great amusement" (15). Tolkien should be very amused as this story is complete nonsense.

It is certain that Isaak took Tolkien to visit his kraal. However, it is not possible that Isaak did this without the permission or knowledge of his employer or at least Mabel Tolkien, who was in charge of the household. Bloemfontein was the capital of the Orange Free State. The first Pass Law, targeting African workers in the Orange Free State's rich mine fields of Kimberley and Witwatersrand, went into effect in 1895, the year young Tolkien turned three. This law's purpose was to control and limit the mobility of Black laborers (Thompson, *A History of South Africa* 121). No male Black African carrying a tow-headed, White, pre-school child would have been allowed to pass without some explanation that would have required a written statement. Residents of Bloemfontein might be familiar with Isaak as a servant of the Tolkiens and might not have been concerned with his escorting young J.R.R. Tolkien around town. However, to reach his village Isaak would have had to use common roads that would have been used by the local Boers. The Boers would not have waited for the slow wheels of justice to turn if they had any reason to believe that there was a Black man who was kidnapping a White child. While Isaak may have been eager to exhibit this amazing child, he was not so stupid or crazy or so reckless as to endanger his life.

Criminal law, unlike civil law, does not require the lodging of a complaint. If Isaak had in fact taken J.R.R. Tolkien without his family's knowledge, Isaak would have been charged with kidnapping. Any charges would have been dropped later if there were extenuating circumstances. But, is there any reason to believe that either Arthur or Mabel Tolkien, whatever their political views, would have tolerated a servant, whether Black or White, who had kidnapped their child? There could not have been that much difficulty replacing a Black servant. There is nothing to indicate that Mabel Tolkien, who took so much pleasure in her handsome, bright, first child, was so distant and detached from him that his possible loss mattered so little (*Bio* 14).

There are simply too many implausible implications to the story as it stands.

To understand this situation and what it involved, the conventions of the time regarding servants must be taken into account. It was a well-established custom in England that servants could take young children in their charge to visit their families, with their employer's permission. Edith Nesbit published *Five Children and It* in 1899, and this story's success depends on the contrast between an accurate depiction of everyday, typical, middle-class life and the intrusion of fantasy. Nesbit presents the socially accepted, common practice of the maid taking the youngest child home to show her family with her employer's knowledge.[6] Assuming that Isaak had indicated how pleased his clan would be to see such a blue-eyed, tow-headed White child, Mabel Tolkien may have chosen to follow the ordinary English custom without regard for how culturally shocking others might find it in the setting of the Orange Free State. Social convention had not seemed very compelling to her during her courtship, and there was no reason for it to be now. She even included the native servants in the family Christmas card from November, 1892 (Bio 149). Isaak, as a longstanding victim of Boer discrimination and abuse, would have known to get some kind of written pass or permission to protect himself on his journey to and from his village.

However, when either Arthur Tolkien learned of this *fait accomplit* or neighbors learned of it, there would have been horrified reactions. Arthur Tolkien had to take into account the attitudes of his Boer clients. He needed to work very hard as an outsider to cultivate and build new accounts for his English bank in the Orange Free State when there were increasing suspicions and tensions between the Boers and England culminating in the Boer War of 1899-1902 (*Bio* 11-12, 14-15). He could not afford to have other people be offended by his wife's casual attitude toward a Black African servant and her willingness to entrust their child to a savage and his uncivilized, if not barbaric, tribe. Previously, Mabel had been a business asset as she was quite popular and involved in local theatrics (Gorelik 7). While in private she complained about Bloemfontein life with "its endless social calls, and its tedious dinner-parties," she understood that this was necessary for her husband's career (*Bio*14). Arthur Tolkien would have had to let his wife know that she had jeopardized his business status.

Her recourse was to feign ignorance, innocence, shock, and dramatic emotional upheavals. Arthur Tolkien would have been happy to help her cover her tracks. Of course, they were overjoyed when Isaak returned with young J.R.R. Tolkien. But, they could not fire Isaak nor allow charges to be filed as either way Isaak would have revealed the details of how he was able to explain himself to any strangers he met. Somehow, Arthur Tolkien made sure that the authorities understood this had all been a misunderstanding, and he gave his wife's reputed "liberal" attitude and "tolerance" toward natives as the reason for deciding that Isaak was not to be dismissed (*Bio* 13). If this occurred when Tolkien was three, this would have occurred early in 1895 as Tolkien's birthday is January 3.[8] A scheduled family visit by Mabel Tolkien and the boys to England followed shortly, in April, 1895. Leaving town would let the gossip and the dust settle.

There may have been other social deceptions involved in this episode, but at least this reconstruction will accommodate the facts. A careful consideration shows that Mabel Suffield Tolkien was "a teller of tales."

Returning to 1898, Mabel Tolkien was living in T.E. Mitton's cottage at Sarehole. He was a member of the Moseley Baptist Church, and the Baptist Church owned a number of the other units on the property, so a large percent of the other residents were likely to be serious Baptists ("5 Gracewell, Sarehole" 8). Mabel Tolkien's only social activity of church attendance during her two years of mourning would have established her own respectability (*http://listverse.com/2013/02/07/10- fascinating-death-facts-from-the-victorian-era*). To fit in with her neighbors and in hopes of discouraging and/or shedding some of her importunate suitors, Mabel Tolkien probably stressed her religious background. As far as reducing the flow of admirers, it probably had little effect. However, it may have given her an idea.

If we assume that Mabel Tolkien was gone from Birmingham beginning sometime in 1888 when her father hustled her out of town in order to separate her from Arthur Tolkien, then Mabel Tolkien embroidered on and covered her absence. She announced that she had been gone on missionary work with her sisters to Zanzibar. Her sister Jane had moved to Liverpool in 1896 to teach science in a girls' high school and did not return to the Birmingham area until 1899 (Burns). Mabel's older sister, May Incledon, was living with her husband and only appears to have returned to the Moseley area sometime around 1900. With both of her sisters gone in 1898, it would have been difficult for others to check on this story. Mabel Tolkien would be known as a foreign missionary to unenlightened savages gaining the respect and admiration of the pious Baptists. She would be "famous." It would also send a clear message to all the local gentlemen that as a devout woman she had been places, done things, and had experiences they could not even imagine matching. It probably had the desired effect of deflating their romantic and matrimonial interests.

The Zanzibar story is almost certainly a fabrication. In 1900 Mabel's younger sister, Jane, ran in the School Board elections on the Church Party ticket. She was an energetic campaigner and addressed meetings, and it would have been easy and obvious for her to highlight any previous religious activities. But there was never a word about any missionary work (Burns).

Mabel Tolkien probably thought little of her successful ruse of religious enthusiasm. However, in 1898 her six-year old son who would remember how deferential and impressed people were with his mother's missionary credentials. Young J.R.R. Tolkien would have believed this story completely and reveled in her being "famous." Carpenter states Tolkien's "real biography is *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*" (260). He draws an explicit parallel between Belladonna Took and Mabel Suffield Tolkien (175). In *The Hobbit*, Gandalf's unexplained comment, "for the sake of poor Belladonna," would make sense in the context of Mabel Suffield Tolkien's later life as seen in Tolkien's remark that her death was due to "persecution, poverty, and largely consequent, disease, in the effort to hand on to us small boys the Faith" (*The Hobbit* [H] 16; *Letters* 354). Tolkien's memories of the years at Sarehole would always include and be colored by his mother's social standing on the basis of her supposed religious activities and create the enigmatic reference to "the famous Belladonna Took" (*H* 12).

The person who was most likely to have dispelled J.R.R. Tolkien's illusion was his Aunt May Incledon when she and her sister Mabel Tolkien were taking classes to become Catholics in the spring of 1900 (*Bio* 23). Would young J.R.R. Tolkien have mentioned or asked about his aunt's former missionary activities with his mother and learned they did not exist? However he learned the truth, his admiration for his mother's cleverness and her ability to spin a story seems to have remained.

The Complicated Mabel Tolkien

Tolkien only spoke of his mother in the most positive and idealized terms: "a gifted lady of great beauty and wit" whose "sole tuition" (except in geometry) "gained [Tolkien] a scholarship to King Edward VI School in Birmingham" and whose death was seen by Tolkien as one of a Catholic martyr (*Letters* 54, 377, 354). Nevertheless, she was more than a two-dimensional, cardboard figure that might have stepped out of a Dickens' novel.

Carpenter acknowledges that in the official biography he portrayed Tolkien "very much as he saw himself, and leaving out several difficult issues" ("Review: Cover book: Tolkien and the Great War by John Garth"). J.R.R. Tolkien's literary executor and editor, his son, Christopher Tolkien, required Carpenter, the biographer, to completely rewrite his original draft, and Rayner Unwin, Tolkien's publisher, confirms this report (249). Carpenter, when talking about how he "castrated" his original draft of the Tolkien biography and "cut out everything which was likely to be contentious," adds how asking someone to write a biography is "a bit like inviting a private detective to investigate your family secrets" ("Learning about Ourselves" 270, 271). Carpenter's use of the word "castrated" indicates that what was left out was important and fundamental. Whatever was left would be misleading due to an incomplete context. This includes the story of Tolkien's mother, Mabel.

Prior to the 1896 move to Sarehole, young J.R.R. Tolkien had been cared for by servants. Given his father's financial situation, the family had a Black African maid, a Black African house-boy, and a White nurse, who was possibly a wet-nurse for Tolkien in his infancy (*Bio* 13). Consequently, Mabel Tolkien was likely to have been little involved in the labor of everyday childcare. Rose reports that during this time period, children's "[c]ontact with parents was highly formalized; children were carefully scrubbed and dressed and went down at set times in the day accompanied by the nursemaid to sit and talk politely with mama and papa. In ... medium middle-class homes, where there were fewer intermediary servants, the contact was more spontaneous

… but here too time was likely to be strictly rationed, and there remained a definite framework of discipline" (228). Native African servants would have tended to indulge their charges by giving them constant attention, and they would have been reluctant to cause any expression of anger or displeasure in a White child (Shengold 274). This pattern of having others deal with the daily routine of child care and discipline continued when Mabel Tolkien sailed to England with her two sons in April, 1895 as her husband, Arthur, "engaged a nurse to travel with them" (*Bio* 15). In February, 1896 she still had a nurse to help her with child care because J.R.R. Tolkien "dictated a letter to his father which was written out by the nurse" (*Bio* 16). This situation ended by the summer of 1896 when Mabel Tolkien and her sons moved to Sarehole on a very limited budget which would have probably precluded the hiring of household help (*Bio* 19-20).

Carpenter writes that when the family moved to Sarehole, "Hilary Tolkien was only two and a half, but soon he was accompanying his elder brother on expeditions across the meadow to the mill" "where they could see the great leather belts and pulleys and shafts, and the men at work" (20). Is it any wonder that the local miller, whom the Tolkien boys called the White Ogre, tried to frighten two pre-school children away from dangerous machinery? They must have been unaccompanied frequently because in his 1991 article, "Tolkien's shire," John Ezard reports that George Andrew, "the White Ogre," the tenant miller's son, said, "The two of them were perishing little nuisances." Again, "he used to complain about people picnicking on their land, near all the

machinery. He said the Tolkiens were some of the worst." ("Exhibition tracks life of young J.R.R. Tolkien," icbirmingham.icnetwork.co.uk). Grotta-Kurska notes that Tolkien and his brother went for "frequent long walks around the countryside - a practice established and encouraged by his mother" (Grotta-Kurska 17). They were evidently allowed great latitude in roaming, and they were by themselves because Hilary recalls an old farmer, who "would swoop on you and tell you what dreadful things would happen if he ever caught you again, straying off the foot path," and "I don't know what he would have done to us if he had managed to catch us having picnics and making fires" in "Bumble Dell" (4). The two of them were alone there when their mother surprised them by using a deep voice (*Bio* 21). Mabel Tolkien certainly read these comments in her son Hilary's exercise book and she had no concerns about their trespassing, wandering, and possibly endangering themselves on others' property. This lack of concern with others' views was consistent with her previous indifference to convention.

There was great freedom in this, both for Mabel and the boys, but this lack of supervision would seem much more of a lower class benign neglect than the kind of more supervised play seen in middle class families, e.g. the kind of supervision seen in *Five Children and It* where the maid is within earshot and can check on the children, though the children may decide to go on unauthorized adventures. One thinks of the contrast in *The Secret Garden* between the lower class child, Dicken, and the strictly supervised Mary and her well-to-do cousin. In *Orphans, Real and Imagined* (1987), Eileen Simpson writes that by "the middle of the nineteenth century, when, with the cult of domesticity, the bourgeois family reached its sentimental peak, … middle- and upper-class children were cosseted as never before," but not by Mabel Tolkien (140). In "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien recalled that he liked "Red Indians … there were bows and arrows ..., and strange languages, and glimpses of an archaic mode of life and, above all, forests in such stories" (134). One wonders if Tolkien's relatives described his roaming with his brother as acting like the proverbial 'bunch of wild Indians'. However, Mabel Tolkien's extended family could do nothing as children were legally the property of their parents and were used by them as personal or family assets (Pinchbeck and Hewitt 348). Young J.R.R. Tolkien was his mother's possession as she was the sole legal guardian due to her husband's death.

The terrifying, but not surprising, final result of this laissez-faire mode of parenting appears to have been Hilary's near drowning. Carpenter dwells only on the mill's temptations with "the water- wheel turning in its dark cavern" and the pool behind the mill "a dangerous and exciting place" with waters that "suddenly plunged over the sluice to the great wheel below" (20). Hilary Tolkien reveals, "I fell in the mill's pool once, but my mother was so glad I didn't get drowned that I wasn't even scolded" (6). The boys must have been unaccompanied.

But the picture of Mabel Tolkien is even more complicated. Before her marriage, she had been a governess (Grotta-Kurska, 18).[9] Mabel Tolkien's employment as a governess would have been compatible with her family's investment in education, and this was one of the few socially accepted occupations for a middle-class, not-yet-married woman. While she dispensed with wearisome supervision, she expected model deportment and educational performance. J.R.R. Tolkien was a child his mother could be proud of as he was reading at the age of 4 and soon writing (*Bio* 21). However, with the 1896 move to Sarehole, not only must the distressed widow, Mabel Tolkien, care for and discipline the children herself, but her own expectations of acceptable behavior in children would have been quite different from the indulgences that they had been used to in South Africa from the native servants and perhaps were allowed by doting relatives during the visit in England. Governesses often had a reputation for "viciously strict discipline" (Rose 165). Her dressing her sons in short black velvet coats, large round hats, and frilly white satin shirts would not allow them rambunctious play. She disapproved of young J.R.R. Tolkien's invented languages as "a useless frivolity taking up time that could be better spent in studying" for his entrance examinations for King Edward VI School, which he failed in November 1899 (Grotta-Kurska 18, Plimmer and Plimmer). He had to buckle down and his notebook, containing his first languages, was destroyed. Given Tolkien's love of languages, this must have been incredibly painful because 30 years later when he was writing "A Secret Vice" in the early 1930s he recalled this (Bunting, Tolkien's First Notebook and Its Destruction" 27).

We may also learn something of Mabel Tolkien's views on teaching children by comparing her to her sister, Jane Suffield Neave, a teacher by training, who took children at her Phoenix Farm for educational activities like mushrooming, country walks, and pointing out constellations (Morton and Hayes 22). While Jane Suffield Neave was "endlessly interesting," she was capable of "taking a stern view of matters concerning domestic order" (Morton and Hayes 22). As a governess, Mabel was likely to have shared this characteristic of "sternness."

Generally, people's expectations of their children are likely to be consistent with their own upbringing unless very conscious, deliberate changes are made. Julian Tolkien, a son of Hilary Tolkien born in the 1930s, recalled in 2001 that they were brought up not to speak unless spoken to ("Related to Tolkien"). Christopher Tolkien, J.R.R. Tolkien's son and literary executor, notes that the *The Lost Road*'s character, Albion, has a biography that "is in many respects closely modelled on my father's own life." He writes that in a way similar to Albion, his father, frequently addressed his sons as "boy" as "a term of friendship and affection," as opposed to using "an aloofly schoolmasterish tone" (*The Lost Road* 53). Carpenter's biography and *The Tolkien Family Album* abundantly indicate J.R.R. Tolkien's affectionate and empathic attitude toward his children, but addressing her sons with "boy" with an "aloof schoolmasterish tone" would have fit a governess with a "stern view " who only allowed children

to speak when addressed directly (*Bio* 158-161).

Hilary Tolkien is quite matter-of-fact in his old diary about getting a "good thrashing." During the time he lived in Sarehole, Hilary was 2½ to 6½ years old, and he would have been ill equipped to resist the temptation of pretty flowers, mill ponds, etc (2).[10] Tolkien in his lecture, "On Fairy-stories" wrote that "the years, few but long-seeming, between learning to read and going to school" were "really a sad and troublous time" (135). Tolkien began to read at the age of four, and he began school in 1900 at the age of eight at King Edward VI School, i.e. the years at Sarehole living with his mother (*Bio* 21). Tolkien called this "the longest seeming and most formative part of my life" (*Bio* 24). This "sad and troublous time" could not have been due to financial difficulties or the lack of available extended family. It is likely this refers to physical abuse as the beating of children by both parents and strangers was common, acceptable, and unremarkable at the turn of the 20th century. These 'thrashings' or beatings should also be seen in the context of the casual and frequent physical discipline of boys, particularly in the English public schools (Rose 179). The widely existing, accepted belief was that this practice was not only for the child's good, but also necessary for education (Rose 180). Biblical authority and custom, i.e. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," supported the physical abuse and exploitation of children, and this was also applied to infants. Physical abuse was not necessarily an indication of disliking a child. People could see themselves as good parents, and be seen by others as good parents, and beat their children. Children were seen as little adults and the "indifference to what we should now see as cruelty to children sprang from … ignorance of the consequences of maltreatment in youth on the physique and character of the grown man" (Pinchbeck and Hewitt 348, 349).

Not only was Mabel Tolkien a "teller of tales" and "famous," but she was an independent person who ignored convention in her courtship with her husband, the supervision of her children, and in 1900 joining and remaining in the Catholic Church against all family opposition (*Bio* 23). She was "beautiful and witty," a stern governess, Tolkien's guide to what he saw as the only true religion, Catholicism, and she was also the source of his interest in languages, etymology, alphabets, and handwriting (*Letters* 377).[11] She was also the beautiful Queen Mab with an "almost idolatrous love" of trees and flowers, his guide to Faërie, the realm of elves and dragons, which he believed in all his life (Grotta-Kurska 19; Bunting, "Fairies, Fairy Queens, and the Character of Guinevere in *The Fall of Arthur*").

When Tolkien reminisced about his early years with Ready, Ryan, and Grotta-Kurska, he carefully orchestrated the positive memories of his time growing up in Sarehole. He was appalled when he realized Ready had taken note of his referring to his mother's missionary activities in Zanzibar.[11] He was furious, as much as with himself as with Ready, for letting the gullible six-year old J.R.R. Tolkien reveal the "famous" missionary, Mabel Tolkien, and for slipping up on his careful presentation. But the slip about Zanzibar allows us to have a much more nuanced view of the "remarkable" Mabel Tolkien as well as a glimpse into Tolkien's *early* life which Carpenter stressed was Tolkien's source of the "seeds of his imagination. Further experience was not necessary and it was not sought" (126; italics in original). This would be the primary reality upon which Tolkien based his secondary reality or fantasy.[12]

Notes

1. As Tolkien strongly averred that children dislike opinionated, intrusive narrators, this fairy tale is written for adults in hope that they will be more tolerant and forgiving (*Letters* 310, 346). Dimitra Fimi in *Tolkien, Race, and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits* (2009) discusses how Tolkien, like many authors, manage their presentation to promote a certain view of themselves, i.e. a 'biographical legend'.
2. Jason Fisher in "The Year's Work in Tolkien Studies 2012" reviews J.S. Ryan's second edition of *Tolkien: Cult or Culture?* (212-213). He writes that as the 1969 first edition "is no longer easy to find, the new edition is a welcome one." However, in fact, the 1969 edition is much easier to find that the 2012 one. The only two copies available of the second edition are in two libraries in Australia. I was able to get a copy of Chapter 2 "Tolkien, the Man and the Scholar," by email from The National Library of Australia. My research found the second edition is not for sale in any Tolkien specialty shop or general bookstore (amazon) though it was only published in 2012. Ryan's publisher lists no copies as available for sale. All quotations in this paper are from the more readily available 1969 edition.
3. Ready received a letter from Tolkien February 2, 1967 stating: "I dislike being written about, and the results to date have caused me both irritation and distaste. I vetoed being treated in one of the series *Contemporary Writers in Christian Perspective* published by Eerdmans. … I hope you will make it literary ... and not personal. I have no inclination, in fact must refuse, to provide information about myself, family and family origin"(55-56). Having been warned in a letter before his April, 1967 interview with Tolkien, Ready was unlikely to have wanted to offend or alienate a writer, whom he much admired, by asking him forbidden personal questions. If Tolkien talked about his background and retold family stories, then this was a slip on his part. He enjoyed playing to an audience when he declaimed *Beowulf* in a "dramatic performance" in his classes (*Bio* 133). He admitted concerning the BBC filming him in the 1960s: "they got what they wanted and my histrionic temperament (I used to like 'acting') betrayed me into playing ball (the ball desired) to my own undoing" (*C&G* 1.711).
3. This independence is also seen in Mabel's other two sisters. Her older sister, May, who attempted to join the Catholic Church with Mabel, was thwarted by her husband, but showed her independent thinking by becoming active in the International Club for Psychical Research (Priestman 36). Her younger sister, Jane, obtained a university degree and ran successfully for the local school board at the turn of the century. After her brief marriage to Edwin Neave, the widowed Jane became a landowner and a farmer, a rather unconventional and pioneering role for a woman in 1911 (Morton and Hayes 18).
4. The 'Ronald' in J.R.R. Tolkien's name is unusual and has never been explained like his name John and Reuel (*Letters* 398). 'Ronald' is a scrambling of 'Roland', an anagram of Mabel's brother's name. Mabel Tolkien's father, John Suffield, was known for his jokes, puns, and doggerel, and was likely to have encouraged his children to play with language (*Tolkien's Gedling, 1914, The Birth of a Legend* 12).
5. Virginia Woolf was a victim of sexual abuse by her two older step-brothers so she understood the lack of protection that women had in her society. The Stephens family certainly knew of this abuse and could do nothing to intervene or protect her (Terr, 230-231).
6. In *Five children and It* one child asks where the baby is and Jane says that Martha, the maid, "is going to take him to Rochester to see her cousins. Mother said she might. She's dressing him now … in his very best coat and hat." Cyril adds "Servants *do* like taking babies to see their relations … I've noticed it before - especially in their best things" (31).
7. Tolkien reports this story as it was told to him and he contributes no memories of his own. However, by November, 1894 he can recall some

memories of the train trip and being by the sea (*Bio* 15). He also had memories from Christmas of 1894, i.e. the drooping eucalyptus tree (*Letters* 213). It is surprising that he has memories from this early, but Tolkien strongly defended these and his visual memory was excellent, i.e. "My memory is mainly pictorial" (*Letters* 343). His lack of memory for something so unusual as a trip to a native village suggests that it occurred before November, 1894 and therefore when he was two, as opposed to three as reported by Grotta-Kurska. If that is correct and the "kidnapping" occurred when Tolkien was two, it may have contributed to the decision for Mabel Tolkien to take the boys in November, 1894 to the coast near Cape Town reportedly to have young J.R.R. Tolkien spend time in cooler air for the sake of his health (*Bio* 15). That is, again, leaving town to let the furor die down. While the 1895 Pass Law would not have been in effect yet, it codified long-standing Boer attitudes to the native population.

8. Hammond and Scull confirm this is true from a communication from Priscilla Tolkien (under March 17, 2010 1018- 1020) (2/09/2014), *www.hammondandscull.com/addenda/guide-by-date.html*).
9. The likelihood of harsh punishment during the time in Sarehole may also be supported by other considerations. Tolkien's spring 1915 poem *You and Me and the Cottage of Lost Play* features the two children of the title who are described as "a dark child and a fair." Also, there are fairies who visit "lonely children and whisper to them at dusk in early bed by nightlight and candle-flame, or comfort those that weep" (*BLT1* 20). While Ronald remained fair like his early picture, Hilary changed to "look more and more like his father" (*Bio* 23). This must partly refer to Hilary's darker hair because Arthur Tolkien, his father, has dark hair in the picture in the Carpenter biography (149). Tolkien was also fascinated with the Kullervo story from the Kalevala. This story focuses on child abuse and it long-term effects on a child, and Tolkien saw this as particularly relevant to the treatment of his younger brother Hilary (See Bunting, "1904: Tolkien, Trauma, and Its Anniversaries" 68-72).
10. See note 7 for how his maternal grandfather, John Suffield, contributed to his love of playing with language.
11. Tolkien wrote the President of the Tolkien Society of America that he wanted the membership to know that the forthcoming William Ready "biography" "is bogus." "Ready has neither the authority nor the knowledge to write such a book" (*C&G* 1.722) However, elsewhere he acknowledged Ready as a "genuine (and intelligent) liker of my works" (*C&G* 1.715).
12. "For creative Fantasy is founded upon the hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun; on a recognition of fact, but not slavery to it" (OFS 144). "Fantasy is made out of the Primary World" (OFS 147).

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banditti's castle; the innkeeper says, "we are now used to that nocturnal sport, and do not care for those infernal spirits, but many strangers have fallen ill through fright" (27). The terror for the villagers has become conditioned, but it proves to be extremely frightening for visitors. When a group of travellers investigate the castle, they are given a most frightful reception as:

> again every thing was silent, but in an instant the former noise struck once more our listening ears, and the infernal hosts rushed by like lightening – the Lieutenant, the Baron, and I darted through the passage leading to the gate, but the airy gentlemen were already out of sight, and we could see nothing, save the faint glimmering of horses. (35)

These men are terrified, and subsequent encounters with the banditti, even when they are revealed as supernatural frauds, prove just as frightful.

Though Teuthold's pseudo-supernatural banditti share some stark similarities with Tolkien's Black Riders, it must be noted that banditti from other texts of the 1790s, such as *The Monk* (1796), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *Clermont* (1798), all serve the purpose of acting as a wild and mysterious source of violence that consume those that they prey on by the use of terror. This is due to the behavior that they exhibit. Externally, both attempt to murder and rob their victims. The Black Riders hope to overtake Frodo and steal the Ring from him. They engage in acts of terror that are threatening to the hobbits and those connected indirectly to their plight such as Fatty Bolger. Though most banditti display this pursuit of greed and a disregard for the lives of their victims, none are more ruthless than the group encountered in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*. When Raymond, one of the protagonists in Lewis's narrative, recounts his encounter with a ruthless group of banditti, he notes "that the banditti were frequently whispering among themselves" (101) discussing how to murder and rob the unsuspecting. Lewis's banditti are as ruthless as they are treacherous, and the Black Riders can be seen as entertaining the use of similar pre-meditated violence against their intended victims.

The internal behavior of the two groups comes from their relationship with one another, adding to their mystique. The Black Riders are remembered for their piercing cry, which Tolkien describes as:

> a long-drawn wail came down the wind, like the cry of some evil and lonely creature. It rose and fell, and ended on a high piercing note. Even as they sat and stood, as if suddenly frozen, it was answered by another cry, fainter and further off, but no less chilling to the blood. There was then a silence, broken only by the sound of the wind in the leaves. (*FotR* 88)

The cry functions as a signal that can only be understood by other Black Riders. Its unnatural sound makes it even more ominous, contributing to its terrifying nature. Likewise, the banditti of the early gothic romances are known for their esoteric gestures that are perceived as frightening to those not counted among their numbers. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily is frightened by the coded gestures and hand symbols of Montoni's henchmen. Her reaction is similar to the hobbits as it increases the state of fear she is in. Emily's belief that Montoni and his henchmen are banditti is later proved false, but it is the link she makes between the gestures and banditti that is important. The Black Riders are also shown to haunt the forests in the northwest of Middle-earth. For centuries, the forest had been viewed as a place where strange fey creatures lurked; it had a mysterious and threatening presence to those of a more urbanized inclination. It is also the place haunted by the banditti, as seen in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Monk*, and *The Necromancer*. The forest was a popular place to waylay victims; its mysterious nature is used as the setting for terror to take place. Finally, both the banditti and the Black Riders resort to strength in numbers when confronting their victims. The Black Riders only attempt to overtake the hobbits when there are several of them together; this not only increases their chance of success, but it furthers the terror as their intended victims realise that they will be overwhelmed. This is also how banditti of the gothic romances would operate; in *The Monk*, the banditti wait until more of their numbers arrive before committing their criminal acts. The banditti thus inspire terror in every aspect of their being and few characters in any of these romances demonstrate fearlessness against them. Tolkien likely realised how effective the banditti were in establishing literary terror. That is why his Black Riders, for the first half of *FotR*, are so like the banditti. He illustrates his understanding of this frightening character type as the Black Riders are extremely efficient creatures in creating a potent sense of terror comparable to what is found in many eighteenth-century gothic romances.

Another element of early gothic fiction appears in *LotR* after the major plot revelations of the Council of Elrond. The heroes' journey takes them into a place of unfound terror, and their escape from the foreboding mines of Moria places a somber tone over the next many pages of the narrative. When Gandalf makes the suggestion that the Fellowship should travel through it, a sensation of "dread fell at the mention of that name. Even to the hobbits it was a legend of vague fear" (*FotR* 287) and Boromir bluntly states that "the name of Moria is black" (288). Moria is thus established as a place of great terror before the Fellowship enters its ancient halls. The exterior of Moria is described in language typical of gothic fiction, with "a path, most broken and decayed, that wound its way among the ruined walls and paving-stones of an ancient highroad" (292) and "stumps and dead boughs were rotting in the shallows" (295) affirming it as a place of things long dead. Death is part of Moria's essence for the language Tolkien describes it with marks it as a place of decay and degeneration. Yet Moria's interior is even more imposing than its exterior; it is "bewildering beyond hope" (303) and filled with a foreboding sense of darkness and loss. Paranoia takes hold on the Fellowship while there, as evident in the example of Pippin, who fears "that some

Eighteenth-Century Gothic Fiction and the Terrors of Middle-earth

JOEL TERRANOVA

J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings has proven itself as one of the most beloved literary works of the twentieth century. It is a landmark text, redefining the fantasy genre and permeating numerous aspects of popular culture. One of the most memorable characteristics of this fantasy epic is the potent level of terror that Tolkien uses throughout its narrative to create a foreboding atmosphere of fear. Terror is an intricate element in establishing the fear that exists within LotR; it is, as a literary device defined by Fredrick S. Franks, a sensation that is "caused by what is dreaded and anticipated and relies heavily on suspense. It has an apprehensive and suggestive dimension that can evoke feelings of the sublime. Terror, then, is preliminary fear accompanied by a certain delight in the awful anticipation that it brings" (349). In LotR, Tolkien's use of terror shares many similarities with how it is employed by the eighteenth-century writers of gothic romances.

There is good reason to believe that Tolkien was familiar with the texts and conventions of the early gothic romances. According to Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien was widely read in all areas of literature, often staying up late each night reading various books of different genres and scope. The birth of medieval antiquarianism in the mid-eighteenth century is also important to note as one of its immediate legacies was the gothic romance. As a scholar of medieval literature, Tolkien would have been aware of this rekindling of interest in the medieval era. Classical gothic romances also received a great deal of attention from academics and publishers during the 1920s through the 1940s when Tolkien was at Oxford. It is therefore not terribly surprising to detect some influential borrowing, whether conscious or not, from the gothic romances of the eighteenth century when Tolkien devised the extremely frightening nature of LotR. All of this, when taken into consideration with LotR's gothic elements, implies Tolkien knew and drew on the eighteenth-century gothic romance when writing his fantasy masterpiece.

Gothic fiction is a genre that thrives on aesthetics and conventions, and one of the most popular devices seen in the eighteenth-century gothic romance were the banditti, which Markman Ellis describes as "an organized gang of marauding brigands" (58). They were often horse riders that inspired a great sense of terror in characters and readers alike. First gaining popularity in Friedrich Schiller's play Die Räuber (1781), it was the gothic romances of the 1790s that immortalised these cruel highwaymen to the reading public as a source of terror; they were outlaws prone to violent and insidious acts while always hidden on the slim border between civilization and the wilderness. The banditti thus resonate with those that read Tolkien, notably in the form of the Black Riders. For the first half of The Fellowship of the Ring, the sinister Black Riders are presented in several instances that greatly resemble the eighteenth-century banditti, especially in their ability to create terror. Terror is the key to their existence; Strider relates that "their power is in terror" (FotR 171) and it is characteristically fitting that "terror overcame Pippin and Merry" (191) by their presence. Likewise, the banditti of the eighteenth-century gothic romances have this same symbiotic correlation to terror. In Peter Teuthold's The Necromancer (1794), a group of banditti prey on a small village and its local surroundings.[1] These banditti operate under the disguise of ghostly horse-riders from a nearby abandoned castle, implying a supernatural origin. The villagers are in a state of pacified terror as they dare not go out at night or travel near the banditti's castle; the innkeeper says, "we are now used to that nocturnal sport, and do not care for those infernal spirits, but many strangers have fallen ill through fright" (27). The

Figure 1. Cover. The Necromancer; or, The Tale of the Black Forest. By Peter Teuthold. 1927 edition. From the author's private collection.

faint fall of soft bare feet. It was never loud enough, or near enough, for him to feel certain that he heard it" (*FotR* 304). Frodo and the reader are suddenly made aware that something else is present, hidden and elusive. As the Fellowship continues its journey, Frodo is continually haunted by "two pale points of light, almost like luminous eyes" (*FotR* 310). With each subsequent notice, more is slowly revealed about this mysterious stalker. The reader is continually forced to dwell on the nearby terror that lurks in the shadows. Each additional encounter heightens the level of terror; not only does the reader discover more about this assailant, but each appearance is more terrifying than the last. For example, while being escorted by Haldir, Frodo is told that "a strange creature had been seen, running with bent back and with hands near the ground, like a beast and yet not of beast-shape" (340). When Aragorn confirms Frodo's fear that this hunter is Gollum, the level of terror is increased. Reader and character now realise what it is that follows; a murderous and twisted recluse stubbornly intent on reclaiming what it greedily sees as its own. The final moment of Gollum's pursuit comes to an end in *The Two Towers* when Tolkien describes him as a "black crawling shape now three-quarters of the way down, and perhaps fifty feet or less above the cliff's foot" (599). He makes his dreadful appearance but is subdued by the two hobbits, ending his hunt from the shadows.

Gollum's pursuit is indicative of a continued increase in psychological terror. Each subtle detection furthers this, until he is ready to make his presence known via violence and murder. Gollum's function as a frightful and persistent tracker, determined to overtake and capture, is, however, yet another iconic use of terror taken from the pages of the eighteenth-century gothic tradition. David Punter describes the type of terror caused by a character, such as Gollum, as that "which has to do with persecution" (117). This is exactly what Gollum does to Frodo; his persecution comes from the fact that he is the Ring-bearer, and Gollum hates him for this.

Similar examples from eighteenth-century texts are plentiful. Two specific texts that bear strong examples of the zealous stalker with parallels to Gollum are *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Castle of Wolfenbach*. In *The Castle of Otranto,* when Isabella desperately flees from Manfred, her flight is described in a manner that it is reminiscent of Gollum's presence in Moria; for example, "in one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled" (11). The terror created in Isabella's mind is much like what the reader encounters with Frodo when he first begins to notice Gollum, whose first portrayal as a pursuer is only noticed from mere sound. What is more, Gollum, like Manfred, demonstrates a powerful resolution to follow his 'precious' no matter where it might take him; he chases it over a great distance before finally revealing himself to the two hobbits. Gollum's desire to possess what he sees as his is at the center of his nature as a pursuer. Similarly, in *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, the villainous Weimar exhibits behavior closely akin to Gollum's. Weimar's mad obsession with his niece Matilda utterly clouds all logic and reason within his mind. He intends to force Matilda into an incestuous marriage and when she flees he relentlessly follows her across Europe. This desire of possession is his ruling passion; he admits that he would prefer Matilda to die than to become another's, when he explains, "your death would to me have been the greatest comfort; I cannot bear the idea another should possess you" (163). Matilda is Weimar's Ring, and his mad, unrelenting quest to possess her creates much of the tension in this text. The similarities between Gollum and these gothic villains is clear and it should not be too surprising that Tolkien likely drew on these figures as inspirational sources when developing Gollum's character.

The gothic romances of the eighteenth century were immensely popular and influential on later writers, such as Bram Stoker and H. P. Lovecraft. Tolkien demonstrates similarities with them in his attempts to achieve a specific type of literary terror. As has been noted, there are ample examples in *LotR* that have strong parallels with many gothic romances. A professor of language and literature, Tolkien would have been familiar with at least some of the better known titles of this period. His interest in the medieval romance, and how men like Walpole dwelt upon it with a high level of fascination, would also have brought him into contact with many of these texts. Through intertextual analysis, it becomes apparent that Tolkien was familiar with the eighteenth-century gothic romance since a great deal of his magnificent epic contains strains of literary terror that is reminiscent of these early gothic writers.

Notes

1 See Figure 1 for a cover of this text republished in the United Kingdom during the 1920s.

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FRODO'S FAREWELL

By Angela Woolsey

My beloved Shire so fair and green,
I can no longer bear to look at thee.
Shadows of evil shroud my eyes.
The cold memories pierce my heart.
Where shall I find peace?

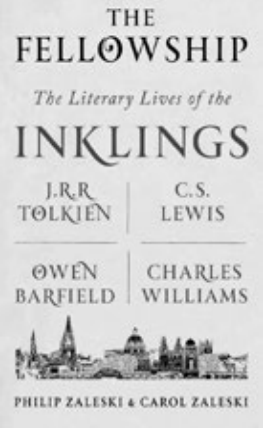
My dear Samwise, Meriadoc, and Peregrin,
You all have so much to do and to be.
I am broken in mind and spirit,
wounded and weary of Middle-earth.
Where shall I find rest?

The murmur of the sea fills my heart.
Thoughts of Valinor enter my mind:
To there is a place where I can heal.
Farewell, my beloved Hobbit friend,
my tale in Middle-earth comes to an end.

Farewell my blessed Shire,
Green are your fertile hills.
From the White Downs to the River Brandywine,
You shall be there in my heart until the end of my days.
I go now to rest in the Uttermost West.

The Literary Lives of the Inklings

KUSUMITA PEDERSON



The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams

Philip Zaleski and Carol Zaleski.

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.
644 pages.
$22.15 hardcover.
ISBN – 978-0-374-15409-7

The Fellowship is a richly descriptive narrative account of the group of friends who met weekly in Oxford from 1932 to 1949 to read to one another their works in progress. Philip Zaleski is the author of well-known works on Christian spirituality and Carol a professor of religion at Smith College. This is their third co-authored book. It focuses on the four best-known members of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, the publisher, novelist and theologian Charles Williams, and the writer and lawyer Owen Barfield, covering the lives of these four members from childhood to their passing. The formal origin of the Inklings was as a literary society founded by Edward Tangye Lean in 1932; when he left Oxford a year later, the group began to meet on Thursday evenings in Lewis's rooms at Magdalen College and on Tuesday mornings at a pub called the Eagle and Child or "Bird and Baby." In a less formal sense, the passionate, learned conversations and deep friendships between Inklings had already begun in debates between Lewis and Owen Barfield and some of their friends in the 1920s, in conversations between Lewis and Tolkien, and in the Kolbítars ("coal-biters," those who huddle around a fire), a group Tolkien founded in 1926 for the study of Old Norse literature. Many members joined and left during the years of the group's flourishing; many though not all were associated with Oxford University. Among the regular members – all men, as women were barred –– were Lewis's older brother Warnie, an army officer and historian, and Tolkien's son Christopher, who joined while attending Oxford after his service as a pilot in World War II. The authors bring the Inklings alive with vivid personal details and revealing anecdotes, writing with empathy but unsparing of their subjects' human failings. C. S. Lewis is at the center of the story. The treatment of his life and works does not occupy more space, but glows more. It is clear that Lewis, the "ebullient maestro" of the Inklings, was its driving force while Tolkien was another central and necessary pillar.

The book is massively researched (with a weighty bibliography) and its length makes possible a palpable sense of the passage of time and the arc of lives lived through decades spanning two World Wars and immense cultural changes. The wonderful evocation of what Oxford was like during World War II is a high point of the narrative. The Zaleskis comment, "War famously induces in those far from carnage, at least for a time, a giddy excitement, a sense of living in suspension, betwixt and between, plucked by the hand of history from the suffocating confines of ordinary life." And the war brought Charles Williams, with many others evacuated from London, to Oxford where he acquired a following of those who were drawn by his personality and found his philosophy of love compelling. His unique intensity and talents infused the Inklings with an added inspiration that proved irreplaceable after his early death in 1945. This was also the time when Lewis became famous as a Christian apologist through his BBC broadcasts. After the end of the war, the group waned and the evening meetings with readings ended in 1949 though morning gatherings continued.

A special gift of *The Fellowship* is its portrait of Owen Barfield, whose philosophy of language in his 1931 *Poetic Diction* influenced other Inklings (he is not as extensively dealt with in Humphrey Carpenter's 1978 *The Inklings*). Barfield was an intimate friend of Lewis from their student days, but their relationship became more distant after Lewis became a Christian, as Barfield was a staunch adherent of the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner from his twenties until his passing in 1997. Also, Barfield became a lawyer to earn a living and resided in London, removed from the Inklings and writing little. He had a late-blooming success teaching in the United States when he was in his seventies and Americans in the 1960s responded to his work on the evolution of consciousness. *The Fellowship* offers a wealth of instructive passages, such as a useful review of the critique of Lewis's first version of *Miracles* by philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe in 1948 at the Socratic Club; it corrects the impression that Lewis turned to children's fantasy because he was crushed by her analysis of the weak points of his argument. One also appreciates learning about women who "could have been" Inklings, notably Dorothy Sayers, who had a long and close friendship with Williams as well as an enduring and cordial one with Lewis. There is a running account of the controversies within British literary criticism, in which Lewis was a major figure, and readings of the works, as they occur in the history, of the four main Inklings.

The Zaleskis reserve their overall assessment and most penetrating interpretation for the closing section, "Epilogue: The Recovered Image." How did belonging to the Inklings affect the work of Tolkien? The authors say that, among complex mutual influences of Lewis and Tolkien, "*Out of the Silent Planet* might have been stillborn without

Tolkien's intervention; so, too, *The Lord of the Rings* but for the persistent support and timely critiques of Lewis and others." They add, "Tolkien has unleashed a mythic awakening and Lewis a Christian awakening…But Tolkien's mythology was deeply Christian and therefore had an organic order to it; and Lewis's Christian awakening was deeply mythopoeic and therefore had elements of spontaneity and beauty often missing from conventional apologetics." Much more than an introduction to the Inklings, *The Fellowship* is a major achievement – and even for those already familiar with Tolkien's life it provides an invaluable historical and literary context.

Let us give the final word to C. S. Lewis, as aptly quoted in this book. He says in *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961), "Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality…Here, as in worship, as in love, in moral action and in knowing, I transcend myself and am never more myself than when I do." This embracing vision animated the Inklings, and is one reason that their works of fantasy have, as we see today, an appeal and influence able to cross the boundaries of religious and cultural traditions.

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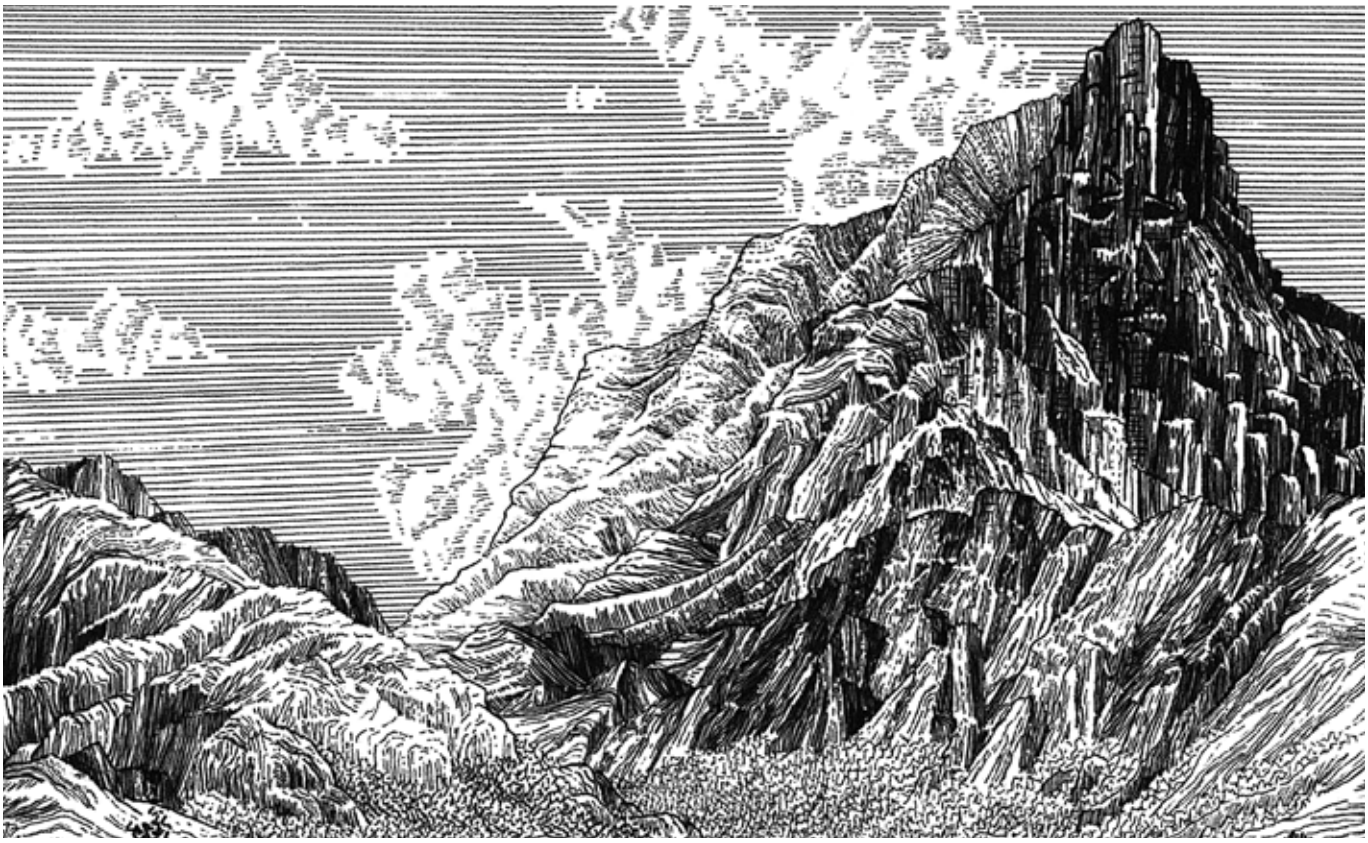


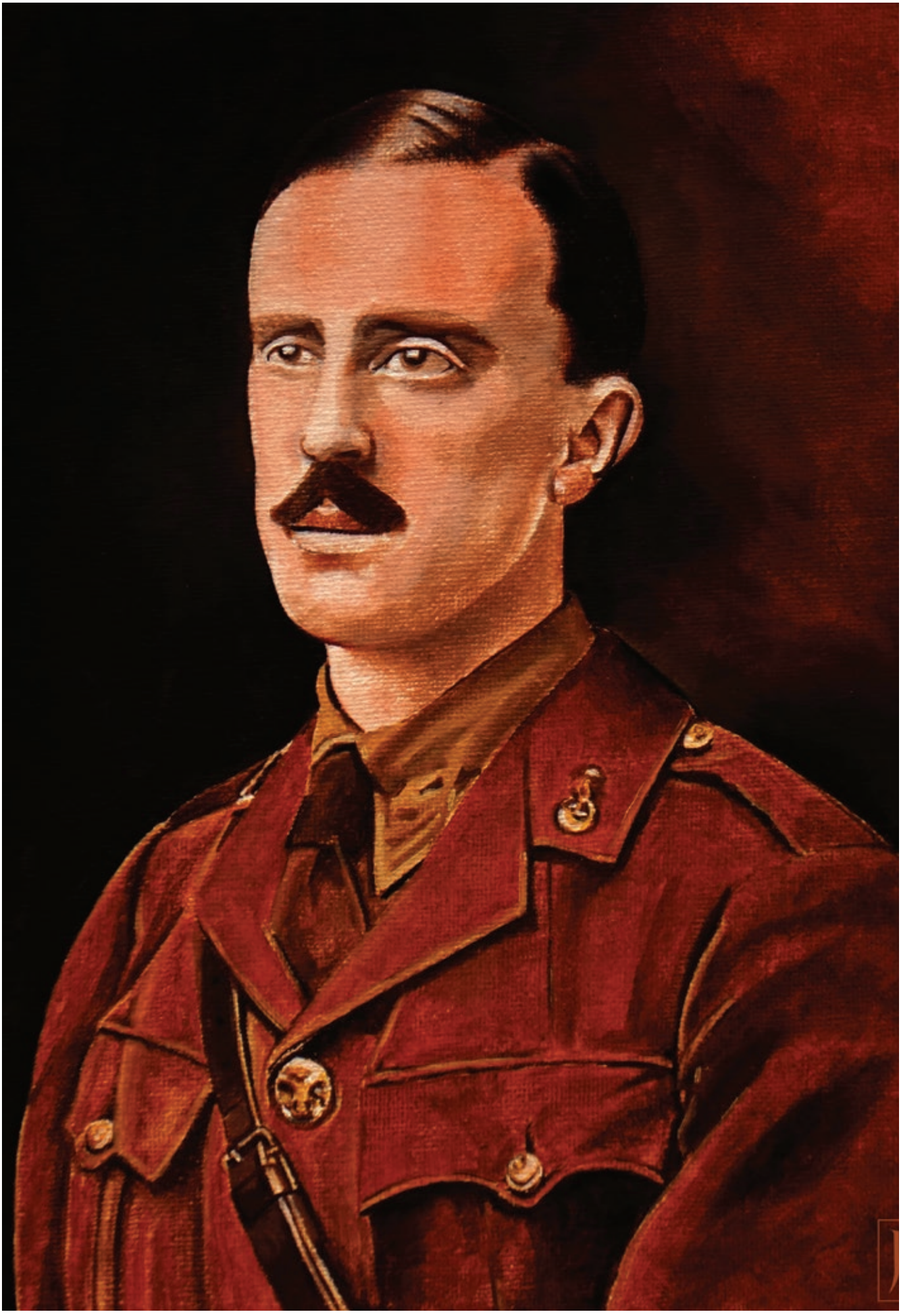
Letters to the Editor:

Just pointing out that the anglicizing of the Greek word on page 29 should be macrothumia, not markothumia as shown on two occasions in the article by N.J.S. Polk.

Adrian Tucker

I do have some criticism of Bratman's summary, as if it had been up to me I would have done it slightly differently. Shippey actually stated that Sauron knew Frodo was in Cirith Ungol, four times! ...I came round to agree with Shippey that Denethor did see Frodo in the palantir thus jeopardizing the quest and fate of Middle-earth, and when JRRT realized this he only altered the text a little bit and hoped nobody would notice. Another point I was proud of finding, was that JRRT originally intended Gandalf to take the palantir to M Tirith and use it there, and when he realized Gandalf might inadvertently betray Frodo, he rewrote it to give it to Aragorn instead.

Jessica Yates



Mallorn:

Guide for Authors

The following list describes the different types of material *Mallorn* usually accepts. If your submission does not meet this criteria, feel free to send a letter of inquiry.

Letters to the editor:
Letters include reader comments on material previously published in *Mallorn* or elsewhere or may include comments about *Mallorn* as a publication.

Reviews:
Reviews of books, films, theatre shows, art, web-sites, radio, exhibitions or any other presentation of Tolkien works or comments regarding Tolkien's works that may be of interest to a large, general audience. Reviews are to be no more than 1000 words.

Articles:
Scholarly articles about Tolkien's works, life, times, concepts, philosophy, philology, mythology, his influence on literature or other areas of interest regarding Tolkien. Articles are to be a maximum of 3000 words with references in either MLA or APA style. Submissions must be in English, double spaced, accompanied by a cover letter which includes an abstract of the article and a brief bio of the author. Please submit 2 (two) electronic copies in Arial or Times Roman 12 font. No hand-written copies will be accepted. Deadline for submission for a December issue is May 1 of that year. Submissions received after that date will be reviewed for the next edition.

Creative essays:
Creative essays regarding Tolkien's works, life, times, concepts, philosophy, philology, mythology, his influence on literature or other areas of interest regarding Tolkien will be reviewed. Essays are to be a maximum of 1500 words. Submissions must be in English, double spaced, accompanied by a cover letter which includes a brief bio of the author. Please submit 2 (two) electronic copies in Arial or Times Roman 12 font. No hand-written copies will be accepted. Deadline for submission for a December issue is May 1 of that year. Submissions received after that date will be reviewed for the next edition.

Poetry:
Verses and poetry must be original and unpublished elsewhere. Submissions must be in English accompanied by a cover letter which includes a brief bio of the author. Please submit 2 (two) electronic copies in Arial or Times Roman 12 font. No hand-written copies will be accepted. Deadline for submission for a December issue is May 1 of that year. Submissions received after that date will be reviewed for the next edition. Verse and poetry are to be a maximum of 1 page.

Fan fiction will not be accepted.

"Well, I'm Back."
"Well, I'm Back." is a back page item of short non-fiction intended to amuse or enlighten. This item is to be no more than 500 words.

Artwork:
Mallorn gratefully accepts all artwork, whether paintings, drawings or photographs and will attempt to match the artwork with articles. Please include a brief bio with the original artwork.

Submission Guidelines:
All submissions are to be sent to the *Mallorn* editor, Rosalinda Haddon at mallorn@tolkiensociety.org.

'I wish it need not have happened in my time,' said Frodo.

'So do I,' said Gandalf, 'and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.'