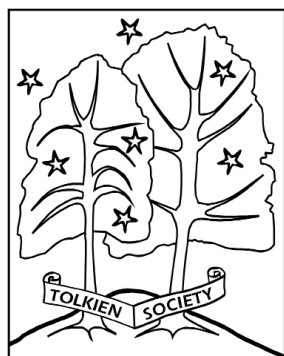


Mallorn

The Journal of the Tolkien Society

Issue 61 • Winter 2020





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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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Abbreviations:

<i>A&I</i>	<i>The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun</i> , ed. by Verlyn Flieger
<i>Arthur</i>	<i>The Fall of Arthur</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>AW</i>	<i>Ancrene Wisse</i>
<i>B&L</i>	<i>Beren and Lúthien</i>
<i>Beowulf</i>	<i>Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary, together with Sellic Spell</i>
<i>Bombadil</i>	<i>The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and other verses from the Red Book</i>
<i>CoH</i>	<i>The Children of Húrin</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Exodus</i>	<i>The Old English Exodus</i>
<i>Father Christmas</i>	<i>Letters from Father Christmas</i> , ed. by Baillie Tolkien
<i>FoG</i>	<i>The Fall of Gondolin</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>FR</i>	<i>Fellowship of the Ring</i>
<i>Hobbit</i>	<i>The Hobbit</i>
<i>Jewels</i>	<i>The War of the Jewels</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
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<i>Letters</i>	<i>The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien</i> , ed. by Humphrey Carpenter with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien
<i>Lost Road</i>	<i>The Lost Road and Other Writings</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Lost Tales I</i>	<i>The Book of Lost Tales, Part One</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Lost Tales II</i>	<i>The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Monsters</i>	<i>The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays</i>
<i>Morgoth</i>	<i>Morgoth's Ring</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>OFS</i>	<i>Tolkien On Fairy-stories</i> , ed. by Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson
<i>P&S</i>	<i>Poems and Stories</i>
<i>Peoples</i>	<i>The Peoples of Middle-earth</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Perilous Realm</i>	<i>Tales from the Perilous Realm</i>
<i>RK</i>	<i>The Return of the King</i>
<i>Silmarillion</i>	<i>The Silmarillion</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Sauron</i>	<i>Sauron Defeated</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Secret Vice</i>	<i>A Secret Vice: Tolkien on Invented Languages</i> , ed. by Dimitra Fimi and Andrew Higgins
<i>Shadow</i>	<i>The Return of the Shadow</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>Shaping</i>	<i>The Shaping of Middle-earth</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>S&G</i>	<i>The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>TL</i>	<i>Tree and Leaf</i>
<i>TT</i>	<i>The Two Towers</i>
<i>Treason</i>	<i>The Treason of Isengard</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>UT</i>	<i>Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien
<i>War</i>	<i>The War of the Ring</i> , ed. by Christopher Tolkien

Looking Ahead, Looking Behind

This marks the first time since 2011 that *Mallorn* has produced two issues in a single year. The trustees of the Tolkien Society and the editorial team behind *Mallorn* thought it was important to accomplish this because there was no issue released in 2019. Producing two issues in a single year is a lot to ask from my editorial staff, the editorial review board, and additional reviewers who contribute to *Mallorn*. It is also a lot to ask from the community of scholars who support the journal by sending in their work for consideration. Therefore, I wanted to take a moment and thank everyone involved with *Mallorn* this year for their hard work and dedication. Not only have we achieved two issues, but we have done so during a time with a lot of uncertainty. Now let me turn my attention to the contents of this issue.

Mallorn 61 presents research that is pushing the boundaries of Tolkien scholarship. At the same time, it pulls together important perspectives from scholars who have shaped the field of Tolkien studies. I am very pleased with our article selection in this issue, as it represents a blend of new biographical scholarship, a new insight from a well-established scholar on a well-studied Tolkienian theme, and a reprinted cornerstone of gender scholarship that need wider readership and recognition.

The first is Nancy Bunting's 'Tolkien's *Fantasy Landscape*'. In this article, Bunting examines Tolkien's watercolour *Fantasy Landscape* and gives it possible provenance and biographical context, as well as discussing personal insights that may be gleaned from the painting's composition. We were fortunate that we were able to acquire permission to reproduce Tolkien's piece to accompany the article. I want to thank the Tolkien Estate and Catherine McIlwaine for their assistance in this regard.

Verlyn Flieger's article 'Defying and Defining Darkness' is a reworking of her keynote address from the Mythmoot VII conference which took place earlier this year. After hearing Flieger's presentation at the conference, Dr. Sara Brown and I asked her to submit it to *Mallorn*, and she graciously obliged. It is important to note that this article is not scholarly in aim but presents a close reading of Tolkien's work. Therefore, it does not engage with secondary scholarship as much as most articles published in *Mallorn*, but has been peer-reviewed for its accuracy.

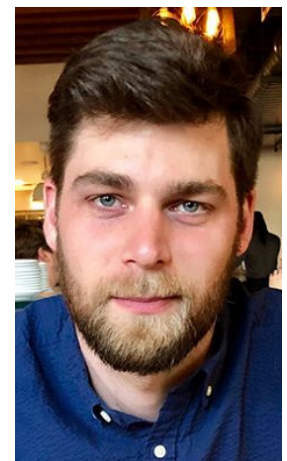
David Craig's article 'Queer Lodgings: Gender and Sexuality in *The Lord of the Rings*' first appeared in *Mallorn* in 2001. It is reprinted here with the author's permission and with a new introduction by the author that contextualizes the work. Robin Reid, a member of our Review Board who studies sexuality and gender, has also provided a short commentary on the importance of

the article. I felt that the piece deserved to be reprinted because of the way it discusses topics that have become more prominent in the field of Tolkien Studies since it was first printed. With this publication, I hope to remedy the article's relative lack of consideration in those conversations. For more on this, see Reid's note.

The three notes for this issue focus on biography and reception. In first note, Robin Reid, a member of our Review Board who studies sexuality and gender, provides a short commentary on the importance of Craig's article. This gives readers a more complete understanding of the article's importance to Tolkien criticism. Next, Bob Blackham's 'Tolkien in King's Heath'. This biographical note follows on from Mick Henry's note in *Mallorn* 60 and discusses the interpretation of census data to illustrate when Tolkien lived in King's Heath. The final note in this issue is from Marcel Aubron-Bülles. He provides an in-depth analysis of the three Tolkien exhibitions which took place in Oxford, UK; New York, USA; and Paris, France from 2018 to 2020. He contextualized their place in history and discusses the similarities and differences between the exhibitions.

We have a good collection of book reviews in this issue. The books reviewed are: Patrick Moran's *The Canons of Fantasy*, Anna Vaninskaya's *Fantasies of Time and Death: Dunsany, Eddison, and Tolkien*, the collection 'Something Has Gone Crack': *New Perspectives on J.R.R. Tolkien in the Great War* edited by Janet Brennan Croft and Annika Röttinger, John Garth's *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien: The Places that Inspired Middle-earth*, and Sam McBride's *Tolkien's Cosmology: Divine Beings and Middle-earth*.

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Tolkien's *Fantasy Landscape*

NANCY BUNTING & ELIZABETH CURRIE

The recently curated exhibition of the watercolour, *Fantasy Landscape*, is a witness to Tolkien's productive use of his experiences in 1911 Switzerland. This essay is a detailed discussion of *Fantasy Landscape*, its origins in Tolkien's 1911 Swiss walking tour and, how it may express many of Tolkien's feelings including those about his relationship with his fiancée, Edith Bratt, and his younger brother, Hilary.¹ French philosopher Michel Foucault's observation seems relevant here: 'What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is only related to objects, and not to individuals, or to life.'² The following discussion tries to address Foucault's complaint in relation to the recently presented *Fantasy Landscape*.

Tolkien admitted to drawing on his memories of his exciting summer in Switzerland in 1911 which 'had the deepest effect on me' (*Letters*, p. 391). Tolkien reported that the size of the company in *The Hobbit* was the same as the number

in the Swiss walking party and that the 'thunder-battle' in the Misty Mountains derived from this trip (*Letters*, p. 309). Tolkien also used Swiss memories in writing about the peaks surrounding Moria: 'the Silberhorn sharp against dark blue: the Silvertine (*Celebdil*) of my dreams' (*Letters*, p. 392, italics in the original). Tolkien's painting of Rivendell (*J.R.R. Tolkien, Artist and Illustrator (Artist)*, p. 117) owes much to the Swiss valley of Lauterbrunnen, the Lauterbrunnental, which the expedition traversed in 1911: notably deep and narrow, with steep limestone cliffs cut through by the river Weiss Lütschine.³ Some features in earlier art by Tolkien, such as a picture of Nargothrond, also seem to derive from images of Switzerland (*Artist*, p. 60). Tolkien may have used sketches or postcards (*J.R.R. Tolkien, A Biography (Biography)*, p. 51) of the Swiss mountains around Sierre (Lewis and Currie, p. 139) for the part of *The Misty Mountains Looking West from the Eyrie Towards Goblin Gate* (*Artist*, p. 121). This is one of the



Tolkien's Fantasy Landscape
© The Tolkien Estate

illustrations in *The Hobbit* and *Moria Gate*, upper (McIlwaine, p. 347), a doppelgänger of the cliffs around Oeschinensee (Lewis and Currie, pp. 223-6).

There is some context that already exists for appreciating the watercolour, *Fantasy Landscape*.⁴ It is dated '1915?' as it was found among other artwork dated '1915' (McIlwaine, p. 174). Denis Bridoux identifies the setting as Switzerland, and the mountains in the background, the covered bridge, and the Alpenglöck all support this reading as discussed below (p. 153).⁵ The setting of Switzerland indicates this watercolour's likely use of memories from the summer of 1911. Tolkien wrote in August 1967, 'Our wanderings on foot in a party of 12... leave many vivid pictures as clear as yesterday' (*Letters*, p. 391).⁶

Before Tolkien created the illustrations for *The Hobbit*, none of his artwork was done for an audience.⁷ Even *The Lord of the Rings* was written 'as a personal satisfaction... I was not thinking much of the profit or delight of others' (*Letters*, p. 211). The same could be said of *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion* which were not originally written with publication in mind. Tolkien's paintings are products of his unique perspective and experience. In a way analogous to his writings, there should be allusions to his situation, thoughts, and feelings in this painting that can be read through the lens of the history of his participation in the Swiss expedition of 1911. Carpenter reports that intense feelings were what drove Tolkien 'to record his feelings on paper' in his diaries (*Biography*, p. 129), so the impetus for his artwork is likely to have been the same.

Bridoux begins the analysis of *Fantasy Landscape* with the central structure, which McIlwaine leaves undefined. He sees it as a 'covered walkway... on the brim of a dam' which he locates near the town of Thun (Bridoux, pp. 153, 169). More specifically, it is a covered bridge. Tolkien would have seen four of these structures in Switzerland according to the itinerary of Lewis and Currie (pp. 269-270), which is based on Tolkien's letter (*Letters*, pp. 391-3), signed guest books, and their own research in Switzerland reconstructing the walking party's trail. The group started their trek at Interlaken where Tolkien would have some of his first impressions of the Swiss Alps. There are three covered bridges in the Interlaken area (*The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide (Chronology)*, p. 33). Functional covered bridges for commercial traffic with similar architecture and construction are not found in England, and these novel structures in Switzerland would have caught Tolkien's attention.⁸

The bridge-weirs, a bridge built on top of a dam, at Thun and at Interlaken have the form seen in Tolkien's painting, as would the covered bridges at Wilderswil and at Innertkirchen. Interlaken sits in between two lakes and at the east end of the Thunersee. Thun was one of the major local attractions around Interlaken, and it was easily accessible, even in 1911, three hours by steamboat or less than one hour by rail from Interlaken. The bridge-weir at Thun has been repeatedly rebuilt in the same place and in the same style giving a good example of what the old bridges looked like. The one bridge-weir in Thun, 'Alte Schleusenbrücke' (Swiss dialect, not

standard German spelling), is still wide enough to take a car, though they are now banned (personal email from Elizabeth Currie).

The bridge in Tolkien's watercolour features finials that have survived at the Kapellbrücke ('Chapel Bridge') in Lucerne. However, it is unknown if there were exterior finials, as shown in Tolkien's painting, on any of the three bridges in the Interlaken area or on the Innertkirchen bridge in 1911. It is possible that in 1911 those bridges or others that Tolkien saw had finials, but they have not survived the intervening hundred years. A number of postcards from the late 1800s show covered bridges with finials, such as the exterior finials at Resti near Bern and the bridge at Wilderswil with interior finials (images courtesy of Elizabeth Currie). Bridges in Switzerland historically were repeatedly replaced due to flooding. It cannot be concluded from the fact that Lucerne's Kapellbrücke has exterior finials similar to the ones in Tolkien's painting that it must be Tolkien's model or source. There is no evidence that Tolkien visited Lucerne, though he certainly could have bought a postcard showing the Kapellbrücke (*Biography*, p. 51).

Tolkien and the 1911 walking party would have had to go through Wilderswil when they went from Interlaken towards the Lauterbrunnen Valley (*Chronology*, p. 33). The village of Wilderswil is on the main road, rail, and footpath routes from Interlaken to Lauterbrunnen, and there are no alternative routes in this area due to the mountains. The covered bridge at Wilderswil crosses the River Lütschine close to the busy railway station. With fewer buildings in between the church and railway station, the bridge was more visible in 1911 from the village and the railway station.



1905 postcard of the bridge at Innertkirchen

Finally, there was a covered bridge at Innertkirchen over the Aare River just east of Meiringen in the Bernese Alps. In Tolkien's letter, the party left Meiringen and went toward the Grimsel Pass, and that road goes through Innertkirchen (*Letters*, p. 392). If the 1911 walking party used the old footpath to the Grimsel Pass they could have come out of the Aareschlucht (Aare Gorge) at the East Entrance and gone to

the footpath passing the end of the Innertkirchen bridge, but not through it. If the 1911 walking party used the carriage road, they would have had to cross the bridge. The river at Innertkirchen, the Aare, would have been quite high and full from the dramatic snowmelt that summer that Tolkien mentions in his letter (*Letters*, p. 392). This snowmelt was due to exceptional weather: 'An unusual period in history: hot and dry period from 26 June to mid-September, with the exception of scattered thunderstorms in August.'⁹

Consequently, right at the start of Tolkien's alpine tour, he would have encountered at least one covered bridge near Interlaken, one at Wilderswil, and then the one at Innertkirchen. Tolkien's painting shows two parallel tracks within the bridge. These tracks would have supported the load-bearing wheels of carts while the inner planks are perpendicular to the direction of travel offering better traction to the horse. Tolkien has embellished this inner groove and has it protrude into the picture frame. This kind of reinforced planking would have been very likely at Innertkirchen which was used by the diligence carriages. These vehicles were pulled by five horses and had two cabins so they would have been quite heavy. Tolkien would not have seen this kind of reinforced bed on the bridges at Thun and Interlaken as they were supported by the dams underneath them.

Unless Tolkien had a postcard of one of the covered bridges (*Biography*, p. 51) or he had available a sketchbook that he might have taken on this walking tour, the Swiss covered bridge is done from memory and may represent a composite impression. Tolkien wrote, 'My memory is mainly pictorial' (*Letters*, p. 343). With Switzerland's deep effect on Tolkien (*Letters*, p. 391) only three years old, his recall would have been good. The identification of the central structure as a Swiss covered bridge is reinforced by the Alps in the background of the watercolour. Although Tolkien may be drawing from memory, the relation of the background mountain range to the bridge is drawn in a skilful and believable perspective.

McIlwaine sees 'bold, psychedelic colours' on the mountains (p. 174). 'Psychedelic' is a word from the 1960s, and Tolkien would not have been trying to produce that effect in 1915. The colours on the mountains are more likely the classic 'Alpenglow'. Alpenglow often has a characteristic reddish orange hue to it. This is because the light of the nearly rising or recently setting sun is passing through more of the atmosphere than when it is high overhead. The atmosphere strips out the blues first and leaves the warm, red/orange light. Comparing Tolkien's colour to photographs of Alpenglow yields striking resemblances. Alpenglow not only has the beauty of its arresting colour, but also the contrast of warm light against a frozen landscape. In some cases, the light on the mountains may appear almost purple, as in the phrase, 'purple mountains' majesty', found in the song, *America the Beautiful*. This line was inspired by the light on Colorado's Pikes Peak.

McIlwaine sees this landscape continuing the 'surreal colours and explosive bursts of light' found in *Water, Wind, and Sand* also from 1915 (p. 173). Scull and Hammond's dating of this last painting to the spring of 1915 around March fits with McIlwaine's analysis so the two watercolours were

done close together in time (*Chronology*, p. 67). The bursts in *Water, Wind, and Sand* are a stylised and transformed representation of the spray from the waves seen in an earlier painting, *Cove near The Lizard Aug 12 1914* (McIlwaine, p. 172). The viewer needs to keep this in mind to see that the lowest pink burst on the right could be water-spray from perhaps the rushing Aare, swollen with an unusual amount of snowmelt from the summer of 1911, reflecting light, either from the Alpenglow, the moon in the dark sky, or the firelight from the town, near or under the bridge in this night time scene (McIlwaine, p. 168). Bridoux sees something similar: 'waves clashing against the dam in high winds' (p. 154). The second, upper pink burst may be lights seen from a distance through the haze of smoke above a town or village. In 1911 only fires provided light, heat, and cooking as there was no gas or electricity in Swiss mountain villages. The sequence of increasingly smaller candle-like pillars leading to the pink burst gives a sense of receding into the distance.

The next higher, white burst could be the glitter on snow as the moonlight hits the shoulder of a mountain. Tolkien's pictures and writing show attention to the impact of bright moonlight. This attention would be consistent with the popular pursuit of witnessing certain Swiss destinations at sunrise and sunset for the maximum effect and spectacle (Lewis and Currie, p. 167). Examples of Tolkien's observance of the effect of the full moon in his life can be found in the moon path of *Roverandom* (pp. x, 19), the 'full moon shining' on the first meeting of Tinúviel/Lúthien and Beren when he came upon Tinúviel dancing (*Lost Tales II*, pp. 8-9), and the *Celbaros* [*Cheltenham*] panel of Tolkien's drawing, *i glin grandin a Dol Erethrin Airi, or Three Designs Representing the Towns of Tavrobel [Great Haywood], Cortirion [Warwick], and Celbaros [Cheltenham]* (McIlwaine, p. 213; 'The Alphabet of Rúmil and Early Noldorin Fragments' ('Alphabet of Rúmil'), p. 93).

In Tolkien's watercolour, *Fantasy Landscape*, the large, dramatic sawtooth, yellow burst seems to be a function of the rising moon. This would have been a 'harvest moon' as Tolkien left for Switzerland shortly after the end of the summer term at King Edward's on 26 July 1911 (*Chronology*, p. 32). The full moon in August 1911 could be seen at 94 % visibility on 7 August, 98 % visibility on the 8th, 100 % on the 9th and 10th, 99 % visibility on the 11th, and 95 % visibility on the 12th. Away from any light pollution, the brightness of the full moon becomes quite dramatic. Lewis and Currie locate the walking party hiking from Grindelwald to Meiringen on 7 August; Aareschlucht to Gutannen on the 8th; Gutannen to Grimsel on the 9th; with 10 August by the Unteraar glacier; and 11 August trekking from Grimsel to Obergesteln with a view of the Rhone Glacier (p. 269). During this period Tolkien would have had the opportunity to see the dazzling play of moonlight on an ice field, and this effect would have been apparent as the party came near Innertkirchen on 7 August 1911. Tolkien would have had other, later views of glaciers: the Aletsch around 19 August and the Herens icefields with its views of famous mountains including the Matterhorn 25 August (Lewis and Currie, pp. 269-70). But he would not have

had the same experience of bright and fascinating moonlight on the ice to add to his collection of ‘mainly pictorial’ memories (*Letters*, p. 343). Tolkien also wrote about the ‘dazzling whiteness of the tumbled snow-desert’ seen during the day (*Letters*, p. 393). The reinforced planking on the floor of the bridge and the atmospheric lighting effects suggestive of reflected moonlight both point to Tolkien anchoring this picture in memories or possibly even a sketch of the Innertkirchen bridge over the swollen Aare River, though other visual memories from his Swiss tour may contribute.

Tolkien’s *Fantasy Landscape* is more complicated than one’s initial impression. Bridoux notes what we see in the night sky is a solar eclipse (p. 154) similar to the one in *The Land of Pohja*, a watercolour done on 27 December 1914 (McIlwaine, p. 177; *Chronology*, p. 65).¹⁰ The eclipse can be elucidated by the drawing’s historical context. The eclipsed sun in the top of the three trees in *The Land of Pohja* is probably a reference to the famous solar eclipse of 21 August 1914 seen throughout much of the British empire, though not in England, and also in central Europe where World War I ignited. Like Halley’s comet of ill omen of 10 April 1066, presaging the invasion of England by the Danes and Normans, the heavens appeared to be announcing apocalyptic destruction as Great Britain declared war on 12 August 1914. If the sun in eclipse is an icon for World War I, as indicated in the public perception shown in the 1914 newspaper image below, the yellow ragged burst may suggest the flames and destruction of war.

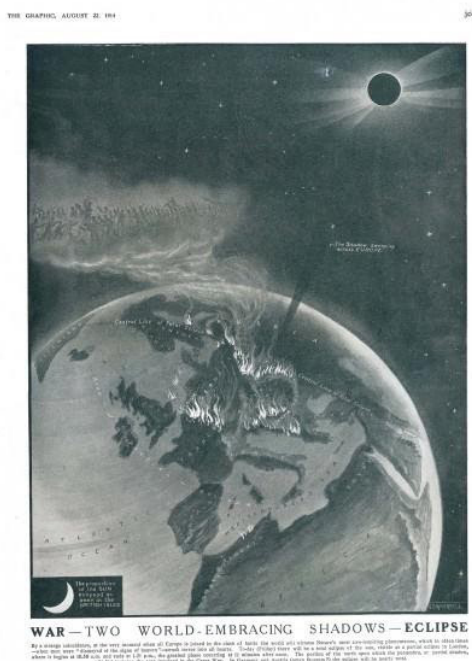


Image from a 1914 newspaper courtesy of Michael Zeiler, GreatAmericanEclipse.com

Knowing more about *The Land of Pohja* will shed light on Tolkien’s cryptic *Fantasy Landscape*. While the 27 December 1914 watercolour is titled *The Land of Pohja*, Tolkien does not depict a fir and a birch tree as specified in the *Kalevala*.

Rather there are three central evergreen trees, indicating that Tolkien has inserted his own elaboration and interpretation of the *Kalevala* myth. This is the *Kalevala* seen in light of Edith Bratt, as the resourceful and fair Maid of the North, rejecting in 1913 the more socially desirable suitor, George Field (or Väinämöinen in the original), to whom she was already engaged, for the impecunious Oxford student who made promises in 1910, J.R.R. Tolkien, in the role of the Smith, Ilmarinen, who forged the vault of heaven and the moon (*Biography*, pp. 60-2).¹¹

The icon of three evergreen trees is found in Tolkien’s watercolours, *Beyond, Here*, painted after his fiancée Edith Bratt’s reception into the Catholic Church and her betrothal with Ronald Tolkien, and *Eeriness* (McIlwaine, p. 169), all painted in January 1914 (McIlwaine, pp. 169, 171). In *Eeriness*, the source of the three fir trees is the standard icon of Calvary, three crosses or trees, such as Acts, 5:30, on a hill. Knowing the probable religious source of Tolkien’s imagery, one of the three trees in *Beyond, Here* and *The Land of Pohja* stands for the tree/cross of Christ and Ronald Tolkien and Edith Bratt can be the *Kalevala*’s other two trees of the Sun and the Moon. Trees of the Sun (female in both Finnish and Elvish) and the Moon (male) also appear in the ancient Indian (Hindu) myth of the trees of the Sun and the Moon. Tolkien appears to have created a personal and Catholic interpretation of the *Kalevala* myth. The validity of reading Ronald Tolkien and Edith Bratt as two trees in *The Land of Pohja* is supported by Tolkien’s continued use of tree imagery in reference to himself and Edith in his poem, *As Two Fair Trees*, written one year later (*Chronology*, p. 1.66; McIlwaine, p. 146; *Biography*, p. 74).

Returning to the events surrounding the spring 1915 painting of *Fantasy Landscape* creates a richer context that furthers this interpretation. McIlwaine states this landscape is among the paintings from 1915 at the end of Tolkien’s undergraduate studies at Oxford (p. 174). In 1915, Tolkien’s Easter break began with the end of Hilary term on 13 March (*Chronology*, p. 1.68) and ended with the beginning of Trinity Term on 25 April 1915 (*Chronology*, p. 70). During Easter break, he was in Warwick where he would have visited Edith regularly and wrote the poems *The Two Riders* (15-16 April), *May Day* (20-21 April) and *Evening* (22 April) (*Chronology*, p. 70). He also painted the watercolour *Tanaqui* during this Easter Break (*Chronology*, p. 71). This would be the last school break before the all-important Examinations for Honour School of English Language and Literature beginning 10 June and continuing through 15 June (*Chronology*, p. 73), which Tolkien had to pass to graduate. Tolkien then ‘bolted’ into the army (*Letters*, p. 53), applying for a temporary commission on 28 June 1915 which was accepted two days later (*Chronology*, p. 76).

Fantasy Landscape probably belongs to this burst of frenetic activity before Tolkien left Oxford. In the first week of his return to Oxford for Trinity Term, Tolkien wrote *You & Me and the Cottage of Lost Play* and *Goblin Feet* on 27-28 April and *Tinfang Warble* on 29-30 April (*Chronology*, p. 71). *Kôr: In a City Lost and Dead* was written on 30 April, and 2-3 May saw revisions of the poems *Darkness on the Road* and *Morning*

Song (*Chronology*, p. 71). On 10 May, he painted The Shores of Faery, a view of the city of Kôr, and shortly after that he wrote *Man in the Moon* (McIlwaine, pp. 202-3; *Artist*, p. 48; *Chronology*, p. 71).

It was a time of transition on the threshold of an unknown future in World War I. *Fantasy Landscape* is not so fantastical as it contains a Swiss covered bridge, likely the one at Innertkirchen up in the mountains, that was associated both with the past, namely the hiking party of 1911, and also the looming future, as Switzerland was part of Europe where the war consumed men, material, and, some feared, civilization. Bridges are transitional structures, connecting two sides of a river. The bridge pierces the picture frame with its bulging entrance highlighted with a series of V-shaped arrows that seem to suck the viewer into the unseen depths of its tunnel. The V-shapes may have come from the struts that strengthen the sides of the bridge as seen in the postcard above or perhaps the beams for the roof structure.

Recalling his adventures in Switzerland in 1911 was pertinent to what Tolkien was facing in the spring of 1915 when he would be applying for a temporary commission in the Army on 28 June 1915. The Swiss hike was filled with risks 'when I came near to perishing' from falling rocks and nearly falling into a snow-crevasse (*Letters*, p. 393). The memories and experiences of danger and being tested were relevant to facing the unknown future of joining the Army in 1915. Tellingly, James Forbes described an Alpine journey as 'perhaps the nearest approach to a military campaign with which the ordinary citizen has a chance of meeting' (qtd. in Macfarlane, p. 92).

For the Victorians and Edwardians, 'Mountaineering' was not just an adventure but part of an important network of moral ideals where risk-taking and defying fear were the basis of the moral self and self-improvement. 'Crossing the snow-fields of the Alps or slogging over the polar tundra revealed what you were made of - and whether it was the right stuff' (Macfarlane, pp. 85-86). The successful mountaineer or explorer possessed 'Manliness', a very Victorian concept. Climbing mountains or challenging the Arctic provided confirmation of one's strength, proof of pluck, and assurance of resourcefulness and self-reliance (Macfarlane, pp. 90-91).¹² Courting danger revealed 'Grit', 'the ability to put one foot in front of the other for as long as necessary and above all, never complain' (Macfarlane, p. 91).¹³ That is, to play up, and play the game. Grit was ingrained in generations of British boys through the public school system, such as King Edward's School which Tolkien attended, and its games, like rugby. Grit was the moral substance that underpinned Britain's martial success, zeal for exploration and its Empire-building (Macfarlane, p. 91).

The bridge, as a symbol of the transition and the uncertain future that Tolkien was facing, appears to have had an annotation in the purple on the bottom left of the picture, but this has been covered over with ink (Bridoux, p. 154). Purple, for a Catholic like Tolkien, was associated with sorrow, sacrifice and suffering as it is used in the season of Lent, Holy Saturday, and the requiem for the dead. 'A commonplace of

patriotic rhetoric [in World War I] was the claim that the soldier who laid down his life for his country had made the "Great Sacrifice" for which the model was Christ's crucifixion' (Searle, p. 762). The Christmas 1914 issue of *The Graphic*, a British weekly illustrated magazine, featured a colour print entitled 'The Great Sacrifice' with a dead British officer lying at the foot of the Cross beneath the gaze of the crucified Christ (Hooker, *Iter*, pp. 95-6). The right-hand entrance post has a barred Greek cross, a symbol of the Military Order of Christ, which was a reconstituted order of the crusading Knights Templar.¹⁴ This cross echoes the impending sacrifices expected by soldiers answering their Christian call of duty.

The left-hand post of the bridge carries a left-hand spiral. The left-hand spiral is found in many Neolithic and Celtic sites, that is, pagan or barbarian sites, especially burial grounds. Tolkien's early Kenya lexicon of 1916/1917 equates Germans with barbarity as 'kaliman' is translated as 'barbarity', 'German', and 'kalimbardi' is glossed as 'the Germans' (Garth, p. 128).

The shape of the covered Swiss bridge, obscuring any exit, creates uncertainty in the viewer. This bridge recalls two motifs that Tolkien later elaborated and repeated in his artwork and writing. One is Tolkien's tunnel motif and the other is his megalithic doorway, both signs of danger and possible death. The Neolithic, megalithic doorway brings to mind the left-hand spiral on one side of the structure's entrance.

Tolkien's motif of the megalithic doorway first appears in his drawing, *Before*, dated around 1911-1912 (*Artist*, pp. 34, 65). The megalithic doorway is an icon of Númenor in its decadence shortly before its destruction as recalled in Michael Ramer's dreams found in *The Notion Club Papers* (*Sauron*, p. 221). The megalithic doorway of Númenor also appears in a drawing of Nargothrond where another deadly monster, the dragon Glorung, has taken up residence (*Artist*, pp. 34, 60 # 57). Both the ink drawing of Nargothrond and three of *The Hobbit's* illustrations of Smaug 'may have been made at around the same time' (p. 83). The megalithic doorway of Númenor marks both *The Back Door* to The Lonely Mountain and the front entrance to Smaug's lair (*The Art of 'The Hobbit'*, pp. 102, 138). The megalithic doorway of Númenor also appears in *The Lord of the Rings* at Dunharrow, a tunnel leading inexorably to mortal danger (*Artist*, p. 170).

Tolkien's conception of Nargothrond with its megalithic doors is the basis of the Elvenking's halls in *The Hobbit*. Hammond and Scull quote Christopher Tolkien that 'in his father's imagination the entrances to Nargothrond and the Elvenking's halls "were visually one, or little distinguished: a single image with more than one emergence in the legends"' (*The Art of 'The Hobbit'*, p. 83). In the drawings, the *Gate of the Elvenking's Halls* and *The Elvenking's Gate* (*Artist* pp. 34, 127, 128), the King's palace features the megalithic doorway associated with Númenor, the site of human sacrifice, just like the Nargothrond doors discussed above. In *The Hobbit*, which Tolkien wrote to be read to his children, the Elvenking is not an overtly dangerous or evil character. However, there are thematic elements that create an undercurrent of imagery

consistent with the megalithic doors. The Elvenking is the alleged owner of the poisonous ‘pet’ spiders (*Hobbit*, IX), just as Sauron has a pet, ‘his cat’, the spider Shelob (*TT*, IV, ix; italics in original). Tolkien explicitly identified Mirkwood with Taur-na-Fuin in the 1937 *Quenta Silmarillion* (Rateliff, p. 219; *The Lost Road*, p. 282). Taur-na-Fuin (the Forest of Night) was filled with Ungoliant’s descendants and matched *The Hobbit*’s Mirkwood as a place of spiders. While not highlighted in his children’s story, The Elvenking, placed in the middle of spider-infested Mirkwood, is an ominous character.

Tunnels, typically dark for Tolkien, constrain one’s choice of movements and can lead inexorably to a dangerous dead-end or trap. In *The Hobbit*, the locked gate to the tunnels and dungeon of Elvenking’s halls holds Thorin and company prisoner. Bilbo confronts Gollum and finds the Ring in the lightless goblin tunnels and he goes alone down a tunnel to face Smaug, the dragon, ‘the bravest thing he ever did’ (*Hobbit*, XII). *The Hobbit*’s Mirkwood path, like ‘the tunnels of the goblins’, has light that was dim to ‘pitch’ (*Hobbit*, VIII). In *The Lord of the Rings*, there is the initial ‘dark’ tunnel from Buckland to the Old Forest with its ‘tunnel-gate’, and a second tunnel, a ‘deep dim-lit gully over-arched by trees high above them’, so that the hobbits ‘came quite suddenly out of the gloom [a]s if through a gate’ (*FR*, I, vi, italics added). Tolkien develops this image in *The Lord of the Rings*: the locked door and tunnels of the Mines of Moria lead to a confrontation with the Balrog; in the tunnels known as the ‘Paths of the Dead’, Aragorn will confront the ghosts of the past, entering and exiting through a gate; and Frodo and Sam will meet Shelob in a tunnel. McIlwaine sees the motif of a central pathway hedged with trees recurring in the tunnel-like covered bridge (p. 174). The two examples she picks are *The Elvenking’s Gate* of 1936 (p. 174; also *Artist*, p. 128) and *Eeriness* from January 1914 (p. 169; also *Artist*, p. 43). *Other People* also displays this pattern (McIlwaine, p. 168).

In the spring of 1915, not only was Tolkien facing the prospect of war, but so was his younger brother, Hilary, of whom we know very little. If *Fantasy Landscape* was inspired at least partly by thoughts of the approaching war, then this watercolour also has a very personal context. Consequently, we digress to review the little available information on Hilary Tolkien and his meaning to his brother, J.R.R. Tolkien.

Hilary, who was two years younger than his brother Ronald, was the one stable and recurring presence in J.R.R. Tolkien’s early life. J.R.R. Tolkien almost certainly was a witness to his brother’s near drowning around 1900 in Sarehole (Tolkien, *Black and White Ogre Country*, *The Lost Tales of Hilary Tolkien* (*Ogre Country*), p. 6), and they had few other playmates growing up in Sarehole (*Biography*, p. 21).¹⁵ After the family’s conversion to Catholicism and a series of moves, the brothers would have had a hard time and limited opportunities to make friends with other children. Hilary was the one consistent person in his brother’s life through the death of both of their parents, a series of homes, and changes in schools, until Tolkien left to go to Oxford. Siblings, who stay together as orphans, often do not compete with one another for the favours and attention of adults because adults play so little

part in what clinicians call their affective or emotional lives. Instead, they watch out for each other: resisting being singled out for treats, not having to be urged to take turns, never telling on one another, sharing their possessions willingly, and making sure that they had both been served before they ate (Simpson, p. 150). Tolkien may have felt he needed to look after his younger brother as his father did with his younger siblings (Grotta-Kurska, p. 13) and as he urged his own son Michael to do with his younger brother Christopher (*Letters*, p. 22). What this history indicates is a close and important relationship that has been passed over in silence elsewhere.

The depth of this relationship may be shown when Hilary left King Edward’s School in the summer of 1910 (*Chronology*, p. 24) to start a job and then attend agricultural school. While Tolkien had been involved in more school activities in the 1909-1910 school year, including rugby, Officer Training Corps, and making his first speech at the Debating society, it is in the 1910-11 school year that he becomes socially ubiquitous, becoming a Prefect, Secretary of the Debating Society, Football Secretary, House Football Captain, and a Sub-Librarian along with Christopher Wisemans and Rob Gilson (*Chronology*, p. 24). This abrupt transition from a minimum of participation to a burst of joining in group activities suggests that previously a good part of Tolkien’s time was spent with his brother.

The emotional value that the two brothers placed on their relationship continued in later life. When Hilary married on 5 July 1928 (Tolkien, *Ogre Country*, p. 68), the couple traveled to Oxford to spend the day with Ronald and Edith Tolkien (*Chronology*, p. 158).¹⁶ Tolkien shared his writing with Hilary as his brother was likely to be the farmer whom Tolkien listed as having read *The Lord of the Rings* (*Letters*, pp. 122, 441). ‘Leaf by Niggle’ is an allegorical story derived from a dream Tolkien had, and Tolkien acknowledged the dream had autobiographical sources (*Letters*, p. 322). In ‘Leaf by Niggle’, the character, Parish, knows quite a bit about gardening (p. 149) and is called ‘Old Earth grubber’ (p. 160). Hilary had a market garden (*Biography*, p. 106). In the story, Parish is also ‘often in trouble and in need of help’ and has ‘no one else to turn to’ (‘Leaf by Niggle’, pp. 149, 150). This would have been very true of Hilary as there was a severe agricultural depression in Worcestershire in the late 1920s and 1930s, and then food prices were controlled during World War II. Many farms went bankrupt.¹⁷ Given Tolkien’s generous salary and Edith’s inherited wealth, it makes little sense that Tolkien’s earnings from marking exams beginning in the summer of 1922, around the time Hilary acquired his farm, were needed by their family (*Biography*, pp. 39, 106).¹⁸ Tolkien only stopped grading exam papers in 1954 (*Letters*, p. 166), around the time a mortgage and various loans would have been paid off. Referring to his examining, Tolkien wrote, ‘Writing stories in prose or verse has been stolen, often guiltily, from time already mortgaged’ (*Letters*, p. 24), perhaps literally so (Bunting, ‘Finding Hilary, Part I’, p. 3). The brothers ‘remained close and wrote to each other throughout their long lives’ (Tolkien, *Ogre Country*, p. 62). In ‘Leaf by Niggle’, Parish/Hilary is so essential to the Niggle/Tolkien figure that Tolkien only enters

the borders of heaven by means of and 'need'[ing] Parish (pp. 155, 158).

Returning to *Fantasy Landscape* of 1915 and its context, Tolkien's younger brother Hilary was a member of the 1911 Swiss walking tour and a witness to the ominous tunnel-like, covered bridge. As a result, all the imagery recalling Switzerland in the watercolour could be relevant to and appropriate for Hilary. Hilary had joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment by September 1914 (*Chronology*, p. 62). Consequently, like Ronald Tolkien, Hilary was under the malign influence of the emblematic eclipse of World War I seen in *Fantasy Landscape*.

The Land of Pohja, as discussed above, also depicts the ominous eclipse of World War I. If the visual imagery of the three trees in *The Land of Pohja* is likely to represent Ronald Tolkien and Edith Bratt 'As [the] Two Fair Trees' joined with the tree of Christ, they are united in the face of the overshadowing menace of the eclipse evoking the looming threat of World War I. But what of the small purple tree in the background which has been previously neglected in discussions of this picture?¹⁹ Not only was the war a threat to J.R.R. Tolkien and Edith Bratt, but also to Tolkien's brother Hilary, who was already training in the military. The possibility that this tree may represent another person, Tolkien's younger brother Hilary, is supported by Hilary's inclusion in Tolkien's newly created mythology. In the *Qenya Lexicon*, written in 1915 and 1916, Hilary is the Vala Amillo (p. 36). The entry for 'Amillo' in the *Qenya Lexicon* is one of the earliest entries ('Alphabet of Rúmil', p. 30), and the spring of 1915 is given as the likely beginning of the *Qenya* lexicon ('Alphabet of Rúmil', p. xii).

The *Qenya Lexicon* states Noldorin [Ronald Tolkien] and his brother Amillo [Hilary Tolkien] live together in Tol Eressëa with Eriniti or Lotisse or Veneste, an avatar of Edith, the Vali of love, music, beauty, and purity, (p. 36). Assuming the invention and development of the new mythology had already progressed in December 1914 to what the vocabulary contains the following spring, we see in the mythical *Land of Pohja*, Ronald/Noldorin, Edith/Eriniti, and Hilary/Amillo together as they were imagined in Tol Eressëa. Just as the watercolour, *Water, Wind, and Sand* of March 1915 is an 'Illustration of Sea-Chant of an Elder Day' (McIlwaine, p. 172; *Chronology*, p. 67) and the watercolour, *Tanaqui* of March–April 1915, (*Chronology*, p. 68) illustrates his poem of *Kor: In a City Lost and Dead* of 30 April 1915 (*Chronology*, p. 71); *The Land of Pohja* is a visual rendition of an early stage of Tolkien's changing concepts of Tol Eressëa. This invented world was based on Tolkien's transformation of Warwick, where his fiancée Edith Bratt lived, into the Elvish Kortirion, the ancient dwelling of the Fairies (*Lost Tales II*, p. 293) and included the most important people in Tolkien's life: Edith Bratt, soon to be his wife, and his brother, Hilary.

If Hilary was an important enough person to Tolkien to have him appear in his invented language and mythology and be seen in an illustration of that, then it would be reasonable to find Hilary appearing in Tolkien's writings on the eve of his enlistment. Hilary seems to be the most logical candidate for

the 'You' in Tolkien's poem, *You & Me and the Cottage of Lost Play*, written in 27–8 April 1915 (*Chronology*, p. 71; *Lost Tales I*, p. 19), a time when Hilary Tolkien would soon be shipping out to the front lines in France as he volunteered in the first wave of wartime enthusiasm (*Biography*, p. 72). The poem is filled with references to what was true of Tolkien's relationship with his younger brother Hilary including: the 'cottage' as a reference to the cottage in Sarehole or one by the sea on their holiday, their dark and light hair, sleeping in the same bed, walking on the sand and gathering shells during a seaside holiday, and walking hand in hand.²⁰

Hilary was a bugler and a stretcher bearer, and this last duty was likely to expose him repeatedly to enemy fire (Currie and Lewis, *Codemaker*, p. 106). Hilary arrived at the front by 12 November 1915 (Bru, p. 95). With Tolkien planning to join the military in June, both he and his brother would be facing the uncertainty of surviving the war (*Biography*, p. 77). In May 1915, Tolkien received the news and wrote to his fiancée, Edith Bratt, that Ernest Hall, had been killed: the 'first of my real personal friends to go; but I know it will soon be a long list' (McIlwaine, p. 160). It would make sense for Tolkien to reflect on his close relationship with Hilary in 1915, when he created *Fantasy Landscape*, given the stark possibility that they might never see each other again or survive the war. Instead, they would be reunited at 'The Cottage of Lost Play' where dead children go.²¹

There may be other references to Hilary in Tolkien's writings at the time. *Tinfang Warble*, written on 29–30 April 1915, composed probably the day after *You & Me and the Cottage of Lost Play* (*Chronology*, p. 71), may also be a contender as the date suggests a continuing train of thought. While Tolkien was offered piano (*Biography*, p. 22) and 'fiddle' lessons (*Letters*, p. 173), it seems likely that Hilary had lessons also. Hilary recalls making whistles from reeds as a child (Tolkien, *Ogre Country*, p. 6). He later became a skilled and talented musician playing several instruments: flute, small trumpet, and piano.²² Dairon, the 'fluter' appears in the earliest version of 'The Tale of Tinúviel' (*Lost Tales II*, p. 8), and the 1915–16 *Gnomish Lexicon*, which contains 'Amillo' [Hilary], as one of its earliest entries ('Alphabet of Rúmil', p. 30), also lists a rather large number of flute references (p. 29).

Tolkien's *Fantasy Landscape* reveals much about his state of mind on the eve of his commitment to Britain's World War I Army. The terror and possible lurking death, seen in the tunnel sucking one into its maw, is balanced by the mesmerising colours and beauty of the Alps. The mountains, the traditional home of the gods, the eventual home of Tolkien's Ainur, and the Victorian and Edwardian icon of testing the self through risk-taking, loom in the background. The roofline of the covered bridge with its Neolithic spiral on the left pillar may be the source or precursor of Tolkien's signature megalithic doorway of Númenor, another cipher of imminent, lethal peril. Neolithic spirals are found in ancient burial grounds, such as Newgrange. Further, Tolkien was facing not only his own possible death, but the potential death of his beloved brother, Hilary. Reviewing what little is known about Hilary discloses his importance in his brother's

life. Hilary was incorporated into Tolkien's Qenya lexicon, mythology, and by inference *The Land of Pohja*, an illustration of Tolkien's emerging secondary world. Tolkien drew on his memories of successfully passing the trials and dangers of the mountains affirming that he could measure up to the expectations of 'Manliness' and 'Grit' that he was facing when he applied for a temporary commission in the Army on 28 June 1915.

In the summer of 1911, Tolkien was preparing for the adventure of Oxford, and now in the spring of 1915 he was transitioning from Oxford into another uncharted enterprise,



the Army and World War I.²³ Under the malevolent solar eclipse, set in a night sky, or possibly the darkness of death and ruin, the flames of war seem to lick the Alps, threatening not only Tolkien's hopes for the future with Edith Bratt, but also for his beloved brother, Hilary. *Fantasy Landscape* conveys the richness and complexity of Tolkien's inner life in 1915.

Notes

1 Catherine McIlwaine, *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), p. 175. This painting has been displayed on the Tolkien Estate website. The naïve viewer may have only seen it without title or any context, and it would have only been a puzzle or an unknown curiosity to the observer. Though there are no instructions, clicking on the Moria gate allows a display of some of Tolkien's artwork with titles.

- 2 Michel Foucault, [1984]. 'On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of work in progress' in *The Foucault Reader* ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1991), p. 350.
- 3 Marie Barnfield presents this view and is quoted in Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, *The Art of 'The Hobbit'* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), p. 47.
- 4 This piece is indexed as #462 in the Tolkien Art Index: <https://tai.tolkienists.org/tai/462>.
- 5 Denis Bridoux, 'Book Reviews: Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth; Tolkien Treasures', in *Tolkien Studies XVI*, ed. by Michael D.C. Drout, Verlyn Flieger, and David Bratman (Morgantown, WV: WV University Press, 2019), 143-17, p. 153. Bridoux reports this could be Switzerland or Austria. The report of Austria can only be based on the unpublished memoirs of Colin Brookes-Smith, used in *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* (p. 1.33) to reconstruct the route of the 1911 walking tour. Garth also presents the watercolour, *Fantasy Landscape*, in *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien* (p. 161). Garth does not acknowledge either McIlwaine's presentation, published in 2018, or Bridoux's discussion, published in 2019.
- 6 A party of twelve would be accurate for the climb up to Col de Bertol as Rev. Hunt, his wife, and Tony Robson did not sign that guest book (Lewis and Currie, p. 167).
- 7 Denis Bridoux, 'Hidden Faces in Tolkien's Illustrations? Part2', *Beyond Bree* (August, 2020), 4-5 p. 4.
- 8 The bridge in Tolkien's painting is definitely a functional public roadway as seen in the two parallel tracks within the bridge that supports the load-bearing wheels as discussed below. The only specimens of covered bridges in England are pedestrian bridges for amusement or ornament, e.g. Birkenhead Park's 1847 covered pedestrian bridge of traditional wooden construction, Cambridge's Bridge of Sighs, or the Palladian Bridge at Wilton House. Birkenhead Park is in a suburb of Liverpool. There is no documentation that Tolkien was acquainted with any of these structures by 1916. The Old London Bridge and the stone Pulteney Bridge at Bath are covered, but are of completely different construction than Tolkien's wooden structure. There was a covered train viaduct at Blaenavon in southeastern Wales.
- 9 [accessed on 20/7/2020] <<https://www.meteoswiss.admin.ch/home/climate/the-climate-of-switzerland/monats-und-jahresrueckblick/the-swiss-weather-archive.html>> Translation from the German courtesy of Mark Hooker.
- 10 There is no reason to believe this represents a lunar eclipse, and there were no lunar eclipses in the summer of 1911.
- 11 Tolkien's identification with the Smith may be part of the source of the Smith in, *Smith of Wootton Major*.
- 12 'Manliness' was not gender specific. The prolific, and definitely feminine, climber Elizabeth LeBlond declared there was "no manlier sport in the world than mountaineering," clearly indicating that this did not have negative connotations for herself and fellow female climbers Roche, Clare, 'Women Climbers 1850-1900: A Challenge to Male Hegemony?' *Sport in History*, 236-259, (p. 238) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2013.826437>> [accessed on 16/7/2020].
- 13 Victorian Manliness and Grit were evident on both sides of the Atlantic. When the future President of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt of New York City, lost his wife and his mother in a twelve-hour period in 1844, he 'lit out for the territories', which were then still a true frontier. He spent the next two years living as a working cowboy on two cattle ranches he owned in North Dakota equipped with a custom, engraved and decorated silver hunting knife with repousse silver scabbard from Tiffany and Company.
- 14 Bridoux states this is a Maltese cross, but the arms do not have the necessary crescent shape (Book Review, p. 154).
- 15 Tolkien missing classes repeatedly his first year in school (*Biography*, p.25) corroborates the isolation of the brothers from other children. Tolkien was now exposed to and picking up germs from other children similar to the experience of modern parents have when their children first go to daycare, pre-school, or kindergarten.
- 16 Scull and Hammond give the wrong year, as one can assume Hilary's children knew when their parents married.
- 17 Tolkien's wife, Edith, had a good friend, Mabel Sheaf, whose farm was quite close to Hilary's and who became impoverished by the agricultural depression (John F.R. Tolkien and Priscilla Tolkien, *The Tolkien Family Album* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992), p. 67.
- 18 Tolkien's Oxford salary of £1,000 per year in 1925 was equivalent to £61,252.69 in 2019 goods and services per 'inflation calculator' Bank of England, last viewed on 7/25/2020, and he would also have had £800, equivalent to £49,000.15 in 2019 ('Inflation calculator' Bank of England) that year as he was still a professor at Leeds (Chronology, p. 139; Lewis and Currie p. 61).

Those amounts would be equivalent to \$77,394.61 for the Oxford salary and \$61,884.33 for the Leeds' salary in 2019 dollars ('XE Currency Converter'). Tolkien's wife, Edith Bratt Tolkien, was the only child of her mother, Frances Bratt, and the 1903 probate notice for Frances Bratt shows an estate of £5269, 14 shillings and 9 pence ('Find a Will' Government.UK. [accessed on 31/5/2020] <<https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/Calendar#calendar>>) or £645,569.65 in terms of 2019 goods and services ('Inflation Calculator' Bank of England). This is equivalent to \$807,845.95 in 2019 dollars ('XE Currency Converter'). She was probably the beneficiary of the total amount, but certainly the bulk, but the archive services needed to secure a copy of the will were not available due to the Covid pandemic. Further, after a stated period of time as an Oxford professor, there would have been annual increases in salary (Lewis and Currie, *Codemaker*, p. 61). When Tolkien's chair at Merton was advertised in 1959 the salary was given as £2500 (Lewis and Currie, *Codemaker*, p. 61). This is equivalent to £58,605.97 in 2019 goods and services ('Inflation Calculator' Bank of England). That is equivalent to \$74,035.16 ('XE Currency Converter'). Lewis and Currie (*Codemaker*) also calculated the Tolkien family household, medical, and school expenses (pp. 64-65, 209).

- 19 Previously neglected details in Tolkien's published artwork include the dragonet in the willow roots of *Old Man Willow* (McIlwaine, pp. 334-5; *Artist*, p. 155), the guardian angel in *Eeriness* (*Artist*, p. 43; Bunting, 1904), and the Siamese cat between the curtains in *Wickedness* (*Artist*, p. 37; John Rateliff, *The History of the Hobbit* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), p. 719)
- 20 See Nancy Bunting, 'Checking the Facts', *Mallorn* 59. (Winter, 2018), pp. 52-56 for more detail. While Tolkien maintained adamantly during the 1950s and 1960s that biography was irrelevant to his writing, this position collapse when he had 'Lúthien' and 'Beren' written on his and his wife's headstone. The Carpenter supplemented the demolition of this position by identifying Mabel Tolkien with Belladonna Took (*Biography*, p. 175).
- 21 In 'Checking the Facts', Nancy Bunting argues that the two words, 'childish things', from Francis Thompson's poem *Daisy* are not sufficient nor compelling enough to support the supposition that the poem, *You & Me and the Cottage of Lost Play*, is a poem about Tolkien and Edith Bratt as previously argued by Edwards and Garth. The *Daisy* poem presents the flirtation of an adult heterosexual couple. The narrator is a man who feels the woman is a tease. Being childish is part of this couple's flirting. Tolkien wrote *You and Me and the Cottage of Lost Play* in 1915, and by 1916 his marriage was so important to him that 'it was like death' when he separated from his wife to go to France in World War I (qtd. in Garth, p. 138). Given the depth of Tolkien's feeling for Edith, he is not likely, in a 'love poem' to his wife, to quote from a poem in which the woman easily and heedlessly leaves the man who feels jilted.
- 22 Based on notes taken at the presentation of an original paper given by Angela Gardner's paper on Hilary Tolkien given at 'The Return of the Ring' conference, Loughborough University, 2012 (Elizabeth Currie email 26/3/16)
- 23 Of course, Tolkien was facing the stress of his final examinations, but he was certainly better prepared for these than he was in 1913 for his Honour Moderations as evidenced by his conscientious reports to Edith in his letters about his studying (*Letters*, pp.7-8) and his time table (McIlwaine, p. 176). Tolkien's achievement of First Class Honours suggests that he was well prepared (*Biography*, p. 77)

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Defying and Defining Darkness

VERLYN FLIEGER

“Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness.”

Anne Frank, *Diary*

The theme for this conference, Defying and Defining Darkness, is both an inspiration and a challenge. It is an inspiration because defying darkness is what humans have tried to do ever since Prometheus brought us fire, and we are still trying. It is a challenge because what it proposes – defying and defining – assumes that you know what you are up against, or at least what you are talking about, which in the case of darkness is not as easy as you might suppose. So, inspired, challenged, but also in need of help, I turn to the dictionary.

The American Heritage Dictionary tells me that *defy* means ‘to confront or stand up to’, with a second meaning, ‘to resist successfully, withstand’, and a third, ‘to challenge’. The same Dictionary defines *define* as ‘state the precise meaning of’. So far, so good. I know what I’m talking about.

Rounding out the set, the Dictionary defines *darkness* with elegant simplicity as ‘total or almost total absence of light.’ It is here that I run into trouble. Elegance is all very well, mathematically speaking, but simplicity turns out to be, in this case, the reverse of precise meaning. Not only is it not precise, it is not even close. This is the reverse of a definition, a retreat to what something is not rather than an explanation of what it is. When I had closed the Dictionary, I thought of what Frodo says to Gildor in *The Lord of the Rings*: ‘Go not to the Elves for counsel, for they will say both no and yes’ (FR, I, iii).

With the dictionary saying both no and yes, I went for counsel to J.R.R. Tolkien instead, hoping to get from the wordsmith of modern fantasy a little more certainty. But searching his work for instances of defining or defying darkness, I find instead that like his own elves – and the Dictionary – Tolkien also says both no and yes. I only found one instance (which I will get to in due time) where he states a precise meaning for darkness. Otherwise, rather than defining it he has it play hide-and-seek, or tag-you’re-it, or catch-me-if-you-can. Most of the time he gives his readers a powerful sense and feel of darkness without necessarily naming it as such, and sometimes he names it something else and lets readers figure out the meaning for themselves. In similar mode, sometimes he defies darkness and sometimes he doesn’t.

So this morning I would like to try out some instances of what I see as Tolkien saying both no and yes on the subject of darkness, not so much to argue a case as to begin a conversation on this important aspect of fantasy in general and the work of J.R.R. Tolkien in particular. For this I need your response as much as your attention. So I am hoping for a lot of questions. Let me make one thing clear: I am not talking about evil in Tolkien’s work, a much larger and more complex – albeit related – subject. I am talking about how he treats darkness. From the myriad examples in his fiction I

have selected a few to analyse how an element which may – or may not be – defined as darkness either is – or is not, or is only partially – defied. You will be the judges.

External Darkness

My first example is from *The Hobbit*, the early scene in Chapter One with the dwarves in Bilbo’s parlour. When the dwarves begin their music and Bilbo is ‘swept away’ the narrator tells us that, ‘The dark came into the room from the little window’ (*Hobbit*, i). It is a wonderful sentence and deliberately designed not to define darkness but to create it as a presence. The reader is invited to imagine a physical entry. Burglars come in windows. Kids sneaking home after curfew come in windows. So in telling us that darkness came in the window, Tolkien is investing it with individuality and substance if not necessarily form. This is sub-creation. Darkness has become a character in the story. It comes in the room as obviously and physically as the dwarves do – almost as a guest at the party. This is neither defiance nor definition. It is not absence. It is presence.

And when Tolkien tells us that dark ‘filled all the room’, he is inviting us (I would almost say ‘daring us’) to see darkness. And when Bilbo says, ‘What about a little light?’ and the dwarves answer that they ‘like the dark . . . dark for dark business!’ (*Hobbit*, i), we have gone in one leap from personification to metaphor. The dwarves’ ‘dark business’ will be their greed for gold, felt by Bilbo as ‘the desire of the hearts of dwarves’, which will play an important role as the story develops. This, of course, is the point of the whole exercise. We can see how cleverly Tolkien has snuck up on us when we were not looking. In this first encounter in *The Hobbit*, while darkness is vividly pictured, it is neither defied nor defined. It is, however, memorably introduced in ways that will pay off later in the story.

Internal Darkness

Granted, this is all on the level of children’s story, and the tone is more than halfway tongue-in-cheek. The story and the tone and the treatment get progressively more serious as the narrative develops, and we get real darkness in Smaug’s cave inside the mountain and psychological darkness with Bilbo’s theft of the Arkenstone.

Bilbo makes three trips inside the Mountain, but for brevity I will lump them together as representing the crux of the Hero’s Journey, the descent to the underworld taken by Aeneas and Orpheus and Beowulf, and Bilbo. This is the hero’s Initiation, the ordeal that leads to change and return. In Jungian psychology it is the journey inward that leads to confrontation with the self. Bilbo goes ‘down, down, down into the dark’ (*Hobbit*, xii). Into the heart of the Mountain. And what he finds there is light. The glow of Smaug. This switcheroo of dark and light upends all notions of defining, and while Bilbo does defy the *dragon* (who glows), he

eventually gives in to the ‘dark business’ of the dwarves (which we first saw coming in the window in Chapter 1), and gives in to his inner darkness by stealing the Arkenstone. “Now I am a burglar indeed!” thought [Bilbo]’ (*Hobbit*, xiii). See again how cleverly Tolkien has moved darkness from stage setting to psychology to action. Bilbo loses the battle, though he will eventually win the war.

The Lord of the Rings

These are foreshadowings of things to come in *The Lord of the Rings*, where darkness seems to come out of the woodwork and attack from all sides. Take for example, the chapter called ‘Fog on the Barrow-downs’, where Tolkien treats darkness in much the same way, escalating it from atmospheric to psychological to metaphorical.

Separated from his companions and fallen off his pony, Frodo, like Bilbo before him but more dramatically, is overtaken by darkness in a landscape far darker than Bilbo’s parlour. The Barrow-downs are ‘dreaded hills’ with their own dark reputation, and in them Frodo is benighted in every sense of that word. The darkness is part time of day (nightfall), part weather (the fog), and part state of mind (Frodo is lost, confused, and frightened). The fog is actual and so is the time of day, but the ‘darkness [that seems] to fall’ around Frodo is at first as much psychological as real. But as it develops, it becomes more and more actual. Stars appear, and ‘clinging night’ closes about Frodo. I call your attention to the word *clinging*. Again, Tolkien is giving darkness agency, as if it were an active force: the darkness that clings to Frodo matches and reflects his mental state. This is T.S. Eliot’s ‘objective correlative’, the outside world mirroring the inner one. But again, this is not a definition – rather an evocation.

Is darkness defied? Like the elves and the Dictionary, Tolkien says both no and yes. Disoriented and scared, Frodo tries to call to the other hobbits, but gets an answer from another source:

‘Where are you?’ he cried . . . both angry and afraid.

‘Here,’ said a voice, deep and cold, that seemed to come out of the ground. ‘I am waiting for you!’

‘No!’ said Frodo, but he did not run away. (*FR*, I, viii).

Frodo then looks up to see ‘a tall dark figure’ with eyes ‘lit with a pale light’. He feels a grip ‘stronger and colder than iron’ that seizes him, and he passes out.

Both the emphatic ‘No!’ and the fact that he does not run away fit the dictionary’s definition of *defy* as ‘stand up to’, which Frodo certainly does. What he stands up to, however – the voice – is not described as dark but ‘deep and cold’. Inside the barrow, Frodo wakes in darkness that fades to ‘a pale greenish light’ as a chant begins in which ‘night [is] railing against the morning’ and ‘cold [is] cursing the warmth’ (*FR*, I, viii). Again, let us look at the words Tolkien uses. *Deep, cold, iron, pale light, greenish light*. He is creating emotional and psychological darkness without ever naming it as such. It is presented, but it is not defined.

Nor is it defied. Far from *resisting*, Frodo thinks of flight:

[A] wild thought of escape came to him . . . He wondered if he put on the Ring, whether the Barrow-wight would miss him . . . He thought of himself . . . free and alive . . . Gandalf would admit that there had been nothing else he could do. (*FR*, I, viii).

The narrative tells us explicitly that ‘he wavered, groping in his pocket’, but adds that he ‘then fought with himself again’. This certainly qualifies as defiance. But what makes this example worth attention is that the defier and the thing defied are one and the same. The battle is internal, and the darkness is within Frodo, what Tolkien called ‘the real battle between the soul and its adversaries’ (*Monsters*, p. 22). Thus it is implicit but not defined. Things become more overt when Frodo wins the battle with himself and takes physical action, seizing the sword and severing the crawling hand, whereupon the *light goes out* in a paradoxical conjunction of metaphorical darkness and psychological illumination.

In this complex episode *defy* increases exponentially from Frodo’s instinctive ‘No!’, to his moral victory over himself to decisive action, each a successively greater act of defiance. But as we have seen, darkness is not so much described or defined as evoked. This is what I mean by hide-and-seek and catch-me-if-you-can. Darkness is there but not there, just around the corner, ready to jump out at any minute. We sense it rather than see it. But with Frodo’s victory over the hand, the moment where any fairy tale worthy of the name would have given the hero the princess and left them happy ever after, Tolkien is just getting started on darkness.

My next example is Weathertop, where we get characters described as so dark that they look like holes against the dark night. They are Black Riders, and the name clearly evokes darkness. But it is darkness without substance. The Riders are wraiths, ghosts. Apart from their white faces and burning eyes and haggard hands there is nothing inside those cloaks. They are insubstantial; they are precisely the presence of an absence that the dictionary called for. It is notable that in the struggle against this absence Frodo gives in and puts on the Ring. The obvious question is: what exactly is Frodo giving in to? The power of the Ring? The pressure of the Riders? His own inner darkness, as in the barrow? Probably but implicitly all three. But he does not give way entirely, striking at his enemy and with a last gesture taking off the Ring. Darkness is enacted rather than defined.

Both Frodo and Tolkien do a little better at the Ford, where Frodo confronts this same darkness, these same Black Riders:

Frodo sat up and brandished his sword. ‘Go back!’ he cried. ‘Go back to the Land of Mordor and follow me no more!’ . . .

His enemies laughed . . . ‘Come back! Come back! . . . To Mordor we will take you!’

‘Go back!’ he whispered . . . ‘By Elbereth and Lúthien the Fair . . . you shall have neither the Ring nor me!’ . . .

Frodo was stricken dumb. He felt his tongue cleave to his mouth . . . His sword broke and fell out of his . . . hand. . . . then Frodo felt himself falling, and . . . He heard and saw no more. (*FR*, I,

xii)

Here is defiance loud and clear, heart-stirring. With better (though still partial) success this time, Frodo does stand (or sit) up against and challenge the Riders. Indeed, he is the only one until the great scene with Éowyn and Merry, who ever does so. But his defiance is ultimately ineffective. It is Elrond, aided by Gandalf, who defeats the Riders and their darkness, not with light, but with water.

I am aware that these examples are selective. I could pick other representatives of darkness, like Old Man Willow, or get into real psychology with characters like Boromir and Denethor and Gollum, but I think I am being fair both in presenting the problems and in tracing a continuum of increasing intensity. I will give you now one of the clearest examples of defying darkness in *The Lord of the Rings*, explicit and unequivocal. This is the heart-stopping moment at the end of Book IV when Frodo holds aloft the star-glass and walks down the tunnel to confront Shelob. The scene is written as a set-piece, you can almost hear the trumpets and drums as sword in hand and holding the phial aloft, 'Frodo, hobbit of the Shire [walks] steadily down to meet the eyes [of Shelob]' (TT, IV, ix). For the reader it creates – and was clearly intended to create – what Tolkien called the 'catch of breath', the 'beat and lifting of the heart' that he says a fairy-story can produce.

How dark is Shelob? Tolkien surrounds her with words like *shadow* and *night*. Her eyes reflect the light of the star-glass, and behind them 'a pale deadly fire glows within, a flame kindled in some deep pit of evil thought' (TT, IV, ix). Again that odd confusion of light and dark. To really understand her we must leave *The Lord of the Rings* and turn to *The Silmarillion* and Shelob's ancestress Ungoliant, whose name means 'dark spider', related to *ungol*, defined as 'unlight', and we are right back where we started with 'absence of light'. Ungoliant sucks the light from the Two Trees and belches forth 'black vapours . . . a darkness that seemed not lack but a thing with being of its own' (*Silmarillion*, p. 76). Tolkien gives us not just one concrete image, but two. Both light and dark are reified, light as a liquid, dark as a gaseous residue. It is with this image of darkness made out of light, that Tolkien comes closest to a definition, a precise meaning in dictionary terms. Here he has created a presence, not an absence. Here there is no hesitation such as we saw with Frodo at the barrow, no internal struggle, no objective correlative.

Nevertheless, the rhythm of *The Lord of the Rings* seems to require that every victory and every defeat be followed by their opposite, every up by a down, every down by a compensatory lift, an oscillation between light and dark that might be the hallmark of Tolkien's story-telling style. So Frodo's defiance of Shelob is not the end of the story, or even the end of the episode, as the reader quickly discovers, for Tolkien provides a down by having Shelob capture and disable Frodo. The scene where Sam thinks Frodo dead is one of the darkest moments in the book. But the darkness is metaphoric, a far cry from the vomit of Ungoliant or Shelob. In a further oscillation it is followed almost immediately by Sam's discovery that Frodo is

alive, and this discovery followed by a further defiance of the dark when unable to locate Frodo in the Tower, Sam begins to sing, and is answered by Frodo. *The Lord of the Rings* is full of such alternations large and small.

The subsequent scene where Sam finds Frodo alive at the top of the tower shows this oscillation at its most compressed. Sam has found Frodo alive only to provoke his predictable, terrible response when Sam tells him he has the Ring. 'You can't have it!' 'No you won't, you thief!' The narrative tells us that, 'Sam had changed before his eyes into an orc again, leering and pawing at his treasure, a foul little creature with greedy eyes and slobbering mouth.' Frodo's remorse is poignant. 'O Sam . . . What have I said? What have I done? Forgive me!' (RK, VI, i). Frodo's anger is followed by his remorse, just as his fear in the barrow was followed by his courage, his ordeals at Weathertop and the Ford by recovery in Rivendell.

I want to bring another term into play here, a word of Tolkien's own coinage directly related to the light-dark back-and-forth I have been talking about. The word is *eucatastrophe*, from his essay 'On Fairy-stories'. *Eucatastrophe*, as you probably know, means 'good catastrophe' and describes the 'turn' in a fairy-story when last-minute rescue reverses the downward trajectory, turns the story from tragedy to comedy and provides the Happy Ending. This brings us directly to the Cracks of Doom, the darkest moment in a story full of dark moments, when Frodo defies his own mandate by refusing to do what he came to do. 'I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine' (RK, VI, iii).

How are we to parse this stupefying moment? It must stand as the most stunning reversal in twentieth-century literature, and it fulfils everything we have been told about the Ring from Chapter Two onward. And I venture to say that it creates darkness in the reader as well as in the story. I know it did for me the first time I read it. But again we get oscillation. At the Cracks of Doom Tolkien goes from dark to light to dark to light and racks up more changes on his own concept of *eucatastrophe* than even Gandalf could contrive. Catastrophe and *eucatastrophe* braid themselves around one another and follow so hard on one another's heels that the reader is hard put to keep up with the pace or tell one element from the other.

The catastrophe for Middle-earth that is Frodo's claiming the Ring is followed by a *eucatastrophe* for Gollum who recovers the Ring by biting it off Frodo's hand; but his Happy Ending when he re-possesses his treasure is followed immediately by his *dyscatastrophe* when he and the Ring fall into the fire. Frodo's catastrophe in coming wholly under the Ring's power is followed by a second catastrophe, losing it, which is paradoxically also his first *eucatastrophe* since it forces him to give it up, which he would not otherwise have done. The Ring's *eucatastrophe* in conquering first Frodo and then Gollum causes its own catastrophe when Gollum, holding it aloft, falls into the fire, which becomes Frodo's second *eucatastrophe* in freeing him of its power and returning him to sanity, robbed, maimed but master of himself.

Even for a book whose pace is based on alternation, as noted above, the dizzying rapidity of the switch-backs in this scene is beyond the skill of any magician less than Tolkien. Yet even

in its mind-blowing alternation, the scene manages to keep an equilibrium that is not static but dynamic. For all its shifts and changes it elevates balance over position, favours suspense over stillness and prefers tension to immobility. It is, in short, as close to real life as Tolkien can bring it, as realistic as fantasy can be.

That realism has its roots in a section of Tolkien's fairy-story essay that has something to offer beyond *eucatastrophe*, something he feels is as essential to fantasy as the Happy Ending. He calls it 'hard recognition'. For Fantasy, he says:

is founded upon the hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun; on a recognition of fact . . . So upon logic was founded the nonsense . . . in the tales and rhymes of Lewis Carroll. If men really could not distinguish between frogs and men, fairy-stories about frog-kings would not have arisen. (*Monsters*, p. 144).

Without this recognition of the world as it is, fantasy could not do riffs on how it might be. No matter how high you fly, you have to push off from the ground under your feet. However far out your fantasy, it must be founded on the hard recognition that 'things are so' in the real world; that pain exists, that life leads to death, that there's no guarantee.

Thus the destruction of the Ring is both *eucatastrophe* and catastrophe for Frodo, who is freed from its power by losing what has become his dearest possession. And while his own inner darkness is defined – both for him and for the reader – that does not mean it can be defied, for the hard recognition is that it is a part of Frodo. The battle that he won against himself in the barrow becomes the much greater battle he loses at Mount Doom, the knowledge of which he has to live with. Tolkien commented about Frodo in a letter that 'one must face the fact [that] the power of evil in the world is *not* finally resistible by incarnate creatures, however "good"' (*Letters*, p. 252). Frodo, says his creator, was 'tempted to regret [the Ring's] destruction, and still to desire it' (*Letters*, p. 328).

In this respect, *The Lord of the Rings* is not a fantasy. The recognition is too hard, the situation too realistic to be fantastic. It is a tragedy. It may not conform 100 % to Aristotle's requirements, for it is the fall not of a great man but a little one, and in this respect more modern than its detractors are willing to allow. But it brings self-knowledge, the hard recognition that things are so in the world, and ranges Frodo not just beside Oedipus but Lear and Macbeth. Tolkien's notes and letters make it clear that the scene at the Cracks of Doom was envisioned from the very beginning, that Tolkien deliberately set up a situation in which his protagonist could not win, but must inevitably, like Oedipus, lose the struggle. Thus his stretching out of that struggle over six books and over nine hundred pages must stand as the longest tease in literary history, the most cynical exercise of authorial power, and the most candid acknowledgment that, as he stated in the 'Beowulf' essay, 'within Time the monsters would win' because 'the monsters do not depart, whether the gods go or come' (*Monsters*, p. 22).

It would be dishonest of me to leave the subject there, with

the deck so stacked that there is no hope of debate, so I have one more example to offer, and I present it because it is in every way the opposite of all the episodes I have just been talking about, proof of Tolkien's biographer Humphrey Carpenter's characterisation of him as 'a man of antitheses', and evidence of either his tendency to contradict himself or his capacity for paradox, the ability to hold opposites in tension. This is the splendid episode on the Pelennor Field when Éowyn and Merry between them defy the darkness of the Nazgûl Lord and together bring about his death – Éowyn with her triumphant revelation that she is a woman (take that, Tolkien misogynists!), and Merry with the blade of Westermarck from the barrow.

This is perhaps the most completely realised moment of victory in the whole book, brought about by the two least likely agents, both of whom were forbidden to be there in the first place. To this day I cannot read this passage out loud without my eyes pricking and my voice quavering not from sadness but the kind of joy that comes when against all the odds the thing that ought to happen actually does. I cannot resist pointing out that this moment is immediately followed by Merry 'blinded by tears' and Éowyn at the point of death. Nevertheless, it is *eucatastrophe* on a grand scale, and clear evidence that Tolkien can defy darkness when he wants to. What I find interesting is that he so often seems not to want to.

And that leads me to my final point. I have been talking as if these were real people. They are not. They are realistic; but that is a different thing. We need to remind ourselves that what we are talking about today is fiction. There is no Frodo, no Gollum, no Éowyn or Merry or Witch-King, in fact, no Ring. There is only Tolkien. And we should pay attention to that fact. If Merry and Éowyn succeed it is because Tolkien writes their success into the world he has invented. If Frodo fails, it is because Tolkien designed his failure. Tolkien wrote this book, and although he may say and, in some sense, believe that he is not the Author, nevertheless he is controlling the story. His many revisions (he rewrote the first chapter six times), his notes and rough drafts give evidence of extensive rethinking, backtracking, giving up and starting over, casting and recasting the words he puts in his characters' mouths, the actions he has them perform, and the ends to which he conducts them. *The Lord of the Rings* may be, as Tolkien says of the lines of *Beowulf*, 'wrought to a high finish', but the operative word is *wrought*, archaic past participle of the verb 'work', that is to say made, crafted.

The Lord of the Rings has been called an epic, a romance, a fairy tale, a fantasy, a war novel. And indeed and in truth a case can be made that it is each – indeed all – of these genres. But in all of them the overriding theme is not so much light and dark – that is just the backdrop. The overriding theme is loss. Théoden asks Gandalf at Helm's Deep, 'May it not so end that much that was fair and wonderful shall pass forever out of Middle-earth?' Gandalf's answer is, 'it may. The evil of Sauron cannot be wholly cured, nor made as if it had not been' (*TT*, III, viii). Both Théoden and Gandalf speak here for Tolkien, whose longing for a lost and irretrievable past led him to make one up that suffuses his work. And Tolkien speaks for Frodo,

who loses the Ring, his health, his innocence, his home. So do we all.

At this point you might well be thinking that Professor Tolkien cannot make up his mind; or that I am thinking he cannot make up his mind. You would be wrong on both counts. He can, and I have no doubt that he can. But I also think that the makeup of his mind reflects the paradox of the human condition – the terrible circumstance that to be human is to be faced with a perpetual oscillation between hope and despair, between the promise of a happy ending – or at least some resolution – and the ineluctable fact of what Tolkien called ‘the long defeat’ that is human history in a fallen world.

For Tolkien, the scales are weighted more towards doom than consolation, in this world at least. And while his story encompasses both, it is based as much on the ‘hard recognition’ that the world is the way it is as on *eucatastrophe* and the Happy Ending. For Frodo it is the hard recognition that at the supreme moment he failed the test. To switch briefly from ‘On Fairy-stories’ to the ‘Monsters’ essay, Tolkien’s story recognises, as does *Beowulf*, that ‘*eal scæced, leoht and lif somod*’, ‘all perishes, light and life together’. For, said Tolkien, ‘the monsters do not depart, whether the gods go or come’ and ‘within time the monsters [will] win’ (*Monsters*, p. 22). To make sure you get the point Tolkien goes on to characterise the theme of *Beowulf* as, ‘man, each man and all men and all their works shall die’, a theme, he said, that ‘no Christian need despise’ (*Monsters*, p. 23), and one, he declared, that will ‘ever call with a profound appeal – until the dragon comes’ (*Monsters*, p. 34).

So at the end of the day, where do we stand on Tolkien defying and defining darkness? More important, where does Tolkien stand? My reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, his masterpiece and centrepiece, the work by which all the others are judged, is that he says both ‘no’ and ‘yes’, but that he says no more often than he says yes.

Unlike some of his contemporaries and successors, Tolkien did not just set up straw men and knock them over. He saw and acknowledged the power of the dark. He lived in a dark world dominated by two terrible wars that did as much to shape his fiction as they did that of Ernest Hemingway, or James Jones, or Erich Maria Remarque – none of whom are identified as writers of fantasy. Nor, I venture to suggest, should Tolkien be so identified. At least not exclusively, for at the end of the day it is the realism even more than the fantasy that makes his work stand out from the others in that genre. It is its darkness as much as its light that has earned *The Lord of the Rings* its deservedly high place in the world’s literature. It is Tolkien’s recognition that the dark is a necessary aspect of the search for light that has drawn readers to his work generation after generation for over sixty years and counting.

What we are left with is neither ‘no’ nor ‘yes’, neither a consistent defiance of darkness nor its clear definition, but something stronger and more resilient than either of those. What Tolkien gives us is a vision of a world in which darkness is recognisable if not necessarily definable, a world that balances *eucatastrophe* and the Happy Ending with the hard recognition that ‘things are so’ and cannot always be defied.

I hope the evidence I have offered today shows that Tolkien recognised darkness as a real force, not just an absence but also a presence, not always easy to define, and more often than not hard to defy, but a thing in itself, always to be reckoned with – the dragon that waits for us. Especially hard to define and even harder to defy when as so often happens, the dragon is us.

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Queer Lodgings: Gender and Sexuality in *The Lord of the Rings*¹ - Reprinted with a New Introduction by the Author

DAVID CRAIG

Introduction

One irate critic – writing in the letters page of *Mallorn* – suggested that the author of this essay would ‘probably find a doughnut sexual’. Not being a great fan of doughnuts, I didn’t think that likely, but before re-reading the piece, after a gap of twenty years, I was expecting something provocative or even scandalous. I was, instead, pleasantly surprised to find a close and cautious textual analysis of a book I had known intimately since my teenage years, and nothing – to my mind – intended to ignite the more combustible reader.

It was written in the summer of 1999 – when I ought to have been finishing off my doctorate on the social and political thought of Robert Southey – and presented at my first Oxonmoot in September. This, I remember, took place over a wet weekend in Exeter College, and there was a large turnout in the relatively small room I’d been assigned. This didn’t help my nerves – I’d already the night before knocked a pint of lager over my pizza – but it seemed to go down well, and the questioners were interested rather than outraged.

My training was as an intellectual historian, not a literary critic, and there isn’t really very much theory in the essay. To the extent there is any, it probably came from the Queer Theory Seminar which I was involved with at King’s College, Cambridge. My main ambitions were to tease out Tolkien’s views about masculinity and femininity in the published text and to see how they had evolved from the various drafts reproduced in *The History of Middle-earth*. I recall being struck by how late in the day characters such as Arwen and Rosie were introduced into the narrative.

The title is perhaps a little naughty, but I was – and am – especially interested in how the meanings of words change over time. ‘Queer’ didn’t mean to Tolkien what it means to us, but nor was it utterly different – there are certain interesting symmetries I tried to explore in the text. And of course, 1999 was the year that Russell T. Davies’s landmark drama *Queer as Folk* was first broadcast on Channel 4, so the term was in the air.

Anyway, it’s very pleasing, and somewhat humbling, that the editor of *Mallorn* suggested that ‘Queer Lodgings’ be reprinted. I haven’t altered the original text. No doubt there would be things I would say differently, and maybe there are other things I want to say about Tolkien in the future, but, as Frodo once said, ‘that is the best I can do yet’.

David Craig
23 October 2020

In June 1955 Tolkien sent a letter to the Houghton Mifflin Company, in which he corrected some errors that had appeared in a *New York Times Book Review* article. He noted two criticisms of his work that particularly annoyed him. The first was that it contained no religion. The second was dismissed in parenthesis: the claim that *Lord of the Rings* contained ‘no women’. He thought this ‘does not matter, and is not true anyway’ (*Letters*, p. 220). There are of course *some* women in the book, but they are very few and often peripheral to the narrative. This might ‘not matter’ to the author, but it should matter to the critic and historian. What *Lord of the Rings* does contain is an abundance of male characters. It’s a man’s world and most of the central relationships are between men. But if any critic (perhaps W.H. Auden?) had asked if the book contained homosexuals, Tolkien would have certainly answered with astonishment that it did not. This paper is an attempt to explore in detail the representation and relationships of women and men in this novel. There is something ‘queer’ (in both the old and new senses of the term) about this problem. The exclusion of women from the narrative has important implications for the way men are presented. My argument looks both at the conscious intentions of Tolkien, but also at some of the more unintentional meanings present in the text. No author can fully control the ways in which a book is read, and meanings have a habit of slipping in through the back door.

The Lord of the Rings is not an allegory, but it is a myth with a purpose. That purpose cannot wholly be understood without reference to Tolkien’s own beliefs and the culture of which he was a member. This is true of his presentation of both men and women. The inter-war period has generally been seen as a deep trough in the history of feminism. Despite a limited extension of the franchise to women in 1918, there were deep-seated fears that the social and sexual order was under threat. These were times when for conservative minded people the growth of communism and decline of Christianity demanded that traditional order was defended. Libertarian attitudes to gender and sexuality were held by only a tiny minority. But, at the same time, the inter-war period saw a rejection of the aggressive, masculine and military values of pre-war England. The simple, the ordinary, the decent and the quiet were now seen as virtues. England viewed itself as an isolationist and domestic nation. To quote Alison Light: ‘In the ubiquitous appeal of civilian values and pleasures, ... the picture of “the little man”, the suburban husband pottering in his herbaceous borders ... we can discover a considerable sea-change in ideas of national temperament’ (Light, p. 8). In other words although inter-war culture was conservative on sexual questions, by the standards of pre-war heroic and masculine values, it was rather ‘feminine’.

Tolkien distilled this inter-war culture into the Shire. The

home of the hobbits was formed partially from Tolkien's childhood remembrances of the countryside, from how he saw rural England, and from the values present in the inter-war period (*Letters*, p. 250, 288). Hobbits were English people as they liked to see themselves: jovial, kind, and primarily domestic creatures. They revelled in anti-heroic values, and their chief pleasures were food, drink and smoking. They were suspicious and dismissive of anything outside their own narrow existence, and this led them to reject things that could ennoble them. Ted Sandyman scoffs at Sam's lament that the elves are leaving Middle-earth: 'I don't see what it matters to me and you. Let them sail' (*FR*, I, ii). But Tolkien was not uncritical of this projection of England. He thought that most hobbits possessed a 'mental myopia which is proud of itself, a smugness ... and cocksureness, and a readiness to measure and sum up all things from a limited experience, largely enshrined in sententious traditional "wisdom"' (*Letters*, p. 329). The pleasures of ordinary life could not exist without heroism, as is shown by the fact that the Shire was protected by the Rangers (*FR*, I, x). Indeed Charles Williams realised this when he said that 'its centre is not in strife and war and heroism ... but in freedom, peace, ordinary life and good liking' (*Letters*, p. 105). Tolkien noted that 'he agrees that these very things require the existence of a great world outside the Shire – lest they should grow stale by custom and turn into the humdrum' (*Letters*, p. 105-6). Frodo was to transcend the mental backwardness of the Shire (as I show later), but nevertheless for all his criticisms Tolkien saw the Shire as his home country.

The Shire is a traditional sexual order, much as Tolkien thought inter-war England should be. Hobbits invariably married and had many children (*FR*, Prologue, i). The few women we encounter occupy such traditional roles. Mrs. Maggot and Mrs. Cotton are defined by their domestic and familial status. They are hearty homemakers who serve beer and prepare supper for their guests but rarely participate in the narrative. One reader was interested in the fact that Gollum's family was 'ruled by a grandmother', and asked if hobbits possessed a matriarchal family structure (*FR*, I, ii; *Letters*, p. 289-96). Tolkien suggested that this was not the norm. The heads of families were generally male, and although 'master and mistress had equal status' they had 'different functions' (*Letters*, p. 29). However if the master died first, then the wife assumed headship until her death, when it passed to the eldest male. Tolkien wrote: 'It could, therefore, happen in various circumstances that a long-lived woman of forceful character remained "head of the family", until she had full-grown grandchildren' (*Letters*, p. 293-4). The reference to 'forceful character' suggests that women were not naturally designed for such a dominant role. This is evident in Lobelia Sackville-Baggins. Whilst she had a commanding presence she was also an unpleasant character who henpecked her husband. These are standard images of the world turned upside down, the natural order inverted. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis had similar opinions on the place of women in the world. Lewis asked: 'Do you really want a matriarchal world? Do you really like women in authority?' (Carpenter, *Inklings*, p. 164). Tolkien, in a letter to his son, argued that men and women were by nature

intended for different roles. A married woman quickly settles down into family life.

Modern conditions ... have not changed natural instinct. A man has a life-work, a career... A young woman, even one 'economically independent', as they say now (it usually really means economic subservience to male commercial employers instead of to a father or a family), begins to think of the 'bottom drawer' and dream of a home, almost at once. (*Letters*, p. 50)

This was how Tolkien viewed his own domestic life, and it was how England should be ordered. These beliefs were passed into his depiction of the Shire, in which married women happily occupied private roles. They had no call to the male concerns of the narrative, and so it passes over them silently.

Relationships between men and women outside the Shire are cast in terms of romantic love. Tolkien told his son that the romantic chivalric tradition of love was a noble ideal. 'It idealizes "love" – and as far as it goes can be very good, since it takes in far more than physical pleasure, and enjoins if not purity, at least fidelity, and so self-denial, "service", courtesy, honour, and courage' (*Letters*, p. 48-9). Despite some problems in this tradition, Tolkien thought it had much to commend it. This language was used in his youthful romantic attachment to Edith. He adopted the role of sentimental lover with her and coated it with 'amatory cliché'. Lúthien was inspired by Edith, suggesting that Tolkien saw himself as Beren, a mere mortal man in awe of his noble and superior elven wife (Carpenter, *Tolkien*, p. 105). Although he believed that women were naturally designed for familial and domestic roles, he interpreted his feelings for his wife through the language of romantic love, and projected this onto her. This same language persists in the representation of 'noble' women in his writings, and the response of male characters to them. The place to begin is Lúthien. In the final published version of *The Silmarillion* Beren comes across Lúthien dancing in the woods: 'Then all memory of his pain departed from him, and he fell into an enchantment; for Lúthien was the most beautiful of all the children of Ilúvatar.' Tolkien described her eyes, hair and clothes, and Beren became as 'one that is bound under a spell.' When 'she looked on him, doom fell upon her, and she loved him' (*Silmarillion*, p. 165). A number of points should be stressed. Firstly, the basic description of women in terms of appearance is conventional and will recur repeatedly. Secondly, the term 'enchanted' is often used to describe the male response to a noble and beautiful woman. And finally there is nothing to indicate what attracted Lúthien to Beren. These themes are repeated in the accounts of Goldberry and Arwen. Goldberry was like a 'fair young elf-queen' who made the hobbits feel 'surprised and awkward'. Frodo felt 'enchanted' by her (*FR*, I, vii).² Likewise he feels 'surprised and abashed' looking at Arwen (*FR*, II, i). Aragorn too feels as if he had 'strayed into a dream' on their first meeting. No reason was given for Arwen's attraction to him (*RK*, Appendix A, v). It seems that Tolkien's accounts of the effects of noble women on men follow a similar pattern.

Is this idea of 'enchantment' sexual? Edwin Muir had noted

the absence of sexuality in a review, and complained that the characters were all pre-pubescent boys who knew nothing about women. Tolkien snorted: 'Blast Edwin Muir and his delayed adolescence. He is old enough to know better' (*Letters*, p. 229-30).³ He told his son that there were three types of male-female relations. The first was purely sexual which was a grave sin, and the second was simple friendliness. In the third a man can be a lover, 'engaging and blending all his affections and powers of mind and body in a complex emotion powerfully coloured and energized by "sex"'. In its highest form this love was also religious. Romantic chivalric love would identify the object of love as a 'guiding star or divinity – of the old fashioned "his divinity" = the woman he loves – the object or reason of noble conduct.' The danger of this way of thinking was that it turned women who were also fallen into divinities. But when harmonized with religion it could produce the 'highest ideal of love between man and woman.' It was this same ideal which inspired devotion to the Virgin Mary; it was conducted in the same language and with the same emotion (*Letters*, p. 48-9). In other words ideal love between men and women was homologous to the love between man and the Virgin Mary. The 'enchantment' felt by male characters in Middle-earth is therefore a mythologised version of the highest form of love. It is religious and yet also contains what we would call sex, although in a non-corrupt form.

This is clearly evident in Galadriel. Many readers saw her as a symbolic Virgin Mary. She was the highest and noblest elf left in Middle-earth and the invocation of her very name inspired many characters in their darkest hours. Tolkien told Father Robert Murray that in his account of her he used 'all my own small perception of beauty both in majesty and simplicity', which was itself founded on the Virgin Mary (*Letters*, p. 172).⁴ Galadriel was both an object of religious devotion and of human love. To some characters this attraction makes her a suspicious character. Éomer thought that 'Few escape her nets, they say ... [perhaps] you also are net-weavers and sorcerers, maybe' (*TT*, III, ii). Wormtongue called her the 'Sorceress of the Golden Wood ... webs of deceit were ever woven in Dwimordene' (*TT*, III, vi). This language suggests that Galadriel was thought to use her sexual allure to capture men for her own purpose. One thinks of a black widow spider. But we know that her 'enchantment' is benevolent. It fuses religion and love. The crucial moment for the company is when Galadriel tests them: '[S]he held them with her eyes, and in silence looked searchingly at each of them in turn. None save Legolas and Aragorn could long endure her glance. Sam quickly blushed and hung his head' (*FR*, II, vii). This is a moment when the divine penetrates the human soul, and only those characters closest to the divine (i.e. Legolas and Aragorn) can bear it for long. But it is significant that this moment is conducted by a female character; it is hard to imagine Tolkien using a male character in this way. It is therefore a gendered moment. Galadriel's physical and mystical beauty are fused together so that the male characters' response is at once divine and emotional. Afterwards the company were reluctant to say much about their experiences, as if they were private moments between

lovers. This is suggested by Sam's blushing, and his feeling 'as if I hadn't got nothing on' (*FR*, II, vii). Galadriel knows that she has the power to make men desire her. In her fantasy of taking the One Ring she focuses on herself as an object of adoration: 'And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible ... All shall love me and despair!' 'She stood before Frodo seeming now tall beyond measurement, and beautiful beyond enduring, terrible and worshipful' (*FR*, II, vii). In other words she would use her power to be universally loved and desired, suggesting that there is a sexual component to how characters responded to her.

Galadriel has a transforming effect on the characters. Faramir says that men who pass through Lorien should 'look for strange things to follow ... few of old came thence unchanged' (*TT*, IV, v). This was true of Gimli whose first encounter with Galadriel affected him dramatically, causing him to place his love for her above jewels and gold. He asks for a strand of her hair, which was a traditional gift between lovers and will 'call nothing fair, unless it be her gift' (*FR*, II, viii). He feels wounded at their parting. 'Memory is not what the heart desires', he lamented, again showing that religious transfiguration and human love were blended in his response (*FR*, II, viii). Sam told Faramir that he also was changed by the experience. 'Beautiful she is, sir! Lovely! ... Hard as di'monds, soft as moonlight. Warm as sunlight, cold as frost in the stars ... [Y]ou could call her perilous, because she's so strong in herself' (*TT*, IV, v). This description uses images of natural beauty to suggest the profundity and emotion of Sam's experience. In a rejected draft Faramir tells Sam that it sounds like he has been 'enchanted' (*War*, p. 163). Sam agrees that he has. It seems that Tolkien used Galadriel to convey the idea that the highest form of love is at once an experience of the divine but also of purified human desire.

The female counterweight to Galadriel is Shelob. In this 'female' character we see the corruption of all that was perfect in Galadriel. The darkness that Shelob represents is the antithesis of Galadriel's light. It is not merely the absence of light but its negation: it 'brought blindness not only to the eyes but to the mind, so that even the memory of colours and of forms and of any light faded out of thought. Night always had been, and always would be, and night was all' (*TT*, IV, ix). Only the radiance of Galadriel's star glass affects the monster, again drawing a contrast between the two females (*TT*, IV, ix). Just as Galadriel imagined being worshipped if she took the Ring and became evil, so Gollum actually 'bowed down and worshipped [Shelob]' (*TT*, IV, ix). Shelob is the lowest form of lust. On a number of occasions she is referred to simply as 'She', drawing attention solely to her gender (*TT*, IV, ix). As the hobbits try to escape they find a 'vast web', a 'great grey net' in their way. This recalls the images used to describe Galadriel by those suspicious of her. Applied to Shelob they are true; for the hobbits are trapped in the power of the monstrous 'female'. She is 'bloated' and 'fat' on hate and depravity. This takes a strongly sexualised form: 'Far and wide her lesser broods, bastards of the miserable mates, her own offspring, that she slew, spread from glen to glen' (*TT*, IV, ix). Her crimes are abominable and include incest, illegitimacy and infanticide, all crimes

pertaining to sex. Her lust was to consume the world. In his letter to his son, Tolkien insisted that women's indulgence in sex alone was brutally depraving because it was alien to their nature. Some 'are actually so depraved as to enjoy "conquests", or enjoy even the giving of pain – but these are abnormalities' (*Letters*, p. 50). Shelob represents these thoughts taken to their limit, a female sexuality run rampant. Her attack on Frodo is a grim perversion of the sex-act, for he lay bound, face upward as she straddled over him. Even her 'punishment' has sexual resonances. Sam ran 'inside the arches of her legs'. 'Her vast belly was above him with its putrid light, and the stench of it almost smote him down.' This is an instance of what Natalie Zernon Davis has called 'women on top', a reversal of sexual norms, a disruption of the natural order. Following this idea it is Shelob that lowers herself onto Sam's raised sword. 'Now splaying her legs she drove her huge bulk down on him' and 'thrust herself upon a bitter spike' (*TT*, IV, x). The depraved scene ends with an invocation of Galadriel and a hymn to Elbereth, showing that love and light have conquered sex and darkness.

I want now to turn to the triangle of Arwen, Aragorn and Éowyn. The tale of Aragorn and Arwen is a replay of Beren and Lúthien. In both cases the women must make a sacrifice to be with their inferior men. But although Arwen is meant to be a Lúthien of the Third Age, her story is a dilution of the original. Lúthien defied her father to rescue Beren, and together they journeyed to Angband to take a silmaril from Morgoth's crown. Arwen does nothing and is no part of Aragorn's struggle.⁵ It is his task to claim his inheritance alone before he can be with her. Part of the explanation is that Arwen did not exist for most of the writing of *Lord of the Rings*. She was invented simply to fulfil the logic of the narrative. A story about the return of a line of kings can hardly end with an unmarried monarch. Arwen was invented to solve this problem, but it was only decided she would marry Aragorn during the writing of 'The Field of Cormallen' (*Sauron*, p. 52; *War*, p. 386, 425). If one wonders why she seems such a shadowy character in the book, it is simply because she did not exist until it was virtually finished.

Éowyn was invented long before Arwen appeared. Her character is complex because of the way that it evolved. Not long after she appears in the drafts it is suggested that she and Aragorn will fall in love (*Treason*, p. 390, 437). Their first meeting is described thus: 'Her face was filled with gentle pity, and her eyes shone with unshed tears. So Aragorn saw her for the first time in the light of day, and after she was gone he stood still, looking at the dark doors and taking little heed of other things' (*Treason*, p. 445). He is transfixed by her, and there is no suggestion that she is either a troubled or a stern woman at this point. In one scene (which was later rewritten to give a different impression) burgeoning love is suggested by physical contact. As Éowyn serves wine to Aragorn, their eyes meet and their fingers touch. At this point Tolkien thought the two characters would marry. But then he changed his mind, for 'Aragorn is too old and lordly and grim.' Evidently he thought Aragorn required someone on his elevated level rather than an (essentially) ordinary woman. Only once the marriage idea

was abandoned does Éowyn's character change: 'Make Éowyn ... a stern amazon woman. ... Probably [she] should die to avenge or save Theoden' (*Treason*, p. 447-8).⁶ Only two roles are conceivable for Éowyn in the narrative: marriage or death. Having rejected the marriage option, Tolkien toyed with the warrior-woman idea, thinking that Éowyn might go openly to battle, and that there was a precedent for this in the history of Rohan (*War*, p. 243). However when he returned to the story two years later he had made some decisions. Éowyn's love for Aragorn would remain, but she would be refused even when she begged him to stay or take her with him (*War*, p. 406, 418). Tolkien also decided that she would go to war in defiance of her king, and disguised as a man, both of which emphasise her transgressions. This adds complexity to Éowyn and is supposed to highlight her despair. But it was still proposed that she die in battle destroying the Witch King. Once this was changed the overall shape of Éowyn was in place (*War*, p. 369).

In the final published version Éowyn is introduced as 'stern as steel'. Aragorn thought her 'fair and cold, like a morning of pale spring that is not yet come to womanhood' (*TT*, III, vi). This suggests that she is troubled; her coldness is meant to indicate that something is wrong. The reference to her youth signals that she is too young for Aragorn. It also suggests that her attraction to him could be seen as a 'crush' rather than genuine love. Aragorn becomes aware of her attraction when she offers him the cup of wine. As he takes it he notices that her hand was trembling: 'his face now was troubled and he did not smile' (*TT*, III, vi). When the host leaves Éowyn is dressed in mail and has a sword in front of her and she effectively confesses her love for Aragorn (*TT*, III, vi). The reader is meant to notice that her feelings for Aragorn and her amazonian qualities are connected. When Aragorn returns to Dunharrow, Éowyn's eyes shine when she hears of the slaughter at Helm's Deep, suggesting that her natural womanly role has been disturbed. Her discussion with Aragorn centres on her desire to be a warrior, 'a shieldmaiden and not a dry-nurse?' Her ancestry, she argues, entitles her to fight, and she does not want to be a homemaker. 'Shall I always be left behind when the Riders depart, to mind the house while they win renown, and find food and beds when they return' (*RK*, V, ii). These were the issues raised by early twentieth century feminists. For Tolkien, Éowyn wants to leave her feminine role and take on a male role. She tells Aragorn, 'All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house.' She feared only 'to stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire' (*RK*, V, ii). Although Éowyn is articulating ideas in which women take on different roles, the reader is meant to feel pity for her, and think with Aragorn that her desires must be the product of a deeply troubled and unhappy mind.

Aragorn's rejection only encourages Éowyn's desire to be a warrior. She wants to achieve glory, but this is forbidden to her as a woman. Therefore she has to become a 'man' and overturn the natural gender roles. Tolkien does not present Éowyn as a liberated woman, but as someone both proud and unhappy. Dernhelm had the 'face of one without hope who goes in search of death' (*RK*, V, iii). At the battle of Pelennor

Fields she almost finds it in fulfilling the prophecy that no man may hinder the Witch King. It is interesting that her transformation from Dernhelm into Éowyn is presented as a celebration of the return of femininity: her hair was 'released from its bonds, gleamed with pale gold upon her shoulders' (*RK*, V, vi). Although initially Éowyn was to die for her gender transgressions, Tolkien had decided that her restoration would be a central component of the story. Aragorn, Éomer, and Gandalf discuss the origins of her despair. Aragorn believed that her unhappiness was present before he met her, but Éomer disagrees. Gandalf, however, has the answer. Mentally Éowyn possessed the courage of her brother, and she came to resent her role waiting upon an aged king. Although this was her duty it did not seem worthy of her. This view was encouraged by Saruman through Wormtongue, who made her feel dissatisfied with her role: 'all her life seemed shrinking ... a hutch to trammel some wild thing in' (*RK*, V, viii). Given that Saruman is presented in *Lord of the Rings* as a twentieth century progressive, it is fascinating that he is ultimately behind Éowyn's feminism. With this Tolkien clearly stresses that he does not support the feminism espoused by Éowyn. We are told that she will die unless her despair is healed (*RK*, V, viii). Her realisation of her real love for Faramir leads her to embrace her long-forgotten womanly role. She sees in him both a great warrior and also tenderness, and this causes her to doubt her own stern coldness. 'Something in her softened, as though a bitter frost were yielding at the first faint passage of Spring.' The image of thawing represents a return to the feminine. She sheds a tear, and 'her voice was now that of a maiden young and sad' (*RK*, VI, v). Slowly she realises that she truly loves Faramir, and she begins fully to return to her true nature as a woman. Faramir tells her that she loved Aragorn because she wanted renown and glory, and 'to be lifted far above the mean things that crawl on the earth'. Faramir then confesses his love for her and the thawing process is now complete: 'her winter passed, and the sun shone on her.' 'I will be a shieldmaiden no longer, nor vie with great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren. ... No longer do I desire to be a queen' (*RK*, VI, v). The references to healing and growing show that she has embraced the womanly role assigned for her, and that love and marriage are her destiny. The unnatural feminism which caused her pain and despair has been cured.

It should now be evident how Tolkien mythologised his own views about the place of women in the world. The true love between man and woman was a beautiful and divine ideal, but it did not mean that women should occupy the same roles as men. It is therefore ironic that Éowyn is the most developed female character, for it is her very deviation from her natural role that makes her interesting. The ideal for women was essentially private; marriage and family. It is well known that Tolkien and Lewis were great defenders of a strong separation between the worlds of men and women. Women were fundamentally different from men (*Letters*, p. 49). Lewis believed, for instance, that women were generally incapable of logic and art (one wonders if he changed his mind when

the philosopher and Christian Elizabeth Anscombe destroyed the theological arguments of his *Miracles* with the ideas of Wittgenstein) (Wilson, p. 210-214). Nor were they capable of close friendship, and so it was important that friendship between men excluded women. In part this reflects Tolkien's all-male life at school and at university, and his long interest in clubability, so evident in the *Inklings*. This was a source of difficulty with his wife, but he thought it important: 'if worth a fight: just insist. Such matters may frequently arise – the glass of beer, the pipe, the non writing of letters, the other friend, etc etc' (Carpenter, *Tolkien*, p. 159). Tolkien and Lewis believed that male friendship was essential, and this is much in evidence in *Lord of the Rings*.

The history of male friendship is complex and it inevitably raises the question of homosexuality. Close friendship between men was common among all classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, if only because women were excluded from so many public activities. From the scouts to the public school, from the training club to the pub, these worlds were generally men only. They allowed men to form close personal relationships which otherwise would not be possible. But initially there was no suggestion that male friendship had anything to do with homosexual attachment. Indeed between the Wilde trials and the Second World War, discussion of homosexuality was usually confined to medical and literary circles. Tolkien claimed that at nineteen he had not even heard of the word (Carpenter, *Tolkien*, p. 3). However as the discourse of homosexuality shifted from 'sinful actions' to 'types of person', a growing suspicion was cast on exclusive male friendship. It was increasingly thought of as leading to homosexuality. Lewis was a leading advocate of male friendship and it is interesting that as he grew older he increasingly felt it necessary to distinguish it from homosexuality. In the *Allegory of Love* he had argued that the deepest worldly emotions in the medieval period were between warrior and warrior. These were, to him, in no sense homosexual. *The Four Loves* from 1960 makes this clear. 'All those hairy toughs of centurions, clinging to one another and begging for last kisses when the Legion was broken up ... all pansies? If you can believe that you can believe anything' (Wilson, p. 274). Because Lewis insists on presenting homosexuality as weak and effeminate, he is able to distinguish it from the manly love and affection of the warriors. But this distinction collapses if we dismiss his crude typology. If we go further and abandon the idea that male homosexuality is a categorically different form of human behaviour which must manifest itself in specific ways, we can argue that what is called homosexual desire can be a part of male friendship. In effect I want to collapse the distinction Lewis was so keen to maintain.

Male friendship was an important mode of expression for men who felt themselves attracted to other men. Homoerotic poetry of the late nineteenth century celebrated friendship between men as the highest form of love. As Paul Fussell has shown, it influenced the poetry of the First World War. Representations of the tenderness of youth, or bathing soldiers were common during the war, and derived from this poetic

tradition. This does not mean that all soldiers who bathed, or all people who wrote poetry describing soldiers bathing were homosexual, but rather that the boundaries between male friendship and homosexuality were somewhat fluid (see Fussell). Another example of this can be seen in Anglo-Catholicism. It placed great stress on male brotherhood, even setting up quasi monastic institutions, and consequently appealed to homosexual men. Although it was generally accepted that there was no sanction for sex-acts outside marriage, it was nevertheless possible to celebrate strong and emotional attachments to other men. Kenneth Ingram was an Anglo-Catholic who argued that homosexuality was 'a romantic cult rather than a physical vice', although by the 1940s he had decided that sexual acts between men were acceptable as long as both parties were truly in love. He believed that 'pure love, especially so intense a love as the homogenic attachment, is not profane but divine' (Hilliard, p. 204). It appears, then, that intense male friendship provided a language through which homosexual men experienced and explained their feelings, even to the extent of elevating them to a divine status. Lewis's rigid separation between male friendship and homosexual feeling simply cannot historically be maintained. (As a footnote, it is worth noticing that W. H. Auden who was an admirer and defender of *Lord of the Rings*, was also homosexual and an Anglo-Catholic.)

It is unlikely that Tolkien was aware of this side of male friendship. However he believed in the importance of the companionship of men, and it is possible that his experience of serving at the front in the First World War strengthened this. Recent work by Joanna Bourke has stressed that men expected to form close attachments during war, and often felt that they were fighting it for their comrades. They were in an all-male environment that necessitated taking on roles usually associated with the 'feminine', from cooking and sewing to nursing each other. Indeed some soldiers went as far as suggesting that women disrupted this natural male intimacy. Bourke writes: 'A world of men was opening up, revealing a wide range of roles played by males and exposing the fluidity between masculinity and femininity' (Bourke, p. 136). Tolkien certainly found the company of N.C.O.s and privates more agreeable than that of stiff older officers, and later commented that he believed them 'so far superior to myself' (Carpenter, *Tolkien*, p. 89). The character of Sam was partly modelled on such soldiers and officers' servants. In a sense *Lord of the Rings* depicts the male companionship that was made possible during the war. The absence of women means that men have to take their functions. Bourke has argued that in pre-war scouting stories the men and the boys function in all the roles of parent, child and lover, leaving no role for women. The same is evident in *Lord of the Rings*: men take roles that would normally be assigned to women. Domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning are performed, for example, by Sam who sheds tears at having to cast his pans away near Mount Doom (*RK*, VI, iii). But Fatty Bolger and Merry also take the domestic roles at Crickhollow, from running the baths to preparing supper (*FR*, I, v). These tasks would normally have been performed by women. The result is that the definition

of masculinity is necessarily shifted because of the absence of women.

This is also evident on a deeper level. In a sense the book is a grand coming-of-age story. The early chapters stress the innocence of the hobbits. They are either children set free from their parents, or young adults released from their families or lovers. All their emotional energies are directed inwards. Sam gives no sign that he is missing Rosie. This is simply because she had not been invented when the early chapters were written. The lush descriptions of the landscape create a sense of pastoral innocence, a happiness in each other's company. The exuberance of bathing at Crickhollow is one example. Another occurs after their release from the barrow-wight when they run naked on the grass and lie in the sunlight 'with the delight of those who have been wafted suddenly from bitter winter to a friendly clime' (*FR*, I, viii). These moments of closeness are possible because of the absence of both mothers and lovers; they are moments of male bonding. When the Fellowship sets out from Rivendell, a new all-male family structure is created. Gandalf and Aragorn are the parent figures. They are the guides through the quest of life and they offer knowledge and comfort. Gandalf scolds and punishes Pippin in Moria, but later softens his approach and tells him to 'have a sleep, my lad' (*FR*, II, iv). Aragorn treats Frodo's wounds by Mirromere like any concerned parent. The hobbits are the children of this family. But like any family it is doomed to break up. The 'Breaking of the Fellowship' is caused by the treachery of Boromir, who functions as a duplicitous uncle (a common theme in literature). Aragorn as the parental figure elects to follow Merry and Pippin, and the rest of that part of the story is in part an account of their growing from childhood into manhood. Meanwhile Frodo and Sam are the lovers who leave the family, and the trajectory of their tale is a story of love in the face of adversity rather than of rites of passage.

Before turning to that love story, I want to consider the way Bilbo and Frodo are presented as exceptional hobbits in the Shire. I have stressed above that Tolkien was somewhat critical of the narrow-mindedness and parochialism of the Shire. The hobbits he was interested in transcend this. In 1963 he wrote that, 'We only meet exceptional hobbits in close companionship – those who had a grace or gift: a vision of beauty, and a reverence for things nobler than themselves, at war with their rustic self-satisfaction. Imagine Sam without his education by Bilbo and his fascination with things Elvish! Not difficult. The Cotton family and the Gaffer, when the "Travellers" return are a sufficient glimpse' (*Letters*, p. 329). The four hobbits, and in particular Frodo, are transformed by their experience of nobility and beauty beyond the Shire. In this sense they are superior to and different from ordinary Shire hobbits. It is significant that Sam, Merry and Pippin all become community leaders upon their return. But Frodo does not: 'Though I may come to the Shire, it will not be the same, for I shall not be the same' (*Letters*, p. 328). His transformation is so extreme that he cannot settle back into Shire life. The nobility of Frodo has been noticed by Charlotte Spivack, who suggests it is strongly feminine, and that although *Lord*



of the *Rings* lacks female characters, it ‘exhibits decidedly “feminine” themes’ (Spivack, p. 7). Frodo, she argues, rejects the traditional masculine values of power and technology and therefore undermines patriarchal society. He is a ‘feminine’ hero. This is a valuable point, particularly when considered alongside how he and Bilbo are perceived by ordinary Shire hobbits. What Spivak sees as ‘feminine’ Shire hobbits see as ‘queer’, a term that recurs repeatedly in the early part of the book. Bilbo and Frodo’s interest in tales and elves is viewed suspiciously, and the Gaffer worries that his son Sam is spending too much time hearing of such strange things. Sandyman agrees, and says that ‘Bag End’s a queer place, and its folk are queerer’ (*FR*, I, i). Almost certainly Tolkien was using this word simply to mean something that was odd and best avoided. However it did mean ‘homosexual’ at the time. (For instance, in T.H. White’s *The Witch in the Wood*, Queen Morgause decides that a character is ‘queer’ because she fails to arouse his interest.) Tolkien’s use of ‘queer’ in relation to Frodo and Bilbo draws attention to their unusual ‘feminine’ values. It is also interesting that Tolkien decided that these values were incompatible with marriage for the hobbits. Neither has a wife. A very early draft had Bilbo running away to get married, but (inevitably, Christopher Tolkien thought) this was soon abandoned (*Shadow*, p. 14). In *Unfinished Tales*, Gandalf explained why he chose Bilbo for the quest to Erebor. ‘[H]e had never married. He was already growing a bit queer, they said, and went off for days by himself’ (*UT*, p. 323). Or in another version: ‘[H]e had never married. I thought that odd ... I guessed he wanted to remain “unattached” for some reason deep down which he did not understand himself – or would not acknowledge for it alarmed him’ (*UT*, p. 331). For Tolkien this ‘queerness’ derives from a desire to experience nobler and deeper things beyond the Shire, an essentially religious desire. But it is significant that to fulfil these ‘feminine’ desires Bilbo and Frodo cannot marry, which confirms their ‘queerness’. Thus although Tolkien is not suggesting that the hobbits are homosexual, it is interesting that their desire for greater things is structured in the same way as a male desire for another male. Both are rejected as ‘queer’ by narrowminded locals.

The relationship between Frodo and Sam is the emotional centre of the book, because their love is spiritual. After publication Tolkien tried to present this relationship primarily in terms of master and servant. He spoke of Sam’s ‘service and loyalty to his master’ and of the ‘devotion of those who perform such service’ (*Letters*, p. 329). But this hardly captures the depth of their relationship. There are two basic reasons for Sam’s desire to follow Frodo. The first is his interest in something nobler, expressed in his desire to see elves: ‘Elves, sir! I would dearly love to see them.’ Sam craves some sort of religious experience. The second reason is Frodo himself. He cannot contain himself when he hears Frodo is to leave: ‘And that’s why I choked: which you heard seemingly. I tried not to, sir, but it burst out of me: I was so upset’ (*FR*, I, ii). He bursts into tears of happiness when told he can go. His desire to see elves is fulfilled early on, but he does not wish to turn back: ‘I don’t know how to say it, but after last night I feel different. I seem to see ahead, in a kind of way. ... I know I can’t turn back.

It isn’t to see Elves now, nor dragons, nor mountains, that I want – I don’t rightly know what I want: but I have something to do before the end, and it lies ahead, not in the Shire’ (*FR*, I, iii). Sam’s quest is bound up with Frodo’s. Indeed his task is to love Frodo absolutely, through thick and thin, for only through this can the quest be accomplished. His devotion to Frodo is expressed in quite physical terms. When Frodo talks with Gildor, he ‘refused to leave his master ... he came and sat curled up at Frodo’s feet’ (*FR*, I, iii). On Weathertop he sheds tears of concern for Frodo. When his master wakes in Rivendell, ‘he ran to Frodo and took his left hand, awkwardly and shyly. He stroked it gently and then he blushed and turned hastily away’ (*FR*, II, i). That this is a moment of physical intimacy is reinforced by Sam’s embarrassment at it. The real bond between the two is developed after the breaking of the Fellowship. Sam is deeply upset that Frodo tries to leave without him. He feels it as a moment of rejection, and brushes tears away at the thought. He tells Frodo, ‘That’s hard, trying to go off without me ... All alone and without me to help you? I couldn’t aborne it, it’d have been the death of me.’ Frodo tells him it will be his death if he does come. ‘Not as certain as being left behind’, Sam replies (*FR*, II, x). He is indifferent to the prospect of death, and his only concern is being with Frodo.

The appearance of Gollum complicates Frodo and Sam’s relationship. Whereas Frodo is able to pity Gollum, Sam cannot. Tolkien thought that this inability to perceive ‘damaged good in the corrupt’ was a major failing. He put this down to Sam’s ‘pride and possessiveness’ of his master (*Letters*, p. 329). In other words Sam’s exclusive love and fierce protectiveness of Frodo leads him to view Gollum as a threat. Essentially he is jealous. This is evident in the fact that Frodo and Gollum have a mental connection with each other through being ring-bearers. Sam is excluded from this. During the taming he notices that Frodo appeared as ‘a mighty lord’ and Gollum as ‘a little whining dog.’ Yet the two were in some ways akin and not alien: they could reach one another’s minds’ (*TT*, IV, i). Sam was always on the lookout for the worst in Gollum, and hoped to get rid of him. He thought Frodo’s pity for the creature was just a case of blindness caused by kindness, and could not therefore see that this pity was essential to Frodo’s nobility of character, the very thing which Sam loved in him. For instance when Frodo is asleep in Ithilien, Sam noticed ‘a light seemed to be shining faintly within; but now the light was even clearer and stronger. Frodo’s face was peaceful.’ Sam says to himself on seeing this, ‘I love him. He’s like that, and sometimes it shines through, somehow. But I love him whether or no’ (*TT*, IV, iv). Sam loves Frodo’s pity, charity and humanity, but cannot see that these are the reasons why Frodo treats Gollum as he does. This failure leads, for Tolkien, to the ‘most tragic moment’ in the story (*Letters*, p. 330). When Gollum returns down the Cirith Ungol stairs he sees the hobbits together.

And so Gollum found them hours later, when he returned, crawling and creeping down the path out of the gloom ahead. Sam sat propped against the stone, his head drooping sideways

and his breathing heavy. In his lap lay Frodo's head, drowned deep in sleep; upon his white forehead lay one of Sam's brown hands, and the other lay softly upon his master's breast. Peace was in both their faces. (*TT*, IV, viii)

It is this vision of love between the two hobbits that could have caused Gollum's repentance. The gleam faded from his eyes, and he began to look like the sad old hobbit he really was. '[A]nd slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee – but almost the touch was a caress' (*TT*, IV, viii). Love has the power to redeem even Gollum. But Sam awakes and his possessiveness and his jealousy prevent him from seeing what is really happening; he merely sees Gollum 'pawing at master'. The repentance is ruined by Sam, ironically because of his love for Frodo, the very thing which was about to transform Gollum. From that point onwards there is no hope of repentance, and as Tolkien said, 'all Frodo's pity is (in a sense) wasted' (*Letters*, p. 330).

Shelob's Lair could have been avoided but for Sam, and so Frodo's seeming death and capture is effectively a punishment for Sam's lack of pity. He is reduced to despair and loss at the thought of Frodo's death: 'night came into his heart' (*TT*, IV, x). It is his love (and common sense) which prevents him believing the warrior fantasies the Ring confers upon him. By risking himself to rescue his master he atones for his words on the stairs: 'His love for Frodo rose above all other thoughts, and forgetting his peril he cried aloud: "I'm coming, Mr. Frodo"' (*RK*, VI, i). The reunion is made poignant by the state to which Frodo has been reduced. He lies naked in a heap of rags emphasising his utter vulnerability. Frodo lies back in 'Sam's gentle arms, closing his eyes. ... Sam felt he could sit like that in endless happiness; but it was not allowed' (*RK*, VI, i). This image of exposed, naked bliss makes Sam and Frodo supremely happy, but their danger ensures that it cannot last. Their love is made more moving because when the question of the Ring is raised it seems to sunder them. The Ring's effects are selfish, and destructive of love. 'Sam had changed before [Frodo's] very eyes into an orc again, leering and pawing at his treasure, a foul little creature with greedy eyes and slobbering mouth. But now the vision had passed. There was Sam kneeling before him, his face wrung with pain, as if he had been stabbed in the heart; tears welled from his eyes' (*RK*, IV, i). Perhaps more strongly here than anywhere else we feel the evil effects of the Ring. The final stages of the journey see the two hobbits drawn closer together, as the task becomes more difficult for Frodo. Finally Sam carries him. This final part of the story is deeply religious; it is about the ideal of love struggling against enormous odds, with only a slim glimmer of hope, and yet conquering. The intimacy and love between Frodo and Sam is the moral and emotional heart of the story which is capable of saving the world from evil, and of regenerating Gollum's own evil.

Wrapping up the story required a return to 'normality'. But at the same time Tolkien did not want to abandon the love story between Frodo and Sam. It was too affecting and elevating to be denied. In the earliest projections of the end of the story, before Rosie and Sam's marriage was conceived, it

was thought that 'Sam and Frodo [would] go into a green land by the Sea' (*Treason*, p. 212). (At the end of Forster's *Maurice* the two male characters retreat from society together and go into the woods). In other words neither would return 'home' to the Shire but would go somewhere together and alone. This cuts against what Tolkien said in 1951: 'I think the simple "rustic" love of Sam and his Rosie (nowhere elaborated) is *absolutely essential* to the study of his ... character' (*Letters*, p. 161). Given that Rosie did not exist for most of the writing of Sam's character this sounds like a retrospective assessment. Nevertheless in the final version it was decided that Sam would return to 'normal' life and Frodo would not. This created a dilemma for Sam. When Frodo asks him to move in, he says that 'I feel torn in two, as you might say' (*RK*, VI, ix). This is also evident in final passages of the book. Frodo's decision to leave Middle-earth moves Sam to tears at the thought of losing him. In a letter from 1951 Tolkien described the dilemma of Sam: He 'has to choose between love of master and of wife.' Interestingly Tolkien says that Sam's last words were 'Well, I've come back.' Christopher Tolkien comments that no draft of the Grey Havens gave that particular reading, which is quite different from 'Well, I'm back' (*Sauron*, p. 131-2). Whether or not this was merely a mental slip on Tolkien's part, it cannot but help reinforce the impression that Sam had to make a choice, even if the narrative could hardly end with Rosie and her child being abandoned. But as we know from the Tale of Years, ultimately Sam does not have to make a choice between his loves. Rosie dies before Sam, and as his family obligations are now dissolved he too passes into the west. Thus at the very end Sam and Frodo are together again, 'in a green land by the Sea.'

Tolkien's own views of men and women and of love and sex are inscribed on every page of *Lord of the Rings*. Of course he used the whole range of 'northern' mythology available to him in crafting his book, and yet the meanings he gave to this material can only be understood by looking at the culture he inhabited. There is no doubt that *Lord of the Rings* is a religious work. More than that it is a Christian (and Roman Catholic) work. This lends it both its conservative and radical qualities. On the one hand it lacks female characters and views them in traditionally domestic terms. On the other it embraces a politics of anti-power and anti-technology which have been viewed as deeply feminine. It is a book about the heroic exploits of a world of men, and yet it challenges that very notion of masculinity. Ultimately it is a book about the religious ideal of love. We see this between Aragorn and Arwen, between Faramir and Éowyn, and we see it in Galadriel. But most of all we see it between Frodo and Sam. Their quest is held together by their love and it is an irony (though probably one Tolkien would deny) that the love which conquers all is the love which dare not speak its name.

Notes

- 1 This article is a reprint. It originally appeared in *Mallorn* 38 in 2001. The only revisions to the article are updates to conventions and abbreviations to align it with the rest of this issue.
- 2 Nevertheless Goldberry is still assigned various domestic chores.
- 3 See also Carpenter, *Tolkien*, p. 226-7.

- 4 For Tolkien's difficulties with this identification see *Letters*, p.407. See also, *UT*, p. 230-2.
- 5 It could therefore be argued that the conjectured expansion of Arwen's role in the forthcoming Peter Jackson film has precedents in the tale of Lúthien, and is not out-of-keeping with the spirit of Tolkien's works.
- 6 After this decision Tolkien considered making Aragorn love Éowyn, and never to marry after her death.

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Celebrating 'Queer Lodgings'

ROBIN ANNE REID

When Luke emailed me that he had permission to reprint David Craig's 'Queer Lodgings' in *Mallorn*, I immediately asked if I could write an introductory note. The essay is a personal favourite of mine (meaning one I re-read regularly for the sheer pleasure of the experience), but it is also important as the first published essay on gender *and* sexuality in Tolkien studies. Michael Drout and Hilary Wynne, in their 2000 bibliographic essay on Tolkien scholarship from 1982-2000, argue that Craig's essay is:

The first sensible discussion of sexuality in Tolkien's work. Craig compares ideals of male friendship in medieval texts, in World War I contexts and in Tolkien's fiction, arguing that Tolkien is able to avoid associations of his characters with homosexuality by making it 'unimaginable' in his secondary-world. (p. 121)

Drout and Wynne cover a wide range of scholarship in their essay which is invaluable for anyone interested in bibliographic scholarship. However, the scope of the work they covered meant that most of the scholarship had to be summarised in a sentence or two. I think their description of Craig's essay in the quote above is reductive as well as misleading, so this note allows me the opportunity to point to some parts of the essay which I consider outstanding and that cannot be covered in a brief summary.

Craig's essay not only covers male friendship but also the 'representation and relationships of women and men', drawing on a key component of gender studies that theorises the complex and multiple meanings of masculinity and femininity as interdependent as well as being socially constructed (Craig, p. 11). I emphasise the importance of women in the essay because far too often work on gender or queerness in Tolkien focuses primarily or only on male characters. Craig notes that the 'exclusion of women from the narrative has important implications for the way men are presented' (p. 11).

As a feminist queer reader, I enjoy how Craig notes the imbalance between male and female characters, then goes on to spend a great deal of his essay on the female characters, including one of the best readings of Éowyn that exists. Craig explores the complexity of her story development and depth of characterisation as well as what Tolkien saw as her 'unnatural femininity' and highlights the irony in her being 'the most developed female character, for it is her very deviation from her natural role that makes her interesting' (p. 14). As someone who fell in love with Éowyn when I was ten, I have always seen her as queer in the sense that she challenges the norms of her culture, and I've explored other options for her in my fan fiction. But while I think more attention should be paid to what the essay argues about female characters, I want to talk about how I see Craig's exploration of the layers of male relationships in the novel as queer in ways that I don't think Drout and Wynne saw. One problem is that they, like many others, reduce the concept of queerness to 'homosexuality',

and *of course* there's no homosexuality in Tolkien.

Drout and Wynne say that Craig argues that Tolkien 'made "homosexuality" unimaginable in his secondary-world' (p. 121). Having just re-read the essay in order to write this note, I could not find the word 'unimaginable', and Drout and Wynne do not supply a citation for the single-word quote. I may have missed it, but I also think that they missed Craig's main argument.

He makes it clear that Tolkien did not intend his use of the word *queer* in the novel to mean homosexual although that meaning existed during Tolkien's lifetime, whether he knew it or not. Nor does Craig think that 'Tolkien [was] suggesting that the hobbits are homosexual' (Craig, p. 11, 16).

However, a significant percentage of Craig's essay is spent on emphasising the importance of the love between Frodo and Sam (as much more than that of master and servant): 'it is the emotional centre of the book because their love is spiritual' (p. 16). The discussion of Frodo and Sam as lovers is understood in the context of the homosocial structures of war, of male friendship in the 19th century, and in the concepts of Anglo-Catholic brotherhood, as well as in the homoerotic poetry of the period that 'celebrated friendship between men as the highest form of love' (Craig, p. 15). Craig quotes Lewis and Tolkien on male friendship, emphasising the crudity of Lewis' definition of classical/heroic male friendship and love as being distinct from 'pansies' (p. 15). Any time I assigned this essay in a class, I had to explain the homosocial/homoerotic/homosexual concepts. These days, if I weren't retired, I'd be explaining Christopher Vaccaro's concept of 'homo-amory' which is an extremely apt one for my purpose:

Unlike homo-sexuality or homo-eroticism, the term homo-amory is not yet anchored to and burdened by signification; it implies something different, a something in the overlapping of friendship and eros. This something is not already understood and known as 'sex' nor as 'friendship.' *Love may be the more precise term; yet 'homoamory' gives space for a reader to supply the dimensions of this love.* (p. 2, my emphasis)

There are two sentences in Craig's essay that emphasise the queerness that, intentional or not, some of us see in the legendarium even if most people overlook it. These sentences are one of the reasons that I characterise the essay as the first, and in some ways still one of the best, queer readings of Tolkien.

The first sentence is at the end of the first paragraph of the essay: Craig explains that his 'argument looks at both the conscious intentions of Tolkien, but also at some of the more unintentional meanings present in the text. *No author can fully control the ways in which a book is read, and meanings have a habit of slipping in through the back door*' (p. 11, emphasis mine). The noun phrase, the back door, has several meanings, but one, as *Green's Online Dictionary of Slang* makes clear, is

anal sex (whether between two men, or between a man and a woman), that is, sodomy.

The second queer sentence is the last one of the essay, summing up Frodo and Sam's love: 'Their quest is held together by their love and it is an irony (though probably one Tolkien would deny) that the love which conquers all is the love which dare not speak its name' (p. 18). This sentence embeds an allusion to a line in Lord Alfred Douglas' poem, 'Two Loves', and to Oscar Wilde's testimony at his trial for indecency and sodomy which emphasised the aesthetic, artistic, philosophical, and spiritual relationship between two men.

The complexity as well as ambiguities in Craig's essay mirror the complexity and ambiguities (and contradictions!) in Tolkien's work. I am thrilled that *Mallorn* is reprinting it because it should be more widely read – and cited – than it has been.

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Oxford, New York City, Paris: The Tolkien Exhibitions 2018-2020

MARCEL AUBRON-BÜLLES

When the Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford first published the press release regarding *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* on 17 March 2017, the news spread like wildfire among the Tolkien community. No major exhibition of Tolkien's works had happened since the 1992 Centenary Conference at Keeble College in Oxford. There were, of course, smaller ones, but none of them presented materials on the scale this press release promised:

For the first time since the 1950s, an unprecedented array of Tolkien materials from the UK and the USA will be reunited in Oxford and displayed together in this seminal exhibition. *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* will feature manuscripts, artwork, maps, letters and artefacts from the Bodleian's extensive Tolkien Archive, the Tolkien Collection at Marquette University in the USA and from private collections.¹

Imagine everyone's surprise when, on 14 December 2018, the Morgan Library & Museum offered a press release stating that the Oxford exhibition would have another leg to stand on, in New York City, to be precise:

This exhibition provides the largest collection of Tolkien material ever assembled in the United States. First presented at the Bodleian Libraries in 2018, the 117 objects on view include family photographs and memorabilia, Tolkien's original illustrations, maps, draft manuscripts, artefacts, and designs related to *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*. The exhibition guides visitors through Tolkien's development as a writer and artist, from his childhood and student days, through his career as a scholar of medieval languages and literature, to his family life as a husband and father. It presents a unique opportunity to understand the intensely visual imagination, the dedicated scholarship, and the aspects of daily life that shaped Tolkien's most treasured work.²

And not only that – in December 2018 news broke that the French National Library would host another major Tolkien exhibition. It is a rare occasion that your favourite author gets a proper exhibition, but when it became clear that we would get to see three exhibitions in major cities around the world we all knew we were in for something good.³

I am very happy to say that I belong to a small group of people who have seen all of these exhibitions, two of them in the opening week, and they have become some of my most cherished Middle-earth memories. When I was asked to do a comparison of these three exhibitions I talked to some fellow Tolkienists on how best to do this, and we all agreed that it would not be of any use to compare statistics.

Yes, the Paris exhibition was certainly the largest by far in terms of space, and yes, in Oxford they exhibited more items

than in New York City. However, these facts do not give you an idea of the individual achievements. If you are interested in seeing the items presented at Oxford and Paris to re-visit your experience, Jeremy Edmonds at his excellent website TolkienGuide.com has listed them all, including a map, thanks to the support of many enthusiastic helpers.

Let me put the most important fact first: In Oxford, New York City, and in Paris, the Tolkien exhibitions, *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* and *Tolkien: Voyage en Terre Du Milieu*, were the largest exhibitions ever hosted by the locations in question.

Fans all over the world could have told the organisers that this came as no surprise to any of us. J.R.R. Tolkien's life and works continue to inspire millions globally, and an exhibition promoting our favourite author was bound to be an overwhelming success.

When I was in New York City the Morgan had a 'free ticket Friday'. Up to about four hundred visitors who could not afford the regular ticket price could get in for free after the exhibition's regular hours. I went there and got a ticket, I think number 334, and I was one of the last to get one. The queue, starting on Madison Avenue, almost went up to Park Avenue, and we are talking about a Manhattan city block. This happened more or less for the full duration of the exhibition. I gave away my ticket to a very happy Tolkien fan as I had had the opportunity of seeing the exhibition several times.

The Morgan Library & Museum had to compete with one of the busiest museums and gallery locations in the world, and it still broke records. Curator John McQuillen and his team must have been mightily pleased.

The Paris exhibition had over 135,000 visitors from 22 October 2019 through 16 February 2020. Keep in mind that there were not only weeks of strikes in public transportation, but at the beginning of the exhibition there were too many visitors trying to get into the exhibition and the library's personnel went on strike, too. Almost a thousand visitors crowded in on opening night. Having been married to a charming French lady it gives me great pleasure to tell you that the French consider their writers to be the best – and having an Oxford don as the reason for the most successful exhibition ever at their national library did lead to quite a few raised eyebrows.

The exhibition space at the Weston Library in Oxford was quite small in comparison to Paris, but during its run from 1 June 2018 through 28 October 2018, it still managed to get over 138,000 visitors in. Richard Ovendon, Bodley's Librarian, told me on vernissage night that they had sold out two print runs of the hardback edition of the exhibition catalogue and were on the third run, an utterly unmatched feat. The catalogue would go on to be the most sold exhibition catalogue on Amazon for weeks.

The catalogues and other publications by curators Catherine

McIlwaine for Oxford and Vincent Ferré and Frédéric Manfrin for Paris bring together the best researchers in Tolkien studies and have become excellent introductory texts into Tolkien's life and works. These will certainly be used both in academia as well as with Tolkien fans in general. Chock-full with illustrations, including unpublished ones, they do not only deserve the moniker 'coffee table books', but also the recommendation by anyone who would love to suggest a great reading experience to people newly come to Middle-earth.

However, the exhibitions did not stop at publishing a catalogue only; the Bodleian Libraries' Shop became a mecca for collectors from all over the world in the opening week, and the National Library of France added its own set of publications available nowhere else. Mugs, towels, silk scarves and Lúthien Tinúviel's earrings certainly found many new owners.

I would have to mention a huge number of names in all of this because any exhibition on this scale needs dozens, if not hundreds of people to make them come true. They also start many years before the opening date, ranging from five to ten years from the idea of staging it to having it come to fruition. I cannot stress enough how much work goes into planning such a venture.

One of the most interesting and inspiring side effects to the exhibition was the accompanying programs including academic conferences and the line-up at all locations was most impressive. The first panel at Oxford on 5 June 2018, was titled *Mythopoeia: myth-creation and Middle-earth* and brought together Dame Marina Warner, Professor Verlyn Flieger and Dr Dimitra Fimi, hosted by Professor Carolyne Larrington. This is just to give you an idea of the level of quality provided during every exhibition's run. Priscilla Tolkien was also present, and she seemed very pleased with this exceptional panel.

At the Morgan Library & Museum the *Tolkien Weekend* was held on 16-17 March 2019, consisting of *Tolkien and Inspiration: A Multidisciplinary Symposium* on the Saturday, and the *New York Tolkien Conference* at Baruch College, organised by local Tolkienists Heren Istarion, which brought some of the best Tolkien researchers of the USA to New York City.

The French National Library held several programs with some of the best French Tolkienists, including a conference in cooperation with the *Musée de l'armée* on 24-25 January 2020. It was most impressive to see that despite the setbacks due to the strikes at the time the organisational team managed to host Adam Tolkien and Alan Lee at Paris, to name a few.

When I titled my thetolkienist.com blog post about *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* 'One exhibition to rule them all' I was well aware that these exhibitions were exceptional on many levels. Their success is most welcome, but every Tolkien fan should realise that we will not see the likes of them for many years to come. The efforts involved in organising exhibitions on this scale are so enormous that it might take decades. Moreover, the next few years will most likely change Tolkien fandom and research again with the Amazon series coming up, just as the film trilogy by Peter Jackson changed it all. We

might get other exhibitions, but probably not ones that are so focused on J.R.R. Tolkien's artistic side and creativity as these three exhibitions were.

The extent of his artistic skills such as calligraphy, drawing, and illustrating was unknown to most of the visitors. This should certainly be an impetus for all Tolkien societies, smials, specialist groups and beyond to increase their efforts in promoting interest in the life and works of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien, CBE, using his art as a steppingstone to inspire a new generation of fans.

It is true that we have several exceptional publications on Tolkien the artist, notably by Christina Scull and Wayne Hammond, with their *Art of the Hobbit, Art of The Lord of the Rings*, as well as *Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator*.⁴ But even though we do have these specialist works they have not reached wider fandom circles yet. I am hopeful the exhibitions will have led many to add a large number of books to their reading list.

And yes, it may not be that important that actress Brie Larson ('Captain Marvel') visited the exhibition, or that Thranduil himself (Lee Pace) showed up, but it made for quite some publicity. Just as much as having Jeff Bezos, the man behind Amazon, which is, of course, the company vying for the spot of the most influential corporation on this planet right now, visiting an exhibition on what he would probably consider a prime investment.

J.R.R. Tolkien has become more than 'just a teller of tales' and has been turned into a massive media franchise, guaranteeing billions of dollars of revenue in the years to come. These three exhibitions may have been the last time fans the world over could have an almost undiluted look at the author, the artist, the medievalist, the linguist, the family father, and Inkling. Whoever had the opportunity of seeing them should not underestimate the part they have played in the literary heritage; in fact, they may remain unique for ages to come.

The exhibitions: Short impressions

Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth, Oxford: Personal and precious
<https://tolkien.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>

Weston Library's ST Lee Gallery may not be as large an exhibition space as one could have wished for, but the team led by Catherine McIlwaine certainly made the best of it. Asking Luxmuralis, a projection art company, to provide the exhibition with 'background' sights and sounds was an excellent choice; dimmed lights for conservation reasons, dividing the exhibition into clear categories, and a cleverly designed ticket booking system guaranteed that every visitor had the impression of entering a shrine of peace and quiet with enough space and time to take it in. Unfortunately, one had to go there several times to process it all, but even a one-time visit left basically everyone with the impression of having learned more about J.R.R. Tolkien in an hour than you could have possibly imagined. Add the fact you were in Oxford and when leaving the library could seek out the places where he



worked, studied, or had a pint was a truly unique experience.

Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth, New York City: An explosion of colours

<https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/tolkien>

As head of the curatorial team at the Morgan Library & Museum, John McQuillen decided to do what was best for an exhibition set in this metropolis: it was full of light and vibrant colours, and they certainly had the best ‘hobbit menu’ at their museum café of all exhibitions. Massive blowups of some of Tolkien’s illustrations showed the large amount of visitors squeezing into the rather small exhibition space of the Engelhard Gallery (who had to pass through a hobbit hole to enter it) that they were in for quite a few surprises on an author they may have only known by *The Lord of the Rings*. Nota bene: The visitors to the *Tolkien Weekend* were given one of the earliest, possibly the first preview of *TOLKIEN*, the biopic, in the United States; an exceptional experience, indeed. 2019 certainly was a great year for the Professor.

Tolkien, voyage en Terre du Milieu, Paris: Putting Tolkien into context

<https://www.bnf.fr/en/agenda/tolkien-journey-middle-earth>

The French curatorial team headed by eminent Tolkien scholar Vincent Ferré and *Chef du service Histoire* of the

French National Library, Frédéric Manfrin, pulled out all the stops thanks to one of the largest cultural collections in the world. An exhibition space of a thousand square metres offered the opportunity to not only exhibit the many items directly taken from the Tolkien collections but also from the archives of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*: medieval publications, first editions from the *Golden Age* of book illustrations, weaponry, art and well beyond. Add to that some of the tapestries currently being created at the *Cité internationale de la tapisserie* in Aubusson presenting Tolkien’s own illustrations. ‘Overwhelmed’ does not even begin to explain how fans had to feel going through this museological miracle.

Notes

- 1 *Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford* [Online]. Major exhibition in 2018 to explore JRR Tolkien’s vast creative genius, 2017, [cited 30 August 2020]. Available from <<https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/news/2017/mar-17>>.
- 2 *The Morgan Library & Museum* [Online]. The Morgan Presents J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Adventurous Tales and Original Illustrations*, 2018, [cited 30 August 2020]. Available from <<https://www.themorgan.org/press/2018-2019/tolkien-exhibition>>.
- 3 *Bibliothèque nationale de France* [Online]. Tolkien, *Journey to Middle-earth*, 2019, [cited 30 August 2020]. Available from <<https://www.bnf.fr/en/agenda/tolkien-journey-middle-earth#bnf-press-release>>.
- 4 See Hammond, Wayne G, and Christina Scull, *The Art of the Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien (London: HarperCollins, 2015); J.R.R. Tolkien: *Artist & Illustrator* (London: HarperCollins, 2004); *The Art of the Hobbit* by J.R.R.

Tolkien in King's Heath

BOB BLACKHAM

I have just read Mick Henry's article in *Mallorn* 60, 'There and Back Again? Tolkien's Brief Visit to Sussex in 1904' which carries on from his article in *Amon Hen* 272, 'The Road to Hove'. It's good to see that another small piece of the jig-saw of Tolkien's early life has been fitted into place. But there does appear to be a problem with how the information from the 1901 census has been interpreted.

Henry's article states that John and Emily Suffield, parents of Emily Jane Suffield (and Mabel Tolkien) and Tolkien's grandparents were living at 7 Ashfield Road. In fact, it was 9 Ashfield Road. This is most likely just a typo. But the article goes on to claim that both Ashfield Road and the later home of Mabel, Ronald, and Hilary Tolkien at Westfield Road were in Kings Norton, Worcestershire. Well, Worcestershire is fine, but Kings Norton is incorrect.

The table below is a summary of the census information recorded for 86 Westfield Road, King's Heath in 1901. The headings in **Bold** are what information was to be recorded by the census taker (enumerator), and the information in *Italics* are what was recorded for 86 Westfield Road in 1901. The first thing to say is that the spelling for Tolkien has been incorrectly recorded by the enumerator as Tonkien.

When the census was started in the nineteenth century one of the units used to record the population for rural areas was the civil parish. The Worcestershire Parish of King's Norton is the area that we are interested in, and it dates back over nine hundred years. During the nineteenth century, settlements and villages developed and grew within the old parish borders, such as King's Heath. In 1863 King's Heath became a parish in its own right with its own parish church, All Saints. By 1901 the area is administrated by Kings Norton and Northfield Urban District Council and the ward of the urban district is identified as King's Heath, and the final entry records the 'village' of King's Heath. The 1903 map shown below also clearly marks the area as King's Heath.

In 1896 Mabel, Ronald, and Hilary were staying with Mabel's parents, Ronald and Hilary's grandparents, at 9 Ashfield Road, King's Heath, and they were about to return to Bloemfontein to be with Arthur Tolkien, husband and father to them. On 14 February that year Ronald dictated to his nurse a letter to his father, and the address is clearly shown as 9 Ashfield Road, Kings Heath. A reproduction of the letter can be seen on page 123 of *Tolkien Maker of Middle-Earth* by Catherine McIlwaine. The letter was never sent as a telegram arrived the same day informing them that Arthur was seriously ill. He died the next day, 15 February 1896.

Worcestershire

Civil parish	Ecclesiastical parish	Urban District	Ward of Urban District	Rural District	Parliamentary Division	Village
<i>King's Norton</i>	<i>All Saints' King's Heath</i>	<i>King's Norton and Northfield</i>	King's Heath		East Worcestershire	King's Heath
Road, Street and No. or Name	Name and Surname of each person	Age Last Birthday	Profession or Occupation		Where Born	
<i>86 Westfield</i>	<i>Mabel Tonkien (widow)</i>	<i>Widow 31</i>	<i>Living on own means</i>		Worcestershire Moseley	
	<i>John R R</i>	<i>Son 9</i>			Orange Free State S. Africa	
	<i>Hilary A R</i>	<i>Son 7</i>			Orange Free State S. Africa	

Returning briefly to the 1901 census for 9 Ashfield Road, Emily Jane Suffield (Ronald's aunt Jane) is recorded as a school-teacher. In those days, if a female teacher married she would have to leave the teaching profession. Still today, at least in the Birmingham area, infant and junior school children still call their female teachers 'Miss'.

Ronald's aunt Jane was a very modern woman for her time, and if you would like to read more about her there are two books by Andrew H. Morton which are well worth a read, *Tolkien's Gedling* and *Tolkien's Bag End*.

86 Westfield Road, called St Malo by Mabel Tolkien, was on the Grange Estate, which was still being built in 1901, so 86 was most likely brand new. At the time of the census 88, 90 and 92 were unoccupied, but, as if to make up for this, at 84 there were three children under the age of 3 and a fifteen-year-old girl as a domestic housemaid, most likely to help the mother with the children. 86 Westfield Road had a railway line at the bottom of the small garden, and this was to play a small part in Ronald's development and education because here he discovered the Welsh language:

Yet the railway cutting had grass slopes, and here he discovered flowers and plants. And something else attracted his attention: the curious names on the coal-trucks in the siding below, odd names which he did not know how to pronounce but which had a strange appeal to him. So it came about that by pondering over *Nantyllo*, *Senghenydd*, *Blaen – Rhondda*, *Penrhiwceiber*, and *Tredeggar*, he discovered the existence of the Welsh language. (Carpenter, p. 26.)

There are likely a number of reasons why Mabel and her sons moved from Moseley Village to 86 Westfield Road, King's Heath, one being to escape from the busy Alcester Road with steam trams ploughing up and down the hill outside their house. But the main reason was probably to be close to the small metal-built Catholic Church of St Dunstan's on the corner of Westfield Road and Station Road, as Mabel had converted to Catholicism a short time before.

So, for two brief periods in Tolkien's life, he did definitely live in King's Heath!

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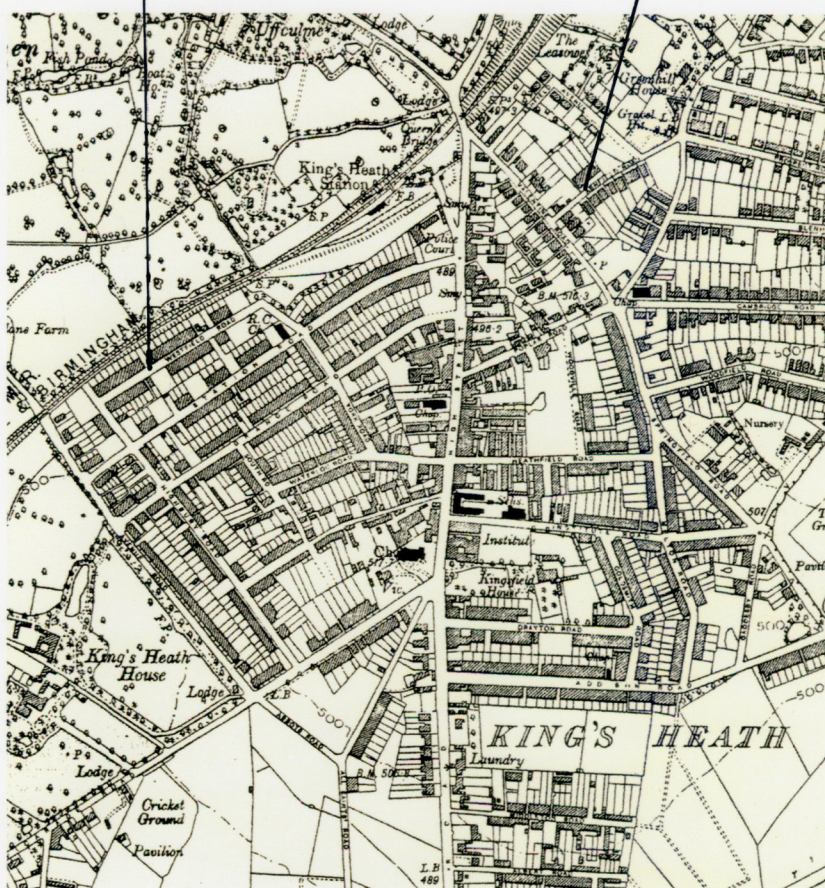
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86 Westfield Road



9 Ashfield Road



Map of King's Heath 1903, showing the two houses Tolkien lived in, 9 Ashfield Road, spring 1895 to early summer 1896 and 86 Westfield Road, 1901 to 1902.

The Canons of Fantasy

By Patrick Moran

Cambridge: University Printing House, 2019.

ISBN 978-1-108-70867-8

‘And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you,’¹ said Nietzsche. I must admit, after reading this book, I felt observed.

The Canons of Fantasy, claimed the title. Intriguing. ‘How could anyone write a canon for something as wide, intricate, and complex as fantasy?’ this reader wondered. I still do, given the lack of initiative by the writer to answer any of the questions raised throughout the text.

Book abstracts can be like profile pictures in dating apps: the date never looks as good as the photo, but you still expect a certain degree of accuracy when you meet in person. The abstract for this book promises careful analyses of the relationship between canon and genre, the relevance of Tolkien in fantasy studies, the transmedia and multimedia nature of the field, and how to strive for a more inclusive and diverse canon. Well, after reading the book carefully (twice), I guarantee you would have left that date long before dessert.

According to Patrick Moran’s introduction, ‘defining a canon of fantasy is complicated for at least three reasons. The first one is that fantasy is a recent and still ongoing cultural phenomenon.’² The history of story-telling – infested with fairy tales, fear and magic – is quite recent when compared to the history of, say, planet Earth; so perhaps it could be defined as *recent*. Quoting Miguel de Unamuno: ‘Out of fantasy springs reason.’³ Fantasy, that narrative expression of the imagination, is the seed of all literature. Moran claims his second reason to be that ‘canon is a high cultural concept, which makes it hard to apply to a popular, “lower” cultural field such as fantasy’. I actually paused here and got some popcorn. Borges, Kafka, Saramago, you ‘lower cultural field’ writers, you wasted all that good paper. Moran’s third reason ‘is that in order to define a canon of fantasy, one must first define fantasy’. The longing to meaningfully answer this question is not satisfied by this book, but it is flirted with by the use of meandering allusions to fickle clichés that, I admit, were quite entertaining to read.

I feared the rest of the book would follow its introduction’s sensationalism, thrusting upon the reader rambling, general concepts in a discursive homily resulting in a string of nonsensical questions that would frustratingly stay unanswered. My fears were confirmed.

The Canons of Fantasy is divided into four chapters and several subchapters with the clear intention of presenting an illusion of exploration and inclusion. But some of those sections are so short, and the ideas presented in them are so shallow and lacking in context that they are as useful as a torn plastic bag. We can only hope it is recyclable.

This glorified beer-talk disguised as a book seems to think European nostalgia of medieval imagery is the only road towards fantasy. This perspective makes *The Lord of the Rings* Moran’s very own Camelot, the ‘precious’ he obsesses over, and

fails to acknowledge that there is a world beyond his experience of it. The author inadvertently weaponizes his fandom against the field that he claims to be so interested in. The book splashes ideas to which he does not commit, such as the oneiric nature of playing Dungeons and Dragons and the relevance of Tolkien’s work to the field of video games. Moran opens doors he never crosses through, probably because he does not know how to turn on the lights.

My main issue with this book is that I believe reality and fantasy are two sides of the same coin: the currency of existence. Trying to set a canon of one would necessarily result in defining and shaping the nature and meaning of the other. But there can never be a canon of reality. ‘Reality’ is an inaccessible ideal, based on a self-narrating amalgam of non-transferable experiences that both feeds and is fed by a thing we call ‘consciousness’. Neuroscientists and philosophers are still trying to figure this out.

Fantasy is regarded by many academics, to whose names I dare add mine, as something closer to a mode than a genre: fantasy as an intention, an artistic stance. Fantasy is, in Rosemary Jackson’s words, ‘the language of desire,’⁵ a song to which the impossible can and will dance to. It is a wondrous party we are all invited to, in which we can dare to discover and inhabit our most fundamental truths of ourselves, facing the chiaroscuro of the world we have learned to be a part of. How and why would you ever establish a canon for that?

Anaïs Nin said, ‘We don’t see the world as it is, we see it as we are.’⁶ We all read from where we sit, and some chairs are more comfortable than others. Failing to acknowledge the limitations and hallmarks of one’s perspective when seated at the head of the table is ‘conceptual colonialism’. The fact that the book very briefly entertains the idea that working on a canon of fantasy might be a potentially pretentious task does not redeem the fact that the book was written and then published by Cambridge University Press, an iconic academic press.

Fantasy scholars will, most likely, read this work and walk away unimpressed. However, I am concerned that readers without an academic background in the field might stumble upon this book, read it, and assume this is what many scholars proclaim fantasy to be. This concern arises because the book fails to consider the views of academics that helped pave the road to (understanding) Fantasy.

One could say this book is reductive. I would say that such a characterisation is generous. *The Canons of Fantasy* is a hazardous adventure into the wilderness of a scholar’s mind that does not know its destination, but is determined to enjoy the sound of his disjointed thoughts, echoing in the endless forest of questions he never fully addresses, but scatters along the pages of what seems like an endless master’s dissertation.

Reviewed by Monica Vazquez

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Notes

- 1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 69.

- 2 Patrick Moran, *The Canons of Fantasy* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2019), p. 1.
- 3 Miguel de Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life* (New York: Courier Corporation, 1954), p. 28.
- 4 Patrick Moran, *The Canons of Fantasy* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2019), p. 2.
- 5 Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy* (London: Psychology Press, 1988), p. 62.
- 6 Anaïs Nin, *Seduction of the Minotaur* (Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1972), p. 124.

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Fantasies of Time and Death: Dunsany, Eddison, and Tolkien

By Anna Vaninskaya
London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020.

ISBN 978-1-137518-37-8

Lord Dunsany, E.R. Eddison, and J.R.R. Tolkien is not a triad of authors that one naturally groups together. Nonetheless, Anna Vaninskaya in *Fantasies of Time and Death: Dunsany, Eddison, and Tolkien* sets out to retroactively justify the haphazard jointure established by Ballantine's publication of all three authors under the heading of one literary genre: fantasy. This grouping proved serendipitous, for, as Vaninskaya points out, Dunsany, Eddison, and Tolkien share two creative traits: each author engages in extensive cosmopoiesis, and they all champion mortality as their theme. Still, little else joins them together, and Vaninskaya is not one to force opposites into agreement. Rather, she dedicates herself to exploring these variations on mortality to their fullest, deftly plunging into the artistic background and tendencies of each author while showing a breadth of knowledge that one wishes were more common in the critic. To read the book is an education beyond what the title heralds. Through exploring the history and ideas behind each author, the birth of fantasy as a genre becomes a matter of course in Vaninskaya's hands, and yet also a moment of wonder, full of death and hope.

To achieve this purpose and effect, Vaninskaya sets up what are essentially three case studies, one for each writer.

She combs through first Dunsany's, then Eddison's, then Tolkien's chief works to tease out the author's unique approach to dealing with Time and Death (the capitalisation is significant). For each author, Vaninskaya uncovers a host of preceding poets and philosophers that feed directly into the world each author built. In the Dunsany section, the reader learns as much about Swinburne as Dunsany, likewise Spinoza in the review of Eddison. Accompanying larger philosophical influences from across the ages, Vaninskaya cites a healthy dose of nineteenth-century poets as more immediate gateways to the creation of fantasy proper and its special emphasis on the question of death. Vaninskaya is not doing source criticism, however. Her work is more akin to a close reading, varying between poem explication and philosophy tome, with a thicket of embedded quotes from the works being studied to build her argument. The sheer weight of citation makes the reading a slow endeavour, but the reader will be rewarded. Vaninskaya, for all her knowledge of Classical, Christian, and fantastic literature, is a narrow scholar of her text. There is little of the biographical or historical in her work, and she sticks closely to the authors' relationship to her titular themes. The result is a rich study of Time and Death at the turn of the century and beyond, showing an almost seamless yet fantastic movement from ideas to creation and Dunsany to Tolkien.

Vaninskaya's organisation of material is as much logical as it is chronological. Beginning with Dunsany, she works through his progression as an author, focusing on the stress-unstress rhythm of his corpus as it deals with human and divine fights against Time through Death and creativity. Here Vaninskaya brings up an important impetus to the creation of formal fantasy, namely, the apprehension of Time and Space as vast and fearsome unknowables unique to the dawn of the twentieth century. Time for Vaninskaya becomes the primary antagonist and scary backdrop against which all fantasy stories are written. How Death plays into that struggle remains her subject for the rest of the work. Dunsany leaves the question open, with his world offering myriad explanations of how Death during and after Time works, yet destroying each explanation as soon as it appears. In Eddison, Vaninskaya finds a more developed approach and a broader point of view. She uses his lengthy *Zimiamvia* trilogy to reach a half answer about Death's role in the mortal tragedy – or perhaps comedy, depending on how broad one's perspective becomes through Eddison's lens. Here the philosophical heavy lifting is at its fullest, where an in-depth study of metaphor serves as the backbone of her research. Indeed, Vaninskaya gives double the time to Eddison that she affords the other two authors, making up for time lost on an overlooked author. Working through Eddison's layered cosmology leaves the reader appreciating the possibility that Death plays a positive and not only a negative role in the mortal drama, but ambiguity regarding the actual nature of Death remains. Vaninskaya has set the stage well for Tolkien's legendarium to sweep in. Although briefer than that of Eddison, the section on Tolkien does not disappoint. Even a weathered Tolkien reader will find new treasures in Vaninskaya's thoughtful and

thorough analysis. Her reading ranges throughout the history of Middle-earth and beyond, delving into Tolkien's poetry, time-travel fragments, scholarship, and letters to pinpoint what he communicates about mortality, the famously self-avowed theme of his writing. Vaninskaya's discipline to her topic allows for moving insights and wisdom-gathering from Tolkien's more far-flung works. Her handling of the *Athrabeth* as it plays out in Arwen and Aragorn's marriage is especially powerful. In the end, Vaninskaya manages to strike just the right note of sorrow and hope, wondering and resolution in her conclusions regarding Tolkien's thesis on mortality, and the reader comes up for air all the better for the dive into his work enabled by her scholarship.

That Vaninskaya is able to tie Dunsany, Eddison, and Tolkien together without coercing their ideas into harmony is a testament to her scholarly integrity. Although Tolkien leaves a good deal of perspectival doubt as to the nature and purpose of Death in his works, it is an ambiguity that falls into a different category than the doubt found in Dunsany or Eddison. Vaninskaya respects this difference and eventually draws out Tolkien's *felix culpa* approach to mortality, which is worlds away from Dunsany's open-ended questions and even Eddison's sequential cosmological scheme. Still, she does not back down from holding out Tolkien's own version of doubt to the reader, a doubt that is essential to the wisdom of hope inherent to his worldbuilding. Vaninskaya's ability to walk this fine line with clarity by the end of her work is one of her finer achievements. Likewise, the extent of research, cross-referencing, and idea-unfolding packed into the volume is exemplary. It is a dense read, and Vaninskaya offers little signposting apart from section headings. But, on reflection, this stylistic choice mirrors the topic of her work: we mortals must labour through the questions of Death not according to a clearly laid blueprint, but as we live our lives day by day. As Vaninskaya states in closing, participating in these questions through story is the opportunity that Fantasy affords, and it is the invitation that these three authors – otherwise radically different – provide.

Reviewed by Jennifer Rogers, Signum University

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Something Has Gone Crack: New Perspectives on J.R.R. Tolkien in the Great War

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft and
Annika Röttinger

Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2019.

ISBN 978-3-905703-41-2

With the centenary marking the end of World War I just passing in 2019, the time was ripe for Walking Tree – the prolific publishers of the Cormarë Series – to commemorate the occasion with a volume focusing on Tolkien's experience as a soldier, and of course as a war writer. As explained in the acknowledgements by series editor Peter Buchs, the original plan to host an international conference marking the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in 2016, ideally in Northern France where Tolkien served, was substituted by the offer to organise a volume of essays on the topic of Tolkien and the Great War by editors Janet Brennan Croft and Annika Röttinger.

The subject has, of course, been explored before. Croft is a notable scholar in this area, having written the 2004 monograph *War and the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* and edited the 2015 collection *Baptism of Fire: The Birth of the Modern British Fantastic in World War I*. Likewise, Röttinger brings her expertise in military history to the table. The most notable predecessor in this field is undoubtedly John Garth's *Tolkien and the Great War* (2003), a celebrated work of scholarship and biography that tells the story of Tolkien's early life and wartime experiences. While acknowledging that a certain amount of the way has been paved, Croft rightly notes in her introduction that even at the end of this volume the topic is 'by no means exhausted' and that:

There is still detective work to be done in discovering facts about [Tolkien's] service and convalescence; there are themes and motifs still to be examined [...]; other works of scholarship in other fields may illuminate aspects of Tolkien's work that have not yet been considered. (vi)

It is in the first of these pursuits – the 'detective work' – that *Something Has Gone Crack* makes the strongest impression. While Garth's earlier biography focused on the emotional narrative of Tolkien's life and relationships, this volume drills down into a wide variety of minutiae regarding wartime themes and historical events as they relate to Tolkien's life and work. This academic tone is struck early on with the inclusion of a map of the Battle of the Somme and a detailed chronology of Tolkien's service. While this slightly Nigglesque interest in dates and details might make for a less engaging experience for the general reader, it should be of value to the researcher.

The volume is split into four sections. The first, on the 'Conduct of War', looks at parallels between the Great War and the various wars of Middle-earth. The second section focuses on new applications of Great War research to Tolkien's biography. The third section traces the 'Roots of Major Themes of the Legendarium in the Great War'. The final section looks at various 'Alterities', approaching the war and Tolkien's fiction from less obvious and well-documented avenues related to race, class, gender and sexuality.

Given the great variety of topics, I will mention several particular highlights. Tom Shippey and John Bourne examine the 'Steep Learning-Curve' encountered by the British Army in this period and explain the circumstances which led to the 'New Army', largely made up of new and untrained recruits, offering vital historical context. Glenn Peterson's 'Strategic Blunders in the First Age Great Battles' proposes that Tolkien's service outfitted him with plenty of ammunition for the creation of the epic battles of Middle-earth, focusing on leadership and cooperation between allies. Tal Tovey's article on 'Aspects of Total War' convincingly argues that Tolkien's hobbit books reflect the historical shift to 'Total War' (the ideological shift from feudal conflicts between rulers and dynasties to wars between nations and peoples) in Western civilisation. 'Fault Lines Beneath the Crack' by John Rosegrant speculates about Tolkien's uncharacteristically vague assertion that '*something* has gone crack' in the wake of the death of his friend Rob Gilson and proposes that it is an expression of Tolkien's physical and psychological trauma. Michael Flowers' essay on 'Tolkien in East Yorkshire' endeavours to fill in the gaps of previous research into Tolkien's stay in that region which influenced the memorable hemlock glade of the tale of Beren and Lúthien and potentially other real-world allusions. John Garth tells the strange and intriguing tale of an urban legend inspired by Arthur Machen's short story 'The Bowmen' and its parallels with Tolkien's early mythology, born at the same time. Lynn Schlesinger pushes back against the notion of WWI as an exclusively male environment and looks at the possible influence of 'wartime women, who directed and worked in hospitals, drove ambulances, ran canteens', and so forth, on Tolkien's characters (p. 288). Felicity Gilbert's 'Mighty Men of War' complicates the expectations of gender roles during wartime, showing how male and female characteristics become fluid. And Giovanni Costabile makes a fascinating connection between Éowyn and the Scottish 8th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Regiment via the Glaswegian painter Frederick A. Farrell (read the book to find out more!).

In summary, *Something Has Gone Crack* provides a dense and varied supplement to previous work in this area. In particular, it takes advantage of its format to delve deeper into specific tangents and historical parallels to Tolkien's writing than a more general work is often able to do. A few of the essays are less convincing in making their points than others, and occasionally a given topic can prove a little dry to read; but this is largely an engaging volume, and all of the authors acknowledge Tolkien's discomfort with biographical

criticism and clearly intend to spark discussion rather than argue for any necessary intention or correlation on Tolkien's part. For more serious fans of Tolkien's writing and particularly researchers interested in this period of his life, this is an essential collection to have on the shelf.

Reviewed by Katherine Sas, Signum University

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The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien: The Places that Inspired Middle-earth

By John Garth

London: Frances Lincoln, 2019.

ISBN 978-0-711241-27-5

The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien requires little introduction, but, for those unaware, the book's subtitle 'The Places that Inspired Middle-earth' gives the game away. Written by John Garth, known to many as the author of the critically acclaimed *Tolkien and the Great War*, the book is a labour of love to Tolkien, exploring the locations that influenced him and his works. At least, that is what the publisher's blurb claims.

One of the first confusions with this book is a feeling that the publisher and the author do not agree on the subject of the book. The title and subtitle seem to be pretty clear,

and this is backed up by the back cover: 'This new book from renowned Tolkien expert John Garth investigates the places that inspired *Lord of the Rings*'. This feels self-explanatory. However, in the introduction the author says the book 'does not restrict itself to identifying real locations' (p. 6). Confused?

What this book certainly is, is a love-letter to J.R.R. Tolkien. The author's love, appreciation, and knowledge flow through this book. Every page is rich with content both in prose and an impressive range of artwork. Garth's background as a journalist is his real strength: he skilfully synthesises academic, mythological, geographical, cultural, biographical, and historical information to ensure the reader never feels lost or overwhelmed. It is strongly to Garth's credit that this is one of the most accessible books about Tolkien I have read in some time. It is a delight to flick through pages and just pick up sections at random: browsing is to be encouraged and cherished.

The chapters are all self-contained and some stronger than others. 'Four Winds', which focuses on mythological inspirations, I found to be a comprehensive and thought-provoking chapter, highlighting the multitude of sources Tolkien grew up with and studied, and which we know had a profound impact on him. Similarly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the chapter 'Places of War' which majors on Tolkien's experience in war is also a poignant reminder of what Tolkien personally went through. On more location-based chapters, 'Roots of the Mountain' which narrows in on Tolkien's journey through Switzerland – as well as the caves in Somerset – is a powerful expression of how some landscapes made such a lasting impression on Tolkien that they flowed onto the pages as Tolkien built Middle-earth.

The book says it 'debunks popular misconceptions'. It does not. In fact, the effort with which the author goes *not* to debunk popular misconceptions may be because he is now creating his own. Anyone who heard Garth's talk at Tolkien 2019 will be familiar with the strength of his argument against the misconception that Edgbaston Water Works and Perrott's Folly are the inspirations behind the Two Towers. If readers expect a similar level of challenge in the text they will be disappointed: the claim is politely dismissed with the line 'there is no sign Tolkien thought of these as a pair' (p. 155). Similarly, the well-known claim of the Burren in Ireland is 'debunked' with a couple of lines in the 78th endnote towards the end of the book. Once again, the reader gets the feeling that the book is not quite delivering the experience the publisher claimed.

However, the biggest issue with this book is Garth's own suppositions. At times the author cheekily places two things together and allows the reader to connect the dots in their own head, such as the comparison between the Old Forest and the New Forest in southern England; or when he notices that Rhosgobel has 'echoes' of Boscobel in Shropshire. At other times he is more explicit: the

similarity of Mordor and Mordred 'may be more than chance', and yet Garth also insists that the Black Country was 'undoubtedly an inspiration' for Mordor even as he acknowledges Tolkien never made that connection (pp. 35, 182-4); that in the Necromancer 'Tolkien created a villain with all the Gothic powers and attributes of Stoker's character' Dracula (p. 122); and that Faringdon Folly 'played a complex but crucial role in the creation of several of Tolkien's literary towers' even though the evidence for this is essentially that it was newsworthy at the time (pp. 156-7).

The most egregious, however, is on page 59 when the author has deliberately mismatched scales to overlay a map of England onto Eriador to compare the Lune with the Severn. Garth then says that in doing this the Grey Havens are in roughly the same location as Clevedon, where Tolkien honeymooned; Garth then extends this to compare the Westmarch of the Shire to Tolkien's own family of the Suffields who happened to live in the Westcountry. Why this comparison is made is never explained. But it is not the level of 'properly conducted' inquiry the introduction proposes, or perhaps every researcher need only play around the scales on a map to draw new comparisons.

These links and comparisons are doubly infuriating. The book is generally well-referenced and sourced, so these comparisons are easy to spot a mile away as they lack any citation. But more importantly, Garth very specifically in the introduction calls out 'assertions [that] acquire the air of fact by being repeated in newspapers or in Wikipedia' (p. 6). This sentence brings to mind the many articles that preceded the book's publication, most prominently in the *Guardian*, that promoted the theory of Faringdon Folly.

The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien is a beautiful-looking tome that will sit nicely on your coffee table. Garth's work brings together multiple sources to create the closest thing to an anthology of Tolkien's influences and covers much more than the name and publisher's blurb imply. It has the appearance more of an encyclopaedia than a piece of research, as each chapter is self-contained with no narrative or argument running through the book. Having said all of that, for the general reader looking to know more about Tolkien's inspirations, this is a solid book; but for the researcher, academic or serious Tolkien fan I cannot recommend this as a work of authority as it is undermined by Garth's own forays into conjecture.

Reviewed by Shaun Gunner

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Tolkien's Cosmology: Divine Beings and Middle-earth

By Sam McBride

Kent State University Press, 2020.

ISBN 978-1-60635-396-7

...this book is a search for *valasse* in Tolkien's writing.
(McBride, p. xi)

There have been many books and articles engaging with the idea that *The Lord of the Rings* is 'a fundamentally religious and Catholic work' (*Letters*, p. 172). McBride has chosen to do something more elemental, which is to look at how Tolkien has made manifest within his sub-creation that which *underlies* religion: belief in the existence of a creator God or gods and their relationship with their creation. *Tolkien's Cosmology*, the result of his search for the divine (*valasse* in Quenya), has three main strengths, the first of which is that it is eminently readable. McBride writes with lucidity and grace and acknowledges those moments when he brings his personal biases into a reading of a text. Secondly, his study is also very well researched, with a bibliography that is in itself a valuable resource for anyone interested in the metaphysics of Tolkien's creation. The third strength of McBride's book is its excellent organisation. His introduction, which should not be skipped, sets out the parameters that guided his research and analysis. McBride has consciously chosen to treat *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* as 'sacred texts', with other posthumous works treated as 'nonspurious apocrypha' – authoritative only when not contradicting the primary texts, even when those contradictions are otherwise interesting (p. xiv). McBride acknowledges the many problems inherent in this approach but argues convincingly that most readers, consciously or unconsciously, do approach the works in this way. One might quibble over his decision, but the result is a book with an admirable 'inner consistency'.

For seven chapters, McBride 'traces the work of divine beings from prior to the creation of Middle-earth to its prophesied fulfillment' (p. xii), but there is also a three-part structure to the book. The first chapter is an examination of the origin and nature of divinity within Tolkien's sub-creation; the next three chapters offer an examination of how the divine operates within the world of Middle-earth; the last three chapters are a thematic examination of three specific cosmological issues most closely linked to the matter of 'its prophesied fulfillment'.

The first chapter, 'Tolkien's Cosmogony and Pantheon', is one I would especially recommend to anyone who finds *The Silmarillion* challenging to comprehend. McBride guides the reader through the scholarly and religious

underpinnings of Tolkien's cosmology, particularly the effect of his choice of Music as a creative metaphor. He also provides a thorough analysis of the Valar – their relationship to their creator Eru Ilúvatar, to the Music, and to each other. Particularly felicitous is his introduction of the term 'monotheistic polytheism' to describe the unique structure of Tolkien's mythology, in which the Valar operate 'simultaneously as creatures from a theological perspective and *the gods* from a literary perspective' (p. 16).

The next three chapters, which form the heart of the book, 'trace divine involvement from the entrance of the Valar into the material reality to the end of the Third Age' (p. xii). 'The Valar in the World', the shortest of the three, covers the First and Second Ages of Middle-earth. In the beginning of Arda, the Valar are an overtly active presence, working closely with Elves, the Firstborn Children of Ilúvatar, who come to live with them in the Blessed Realm. After the Noldorin rebellion, the Valar assume a progressively more remote and godlike character (they rarely interact with Men at all). Their remoteness continues into the Second Age; only Sauron remains a visible presence in Middle-earth, sowing the seeds for the downfall of Númenor. By the Third Age, the Valar practically disappear.

Chapters Three and Four look at 'Divine Intervention in the Third Age', first through Visible Power. Most attention is given to the Istari, chiefly Gandalf. There is a nice discussion of the problem of Tom Bombadil; McBride does not choose between any of the various theories about his identity but asserts that his use of music is probably 'the strongest evidence of Tom's divine nature' (p. 76). It may surprise some that he ends the third chapter with a consideration of the power of the High Elves, suggesting that some – Glorfindel, Elrond, and (especially) Galadriel – act along with Tom and the Istari 'simultaneously as characters and as metaphysical representatives ... for the generally invisible Valar' (pp. 88-89).

McBride's discussion of Invisible Powers begins with how various evil beings make their power felt indirectly: the fear and intimidation emanating from the Black Riders, for example. Gandalf appears to put a similar ability to use for good, as when he wrestled with Sauron for the freedom of Frodo's will at Amon Hen. Within *The Hobbit*, McBride considers the many references to luck as potential signs of divine intervention, especially when read in light of the cosmology developed in *The Silmarillion*. Before searching for the divine in *The Lord of the Rings*, McBride reminds the reader that he is offering not an authoritative interpretation, but one which he has found personally enriching. He frequently draws on *The Silmarillion* to show that what was an obvious manifestation in the First Age – Ulmo's presence in the waters of Beleriand, for example – might be seen as a continuing presence in the Third Age.

'The Problem of Evil' is the first and longest of the final three chapters. The section on 'Evil versus Folly' is

particularly interesting; McBride begins by comparing Melkor's fall into Evil with Aulë's into Folly, then follows the thread of folly throughout *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, proposing that perhaps Tolkien's 'narrative requires the moral space of folly to allow fallen beings to work with divine beings in the battle against evil' (p. 157). The next four sections look at evil operating through different beings, from the irredeemable to the redeemable, including a lengthy examination of the problem of the nature of orcs. This chapter ends with a consideration of technology and evil through the lens of various rings and stones of power.

'Death' and 'Eucatastrophe, *Estel*, and the End of Arda' necessarily include material outside the scope of the three 'sacred texts', for most of what Tolkien wrote on those matters comes from his later writings found in *The History of Middle-earth*; I hope that these final chapters might encourage readers to explore the material therein. I was pleasantly surprised that McBride included a short section on what death might mean for an Ainu, nicely tying Sauron's fate to that which Lúthien foresaw at their encounter at Tol-in-Gaurhoth. McBride's discussion of the End of Arda is short but sweet, emphasising Eucatastrophe's importance as a consummation of hope (*Estel*), which in the End can only come about by the direct intervention of Eru Ilúvatar:

Arda Healed will have no further need of divine intervention providing glimpses of evangelism; instead, evangelism will have been achieved. (p. 224)

Reviewed by Kate Neville, Signum University

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Dear Dr. Shelton,

I have discovered in the latest issue (60 Summer 2020) that on page 44 *The Fellowship of the Ring* is missing from the Abbreviations list...

Yours sincerely,

Balogh Nora

Comment on *Working Over Time*:

I enjoyed Mr. Hick's article and information on Edwin Neave. The figure in the drawing is correctly identified as Tolkien. Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull previously stated that the figure was Edwin Neave (*Artist and Illustrator (Artist)*, p. 13; C&G, p. 1.11). However, Tolkien repeatedly drew Edwin with a signature, prominent moustache (*What is Home Without A Mother {Or a Wife}*) and even shows it protruding from a rear view in *For Men Must Work* (McIlwaine, pp. 133, 134). It is also apparent in *They Slept in Beauty Side By Side* (*Artist*, p. 100). A sequence for these cards or dates would be helpful in understanding them. Only the date of 27 April 1904 is given for *They Slept in Beauty*. We do not know if there were other cards in this sequence.

In this postcard, Tolkien shows his understanding of his mother. It would reassure her that he was studying and making up for work he had missed at school during his illness, as he would be well aware of her hopes for his education and his future. He appears to depict the typical busy wallpaper, wall clock, and tall desks that would be found in a business office of the time. The reader may wonder why 'S.P.Q.R.', usually translated as the Latin abbreviation for the 'Roman Senate and People' or 'the Senate and People of Rome', is present. One needs to know that SPQR is sometimes jokingly seen as the abbreviation of 'Small Profit, Quick Return'. This motto would fit with the setting of the insurance company and perhaps Tolkien's hopeful expectation of a 'Quick Return' on his studying. Tolkien's well-known joking nature is already apparent here. The mouse hole on the right is also a humorous addition. Tolkien, who was very well read for his age (Carpenter, p. 28), appears also to be playing on the standard imagery of the poor clerk slaving away at his desk as immortalized by Charles Dickens in his character, Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol*.

Hammond and Scull mention a 'trade mark', 'Mrs Sambo and Nephew Series' on the back of *They Slept in Beauty* (p. 13). A similar 'trade mark', 'Messrs S(?) nephews Series', appears in the lower left-hand corner of *What is Home Without A Mother {Or A Wife}* (McIlwaine, p. 133) with a pinwheel shape in an oval. This pinwheel is also visible on the right side of *They Slept in Beauty*. Tolkien continues this pattern, putting 'Trade Mark' with the same pinwheel shape in the bottom right hand corner of *Working Over Time*, S.P.Q.R.

In the 'trade mark', Tolkien appears to be playing on the idea that he would be Edwin's nephew once Edwin and Jane marry. It is possible that he may have also known that the surname Neave meant 'nephew' in a standard reference work of the time (Bardsley, p. 551; C&G, p. 2.842). Tolkien's interest in the origins of words was already present as he had acquired a copy of *Chamber's Etymological Dictionary* in late 1903 (C&G, p. 1.10).

To the right of Tolkien in *What is Home Without A Mother {Or A Wife}* there is the drawing of a photograph with the initials 'AJS' underneath it. The Tolkien brothers apparently referred to their Aunt Jane Suffield as 'AJ' (Tolkien, p. 66). The drawing shows that Edwin had a photograph of 'AJS' or Aunt Jane Suffield, his sweetheart. Perhaps the prominent display of Aunt Jane's picture in Edwin's quarters is why Tolkien wrote 'Show Aunt Jane' on the card so she would know that Edwin was thinking of her daily.

Nancy Bunting

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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.

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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 usually between 5,000 and 10,000 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 an electronic copy in Arial or Times Roman 12 font. No hand-written copies will be accepted.

Notes:

Notes are shorter research pieces, usually covering a topic or resource of interest to the Tolkien community. Notes are generally between 1,000 and 3,000 words. This format is most suitable for extensions or updates on previously published research, descriptions of projects that have important insight but did not lead to a full article, descriptions of new resources for Tolkien scholars, or presentation of new Tolkien-related material that may be built on by further research. These are reviewed by the editor, but are not usually considered peer-reviewed.

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 at mallorn@tolkiensociety.org

Conventions:

All citations of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* use volume, book, and chapter only because there are so many editions. E.g. "When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End announced that he would shortly be celebrating his eleventy-first birthday with a party of special magnificence, there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton" (*FR*, I, i). Tolkien's other works, however, should include page numbers. E.g. "Lo, now do we know the reason of our transportation hither as it were cargoes of fair slaves" (*Lost Tales I*, p. 164).

