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Editors' Introduction

This is the ninth issue of *Tolkien Studies*, the first refereed journal solely devoted to the scholarly study of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. As editors, our goal is to publish excellent scholarship on Tolkien as well as to gather useful research information, reviews, notes, documents, and bibliographical material.

All articles have been subject to anonymous, external review in addition to receiving a positive judgment by the Editors. In the cases of articles by individuals associated with the journal in any way, each article had to receive at least two positive evaluations from two different outside reviewers. Reviewer comments were anonymously conveyed to the authors of the articles. The Editors agreed to be bound by the recommendations of the outside referees. Although they are solicited and edited by the editors, book reviews represent the judgments of the individual reviewers, not *Tolkien Studies*.

With this issue *Tolkien Studies* bids farewell to Douglas A. Anderson, one of the founding editors of the journal. Since 2001 Doug has been co-editor of *Tolkien Studies*, taking special responsibility for Book Reviews and Book Notes, but keeping his keen eye on every aspect of the journal, making innumerable corrections and additions from his vast knowledge of Tolkien and his works, and employing his sound scholarly judgment on matters great and small. He will be missed, and we wish him well with all his future endeavors, including his own publishing imprint, Nodens Books.

Starting with our next issue (*Tolkien Studies* X), David Bratman will be Book Review editor and co-editor of *Tolkien Studies*, and Merlin DeTardo will be taking over the annual *Year's Work in Tolkien Studies*.

Michael D. C. Drout
Verlyn Flieger

Notes on Submissions

Tolkien Studies seeks works of scholarly quality and depth. Substantial essays and shorter, "Notes and Documents" pieces are both welcome.

Submissions should be double-spaced throughout and use parenthetical citations in the (Author page) form. A Works Cited page should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. All citations to Tolkien's works should follow the "Conventions and Abbreviations" of *Tolkien Studies*.

Self-addressed, stamped envelopes should accompany all correspondence unless the author wishes to communicate via email and

In Memoriam

Kathleen E. Dubs (1944 - 2011) was a member of the humanities faculty at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, and a member of the Hungarian Tolkien Society. Her courses included medieval literature and Old and Middle English, and her lectures on Tolkien revived interest in him in academic circles. She contributed the entry on Fortune and Fate to the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia*, and with Janka Kascáková edited the collection *Middle-earth and Beyond: Essays on the World of J.R.R. Tolkien*, reviewed in this volume of *Tolkien Studies*.

Conventions and Abbreviations

Because there are so many editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, citations will be by book and chapter as well as by page-number (referenced to the editions listed below). Thus a citation from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, book two, chapter four, page 318 is written (*FR*, II, iv, 318). References to the Appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* are abbreviated by Appendix, Section and subsection. Thus subsection iii of section I of Appendix A is written (*RK*, Appendix A, I, iii, 321). The "Silmarillion" indicates the body of stories and poems developed over many years by Tolkien; *The Silmarillion* indicates the volume first published in 1977.

Abbreviations

B&C	*Beowulf and the Critics*. Ed. Michael D. C. Drout. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2002. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 248.
Bombadil	*The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.
CH	*The Children of Húrin* [title as on title page:] *Narn i Chîn Húrin: The Tale of the Children of Húrin*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins, 2007; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.
FG	*Farmer Giles of Ham*. Ed. Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond. London: HarperCollins, 1999. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

FR *The Fellowship of the Ring*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954. Second edition, revised impression, Boston: Houghton Mifflin,1987.

H *The Hobbit*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938. *The Annotated Hobbit*. Ed. Douglas A. Anderson. Second edition, revised. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

Jewels *The War of the Jewels*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

Lays *The Lays of Beleriand*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985.

Letters *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter, with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

Lost Road *The Lost Road and Other Writings*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Lost Tales I *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

Lost Tales II *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

MC *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

Morgoth *Morgoth's Ring*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

OFS *Tolkien On Fairy-stories: Extended Edition*. Ed. Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson. London: HarperCollins, 2008.

Peoples *The Peoples of Middle-earth*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

RK *The Return of the King*. London: George Allen & Unwin 1955; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956. Second edition,

	revised impression, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
S	*The Silmarillion.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. Second edition. London:HarperCollins, 1999; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
Sauron	*Sauron Defeated.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.
SG	*The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun.* Ed Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009
Shadow	*The Return of the Shadow.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988.
Shaping	*The Shaping of Middle-earth.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986.
SWM	*Smith of Wootton Major: Extended Edition.* Ed. Verlyn Flieger. London: HarperCollins, 2005.
TL	*Tree and Leaf.* London: Unwin Books, 1964; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965. Expanded as *Tree and Leaf, including the Poem Mythpoeia [and] The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son.* London: HarperCollins, 2001.
TT	*The Two Towers.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955. Second edition, revised impression, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
Treason	*The Treason of Isengard.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.
UT	*Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980.
War	*The War of the Ring.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Untold Tales: Solving a Literary Dilemma

Peter Grybauskas

> "Close to the western summit there is the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard. No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude."
>
> —Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (39)

In January 1945, near the end of World War II and about midway through the long gestation period of *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien wrote to his son Christopher describing a literary quandary in relation to two different emotions:

> one that moves me supremely and I find small difficulty in evoking: the heart-racking sense of the vanished past (best expressed by Gandalf's words about the Palantir); and the other the more 'ordinary' emotion, triumph, pathos, tragedy of the characters. That I am learning to do, as I get to know my people, but it is not really so near my heart, and is forced on me by the fundamental literary dilemma. A story must be told or there'll be no story, yet it is the untold stories that are most moving. I think you are moved by *Celebrimbor* because it conveys a sudden sense of endless *untold* stories: mountains seen far away, never to be climbed, distant trees (like Niggle's) never to be approached—or if so only to become 'near trees' (unless in Paradise or N's Parish). (*Letters* 110)

The paradox of the untold story, and Tolkien's efforts to resolve it, play a pivotal role not just in *The Lord of the Rings*, but throughout his entire legendarium. Vladimir Brljak has recently championed the importance of this letter, asserting that "how to tell the untold … was Tolkien's *fundamental* literary dilemma," and arguing that Tolkien's solution is found in the "metafictional 'machinery'" of his stories—the mediating conceit that the tales are derived from layered translations and redactions of wholly vanished source texts—which allows for their "telling and untelling…in the same breath" (19). In spite of the importance of this framework, the heart of Tolkien's solution is found in the stories themselves, in the narrative device which grants what Tolkien called "unexplained vistas."

With a nod to the letter, I would call this device the "untold tale," and count among its ranks the gaps, enigmas, allusions, ellipses, and

loose ends that pepper Tolkien's narratives. In his analysis of the centrality of this correspondence, Brljak overlooks the two examples given to help illustrate the "heart-racking sense" of untold stories—"Gandalf's words about the Palantir" and the name "*Celebrimbor*." These references offer a clue to Tolkien's solution; indeed they are themselves instances of it. In spite of his attention to minutiae, Tolkien understood when to check his pen and create space for untold tales. In this paper, I hope to clarify how he exploits his paradox of the untold story by developing a system of narrative withholding into a core element of his prose.

The study of Tolkien's creation of narrative depth is not, of course, new; other scholars have contributed substantially to our understanding of both its roots and function. In his two book-length studies of Tolkien's work, Tom Shippey explores the author's creation of Middle-earth from a philological perspective, as the reconstruction of an "asterisk-reality" largely derived from the legends of Northern Europe.[1] According to Shippey, Tolkien "took fragments of ancient literature, expanded on their intensely suggestive hints of further meaning, and made them into coherent and consistent narrative (all the things which the old poems had failed, or never bothered, to do)" (*Author* 35). But, as the letter to his son suggests, of equal weight was a different kind of impulse, one which above all sought to preserve the sense of untold stories, for Tolkien understood that reconstructing coherent and consistent narratives out of such fragments risked destroying the very appeal of these nebulous legends in the first place.

Though he treats the romance of untold stories primarily as the inspirational spark to reconstruct lost narratives, Shippey acknowledges the opposing force at work, at times touching on it to great effect: as in his discussion of "peripheral suggestion" and the crucial observation that "more often stories are not told" in *The Lord of the Rings (Road* 110*)*.[2] Tolkien's ability to suggest narrative depth, Shippey demonstrates, owes a debt to the inspirational sources as well: "the trick is an old one, and Tolkien learned it like so much else from his ancient sources, *Beowulf* and the poem of *Sir Gawain*, but it continues to work" (*Author* 49). He also hits the mark in highlighting the importance of Tolkien's claim that "to go there is to destroy the magic, unless new unattainable vistas are again revealed," though I argue that this is a more far-reaching concern, an essential principle behind his work, not just a localized challenge in presenting *The Silmarillion* (*Letters* 333; *Road* 230, 310). Thus I believe that Shippey underestimates the significant presence of untold tales in texts outside of *The Lord of the Rings*, though he is right not to concede to Christopher Tolkien so easily the notion

that depth was a major preoccupation of Tolkien's in bringing *The Silmarillion* to light.[3]

Depth created by the intertextual relationship between *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* (and other texts or pseudo-texts) is the subject Gergely Nagy explores in "The great chain of reading: (inter-) textual relations and the technique of mythopoesis in the Túrin story" (Chance 239–258). In his analysis of the various Túrin stories and allusions throughout the legendarium, Nagy examines the "mythopoeic" effect of this depth and begins to untangle the many layers involved. With reference to *Beowulf* and Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, he draws distinctions between the invocation of stories and the invocation of texts, and calls to attention the difference between "genuine" and "contentless" allusions (Chance 242). However, Nagy's focus remains chiefly on the interaction between diverse texts—only one important aspect of untold tales—over the more immediate element present in the individual text that is the subject of this paper.

The recent news of Tolkien's nomination and subsequent rejection for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961 brings to the forefront once more the arguments over Tolkien's literary merits.[4] For some, Tolkien's rejection by the Swedish committee validates the common cry (here voiced by Salman Rushdie in a review of Peter Jackson's *The Two Towers*) that, however enjoyable the story, "nobody ever read Tolkien for the writing."[5] Detractors of Tolkien's prose cite various weak points, several of which stem from the notion that his great strength in detailing Middle-earth is by some literary standards a kind of Achilles' heel; thus the admiration for the clarity of Tolkien's vision and world-building, mixed with complaints about the dullness, density—even turgidity—of his prose.

In fact, the author himself was cognizant of the dangers of bloated prose and on more than one occasion expressed doubts about his habit of over-elaboration. In a letter written to Naomi Mitchison in April 1954, just prior to the publication of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien probes the curious tension in his work between a desire for exhaustive detail and what he came to understand as an equally important need to suppress it:

> There is of course a clash between 'literary' technique, and the fascination of elaborating in detail an imaginary mythical Age…. As a story, I think it is good that there should be a lot of things unexplained (especially if an explanation actually exists); and I have perhaps from this point of view erred in trying to explain too much, and give too much past history. Many readers have, for instance, rather stuck

> at the *Council of Elrond*. And even in a mythical Age there must be some enigmas, as there always are (*Letters* 174).

Some months later, Tolkien again expressed an awareness of the problem. Grumbling to Rayner Unwin over the appendices he had promised to include with *The Return of the King*, the self-confessed "pedant" (*Letters* 372) admitted that, though such indulgence in ancillary detail was for him in fact "fatally attractive," he was "not … at all sure that the tendency to treat the whole thing as a kind of vast game is really good" (*Letters* 210). In addition, Tolkien went on, echoing his earlier statement to Ms. Mitchison on the virtues of the unexplained and enigmatic, readers "who enjoy the book as an 'heroic romance' only, and find 'unexplained vistas' part of the literary effect, will neglect the appendices, very properly." The self-critical tone of these remarks highlights his sensitivity toward this issue. However, it should not be taken as mere regret over lost opportunities in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien was capable of reining in his tendency toward over-elaboration to great effect, as the countless untold tales which lurk (but hide from plain sight) on the borders of his narratives—both before and after *The Lord of the Rings*—can attest. With the twofold aim of understanding the untold tale as a core element of Tolkien's legendarium and proposing some categorical guidelines for its further study, let us first take a closer look at the two examples Tolkien offers in his letter to Christopher cited above.

"Gandalf's words about the Palantir"

It is difficult to determine precisely which words Tolkien is referring to, as the subject of the palantíri—the seven Seeing Stones—is broached quite often by the wizard once he has discovered Saruman's use of one of the Stones at Orthanc. There is also the added complication that Tolkien's letter to Christopher refers to drafts of the text sent via airmail—it does not necessarily reflect the published text. Still, keeping in mind that the words are said at least to evoke an elegiac "heart-racking sense of the vanished past," it is Gandalf's conversation with Pippin in Book III: "The Palantír" that seems to me the best fit. Unfortunately, Christopher Tolkien makes no mention of that particular letter from his father in his notes on the evolution of the chapter in *The War of the Ring*. He does, however, include some alternate versions of Gandalf's words to Pippin that differ somewhat from the published text and are worth examining as further demonstrations of the range of effect Tolkien produces through untold tales.

While most of what carries an elegiac tone in the conversation between Gandalf and Pippin is preserved in the final form of the text, Gandalf's rumination in one draft about the lost location of two of the

Stones— "I do not know where, for no rhyme says. Maybe they were at Fornost, and with Kirdan at Mithlond in the Gulf of Lune where the grey ships lie" (*War* 77)—is excised from the final edition. The full force of the remote fictive past is delivered in not-so-subtle terms; the mystery of the stones' locations is explicitly untold—"no rhyme says." Another wrinkle of interest is introduced by the use of dialogue over plain narrative description, although from the perspective of a lore-master such as Gandalf, the words bear added significance—a sort of finality perhaps rivaling that of omniscient narration. If Gandalf says that there are no rhymes to remember the whereabouts of the stones, the reader has little difficulty accepting this as fact. The wizard's wistful, hypothetical "maybe" and the names of distant lands and characters that readers would have little knowledge of contribute also to the sense of loss, wonder, and sadness.[6]

What Tolkien ultimately decides to include of Gandalf's words in published form maintains the elegiac tone of the drafts while evoking the sublime[7] as well. The scene weaves in references to his wider body of myth while impressing on readers Gandalf's extensive, yet ultimately limited knowledge. The discussion of the palantír begins with Gandalf muttering "Rhymes of Lore" to himself as he and Pippin ride toward Minas Tirith. The rhyme Pippin overhears ends with "Seven stars and seven stones / And one white tree" (*TT*, III, xi, 202). Songs and poems are often used throughout Tolkien's narrative to convey a sense of oral history and of depth—verses like the Rhymes of Lore suggest layers of prior history and legend, preserved fragments.[8] The remote appeal of the Rhyme catches Pippin's attention, prompting his inquiries about the origins of the Palantír. Gandalf's reply exemplifies the emotion Tolkien considered closest to his heart, and is the most reasonable candidate for the vague reference to "Gandalf's words" in the letter to his son. The wizard tells Pippin, "The Noldor made [the palantíri]. Fëanor himself, maybe, wrought them, in days so long ago that the time cannot be measured in years" (*TT*, III, xi, 203). Whether or not we are familiar with the legendary craftsman, Gandalf's words leave us with a powerful sense of a measureless abyss of time.

This is again the impression when Gandalf later "sighed and fell silent" after expressing his longing to gaze into the Stone, "to look across the wide seas of water and of time to Tirion the Fair, and perceive the unimaginable hand and mind of Fëanor at their work, while both the White Tree and the Golden were in flower" (*TT*, III, xi, 204). It is a poignant image of longing and regret, though we might understand little of what Gandalf says, and its beauty and sadness are only heightened by the fact that the time is irretrievably lost—even Gandalf, sage and scholar, finds the work of Fëanor almost "unimaginable." It should be

noted that much of the history of Fëanor, at least, is recounted in *The Silmarillion*, thus setting this episode somewhat apart from the many completely "ungrounded" untold tales. Yet even if we have had the privilege of reading *The Silmarillion* (those reading prior to 1977 certainly had no such recourse), the element of confusion is only slightly effaced; Gandalf is justified in expressing uncertainty about the origins of the stones, as Fëanor is not explicitly linked to them in any other writings. The wizard's words, as Tolkien rightly indicates in the letter to Christopher, grant the reader a brief glimpse of the vanished past, at once revealing and baffling.

"*Celebrimbor*"

The untold story of another legendary Elvish smith is the subject of Tolkien's second example. If his reference to the palantír was somewhat vague, Celebrimbor proves even more troublesome. Although a renowned craftsman and in fact the maker of the Three Elven Rings of Power (a feat of obvious import to the events of the Third Age), Celebrimbor is mentioned only three times in all *The Lord of the Rings*. We know he is the "maker of the Three" and that he wrote the "signs" on the door to the entrance of Moria, but little else (*FR*, II, ii, 255; *FR*, II, iv, 318). It seems an oversight that so little is said of the smith who had such an important hand in the events leading up to what transpires in *The Lord of the Rings*, but this is precisely Tolkien's point in the letter; the name alone imparts a sense of untold stories, as the deeds of Celebrimbor are almost entirely obscured in the fictional past. What little that remains, however, is shaped for maximum literary effect.

During "The Council of Elrond," a chapter so densely weighted with historical revelation that Tolkien himself expressed some misgivings, the history concerning Celebrimbor at least is delivered in a manner which showcases the importance of the paradox of the untold story in Tolkien's work. As the Council progresses, we are tantalized by the thought of "Elrond in his clear voice" telling the full tale of the history of the Rings, but such dialogue is withheld in favor of a kind of terse summation by the narrator, dashing any hopes of a thorough account.

> But Celebrimbor was aware of [Sauron], and hid the Three which he had made; and there was war, and the land was laid to waste, and the gate of Moria was shut.
>
> Then through all the years that followed [Elrond] traced the Ring; but since that history is elsewhere recounted, even as Elrond himself set it down in his books of lore, it is not here recalled. For it is a long tale, full of deeds great and terrible, and briefly though Elrond spoke, the sun rode up the sky, and the morning was passing ere

he ceased. (*FR*, II, ii, 255)

Here are present many of the hallmarks of Tolkien's untold tales, which grant his prose narratives the ability to solve his "fundamental literary dilemma." The condensed, polysyndetic summation, combining stark and striking images with the passive voice, recalls Christopher Tolkien's description of *The Silmarillion*'s "epitomising form," which, "with its suggestion of ages of poetry and 'lore' behind it, strongly evokes a sense of 'untold tales', even in the telling them; 'distance' is never lost" (*Lost Tales I*, xii). In "The Adapted Text: The Lost Poetry of Beleriand" (*TS* I 21–41) Nagy elaborates further on this point, demonstrating how certain elements of style in *The Silmarillion* contribute to a sense of depth by suggesting (and at times revealing) verse adaptation.[9] In "the textual world," Nagy argues, these stylistic elements often "mark central scenes, climaxes, or privileged points in the narrative" (25). As the Celebrimbor passage suggests, this phenomenon is not limited to *The Silmarillion*. Crucial events in *The Lord of the Rings*, whether "historical" or in the narrative present, are often treated indirectly or elliptically, through mediating storytellers who withhold from us the whole tale.

The following paragraph, beginning with "Then through all the years," provides another shift, and we are further removed from the action, with all but the duration of Elrond's speech, indirectly measured by the sun's path through the sky, omitted. The description of the passing day is reminiscent of the excuse used by Aeneas in Book I of Virgil's *Aeneid*: "Goddess, should I recount / From their first source, and wert thou free to hear, / Our sorrow's sad recital, eve would first / Put day to sleep, and shut the gates of heaven" (Rhoades, I, 113, ll. 370).[10] But Tolkien does not stop at simply robbing the reader of the full story. He then offers the blunt, dead-end provocation that, because this text can be accessed in Elrond's library, the details of the tale will not—need not—be "recalled." The reader is left with a powerful and lasting impression of this legend out of the fictive past, but any sense that our curiosity has been satisfied quickly gives way to the realization that it is merely being tickled into the realm of further inquiry.

Taxonomy: Two types of untold tales

Based on Tolkien's initial examples, we can distinguish between two broad categories of untold tales: the explicit and the implicit. These two categories relate to Nagy's distinction between two aspects of depth: the invocation of stories versus the invocation of texts. The explicitly untold tale is tied to the latter; it withholds information on the grounds that the corresponding song or tale is either non-existent/

non-extant (as in Gandalf's "no rhyme says"), unavailable (Celebrimbor's "history" is "not here recalled"), or abridged (Treebeard "cannot tell it properly, only in short") (*TT,* III, iv, 78). Explicitly untold tales are delivered either by the narrator or through characters within the fiction unable or unwilling to divulge more information. They are self-reflexive, drawing the reader's attention away from the immediate narrative.

The implicitly untold tale, on the other hand, evokes or suggests a relation to outside stories without any clear reference to textuality. This second category includes all other methods of narrative withholding: allusions (often to names of people or locations, as in "Kirdan at Mithlond in the Gulf of Lune"), ellipses, digressive episodes, or condensed summaries ("and there was war"), to name a few. Whether explicit or implicit, all untold tales can be said to be "verifiable" or "unverifiable," depending on the possibility of further investigation in the same or another text.[11] Although these two types of untold tales can and do exist separately, they are often entwined, working in tandem, as in the examples of the Palantír and Celebrimbor.

"To go there is to destroy the magic, unless…"

Both of the examples in the letter to Christopher are derived from *The Lord of the Rings*, a work which has often been praised for such qualities.[12] But, as I suggested earlier, the untold tale is not a feature of one work only, but an important part of the legendarium as a whole. Some distinction must be drawn, of course, between core texts like *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* on the one hand, and the many posthumously released stories on the other. If, as I argue, we are to consider the untold tale a highly refined element of Tolkien's prose, there remains always some doubt over the ultimate intentions of the author in assessments of the posthumous material. In spite of the problematic state of much of the legendarium, the appearance of untold tales in narratives published after Tolkien's death in 1973 remains worthy of examination.[13]

The Silmarillion of 1977, perhaps the most important of the posthumous Middle-earth publications, may bring into clear view some of the "glimpses" which tantalize readers in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but not without whetting the reader's appetite with its own enigmas. The mate of Anglachel, Beleg's (and later, Turin's) sword, sounds interesting indeed, but it "does not enter into this tale" (*S* 201). Likewise, Beren's exploits in Gorgoroth might presumably merit their own chapter, but instead we learn nothing of his journey, as Beren "spoke of it to no one after, lest the horror return into his mind; and none know how he found a way, and so came … to the borders of Doriath"

(*S* 164). Tolkien's paradox of the untold story was one which engaged all of his work, as the untold tales of *The Silmarillion* suggest.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the ubiquitous nature of untold tales comes from a collection like *Unfinished Tales*, which, as advertised on its dust jacket, would seem to reveal the "unexplained vistas" which Tolkien had cautioned some readers, for the sake of "literary effect," to avoid. But just as in *The Silmarillion*, anything more than a cursory look at the drafts and excerpts compiled within *Unfinished Tales* reveals prose riddled with a sense of untold tales. I offer two brief examples: one from "The Disaster of the Gladden Fields" and another from "The Quest of Erebor." The first tells of Isildur's plight after the Last Alliance, an event crucial to the history of the Ring but one only hinted at in *The Lord of the Rings*. This "late narrative" concludes with a description of a treasure hoard containing some of Isildur's effects, discovered long after in Orthanc:

> When men considered this secret hoard more closely, they were dismayed. For it seemed to them that these things, and certainly the Elendilmir, could not have been found, unless they had been upon Isildur's body when he sank; but if that had been in deep water of strong flow they would in time have been swept far away. Therefore Isildur must have fallen not into the deep stream but into shallow water, no more than shoulder-high. Why then, though an Age had passed, were there no traces of his bones? Had Saruman found them, and scorned them—burned them with dishonour in one of his furnaces? If that were so, it was a shameful deed; but not his worst. (*UT* 277)

Ending the account with such a discovery would seem to wrap things up properly, but for the puzzling question of the king's bones—which, in spite of the suggested cremation scenario, is left intentionally ambiguous. Elsewhere, Tolkien uses the discovery of bones or other fragmentary remains to initiate investigations into untold tales, but here they are used otherwise; Isildur's missing skeleton is symbolic of some essential lacuna in the story, and indeed this final point of intrigue is a fitting end to the nebulous tradition of Isildur.

Elsewhere in *Unfinished Tales*, an early draft of "The Quest of Erebor" material yields an exchange between Gimli and Gandalf which goes straight to the heart of Tolkien's untold tales. Most of the text is tailored toward tying up loose ends created by the beginning of *The Hobbit*; Gandalf, in retrospect, provides his reasons (however farfetched) for facilitating the business venture between Thorin and

Bilbo, highlighting the earth-shattering importance that such seemingly insignificant actions would have on the subsequent history of Middle-earth. In the end, however, the tidy conclusion is overturned with almost post-modern audacity, the dwarf musing: "Well, I am glad to have heard the full tale. If it is full. I do not really suppose that even now you are telling us all you know." Gandalf, channeling Tolkien, can only reply, "Of course not" (*UT* 336). In what way (if at all) Tolkien intended to publish such material is unclear, but the fact that, as we have them, both these unfinished narratives should end on the distinctive note of an untold tale is indicative of Tolkien's method.

Returning to *The Lord of the Rings*, we find similar tactics at work. The tale proper, itself full of enigmas, is in some sense bracketed by untold tales thanks to its Prologue and Appendices—sections which the reader would normally expect to provide clarification rather than further confusion. The Prologue ends on a note of speculation regarding Celeborn's departure, but concedes that "there is no record of the day when at last he sought the Grey Havens, and with him went the last living memory of the Elder Days in Middle-earth" (*FR*, Prologue, 25).[14] On the far end of the narrative are the Appendices, containing the ancillary material which Tolkien had grumbled about but did eventually complete. The first of the Appendices concludes with an explicitly untold tale: that, regarding rumors of Galadriel's role in bringing Gimli to Valinor, "more cannot be said of this matter" (*RK*, Appendix A, III, 362). By striking this emphatically cryptic note with the last line of Appendix A, Tolkien once more demonstrates his overarching concern with enigmas.

Having differentiated between some major types of untold tales and acknowledged their centrality, can we say more of their role? Like "the gaps in the leaves and boughs" in "Leaf by Niggle" which grant glimpses of the painter's vast landscape and mountains beyond, the suggestive power of untold tales creates space and depth, bringing Tolkien's prose to life (*TL* 76). They are the hyperlinks to Middle-earth's web of stories, and whether active or dead, they, like the digressions in *Beowulf*, convey a whole range of artistic effects.[15]A full categorization[16] of the myriad roles played by untold tales is beyond the scope of the present study, but here I should like to discuss their relation to two important aspects of Tolkien's prose: the elegiac mode and the sublime.

Elegy and the Sublime

As has been noted, the depth created by untold tales is largely illusory; the fleeting glimpse of a world of stories on the periphery is often (though not always) a mirage. The provocations and subsequent

limitations imposed by untold tales contribute to what Tolkien called in his letter on literary paradox, the "heart-racking sense of the vanished past," a remote but poignant feeling of loss and nostalgia.[17] John D. Rateliff suggests that an elegiac "sense of loss is always pervasive in all Tolkien's work" (*Blackwelder* 80).[18] Still more plainly, *The Lord of the Rings* is, as Strider says of his campfire tale of Beren and Luthien, "sad, as are all the tales of Middle-earth" (*FR,* I, xi, 203).[19] Throughout the legendarium, untold tales help to convey this elegiac tone—Gandalf's longing to see Fëanor at work and the reader's desire to hear Elrond recount the history of the Ring are but two among many examples of this unrequited longing. Earlier in *The Lord of the Rings*, after rescuing the hobbits from a barrow-wight, Tom Bombadil sifts through the wight's treasure hoard.

> He chose for himself from the pile a brooch set with blue stones, many-shaded like flax-flowers or the wings of blue butterflies. He looked long at it, as if stirred by some memory, shaking his head, and saying at last:
>
> 'Here is a pretty toy for Tom and for his lady! Fair was she who long ago wore this on her shoulder. Goldberry shall wear it now, and we will not forget her!' *(FR,* I, viii, 156-57)

We never receive even a hint of who this fair "she" is, or what memory may have stirred Tom, but in spite of this (or perhaps precisely *because* of it) the scene is tantalizingly effective. In his aforementioned letter to Naomi Mitchison Tolkien places special emphasis on verifiable enigmas, like those which allude to events detailed in *The Silmarillion*. Bombadil's memory, however, is a fine example of Tolkien's aptitude for exploiting completely illusory loose ends as well. Untold tales are uniquely well-suited to conveying this emotion, for they are themselves a lack, a felt absence and a faint reminder of other stories fading beyond recall.

Of course, untold tales are capable of more than just making readers sad; in their ability to suggest limitless, infinite depth, they evoke the sublime, a quality of transcendent potency. Tolkien has had little to say explicitly on the subject, but some of his reflections on literary power bear mentioning, especially in their connection with our notion of untold tales. In "On Fairy-stories," for instance, Tolkien refers to the sensation of an "abyss of time" in his discussion of the "ancient" quality of the fairy-tale. He believed this quality lends a transcendent power to fairy-tales, rivaling (and maybe even surpassing) that of other great stories—"they open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through,

though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe" (*MC* 129). It is no great stretch to connect this door to Other Time to our previous discussions of narrative depth, and to imagine it opening as Gandalf muses on the origins of the Seeing Stones: "Fëanor himself, maybe, wrought them, in days so long ago that the time cannot be measured in years" (*TT*, III, xi, 203).

Tolkien's ruminations on the sublime are not confined only to his academic essays, however. In his letter exploring the paradox of the untold story, Tolkien makes pointed reference to "Leaf by Niggle," and it is thus unsurprising that the distant mountains in Niggle's life's work provide another link between untold tales and the sublime. In Niggle's Parish, where the painter is blissfully free to explore the reaches of his painting, the mountains "get nearer, very slowly," but even so they do "not seem to belong to the picture, or only as a link to something else, a glimpse through the trees of something different, a further stage: another picture" (*TL* 89). Their essence, it seems, is too great to be contained in or fully captured by Niggle's art. As the artist goes along his journey, presumably toward Paradise, he progresses ever closer to the mountains. But for the narrator they remain the ultimate untold story, for "what they are really like, and what lies beyond them; only those can say who have climbed them" (*TL* 93). A similar sense of ungraspable immensity is evoked in the legendarium by passages like the Celebrimbor summary, with its minimalist treatment of a legendary historical event.[20]

At its best, Tolkien's prose grants Middle-earth the multiplicative depth of Niggle's Parish. The reader can "approach it, even enter it, without its losing that particular charm," because there is always the sensation of "new distances" unfolding, "doubly trebly, and quadruply enchanting" (*TL* 89). This aptly describes the Grey Company's (and the reader's) experience venturing under the mountains along the Paths of the Dead. Continuing straight through would seem to satisfy the immediate needs of the narrative, but Tolkien instead takes them on a short detour to highlight something quite far removed from the pressing concerns of the War of the Ring or the Oathbreakers:

> Before [Aragorn] were the bones of a mighty man. He had been clad in mail, and still his harness lay there whole; for the cavern's air was as dry as dust, and his hauberk was gilded. His belt was of gold and garnets, and rich with gold was the helm upon his bony head face downward on the floor. He had fallen near the far wall of the cave, as now could be seen, and before him stood a stony door closed fast: his finger-bones were still clawing at the cracks. A notched and

> broken sword lay by him, as if he had hewn at the rock in his last despair. (*RK*, V, ii, 60)

The ranger sighs, taking a moment to reflect by the body, yet he is resigned to his ignorance of the man's purpose, knowing that the Company must press on. He leaves the fallen warrior, saying, "Nine mounds and seven there are now green with grass, and through all the long years he has lain at the door that he could not unlock. Whither does it lead? Why would he pass? None shall ever know" (*RK*, V, ii, 61). Aragorn is right, of course, though bits and pieces (his name at least, Baldor son of Brego) can be gleaned from the appendices (*RK*, Appendix A, II, 349) or from Theoden's recollection of "ancient legend, now seldom spoken" (*RK*, V, iii, 70). But this is precisely Tolkien's point, and the episode brings Middle-earth to life—ironically, paradoxically—as only an untold tale could.

There is a striking similarity between the skeleton on the Paths of the Dead and Ernest Hemingway's leopard in the epigraph to this paper. Like Tolkien, Hemingway, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1954, seven years before Tolkien's nomination, developed a theory of omission and narrative withholding which became a core tenet of his prose style.[21] According to his theory, "the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood" (*A Moveable Feast* 75). There remains, of course, a world of difference between the two writers, but the fact that they share this fundamental principle is nonetheless significant. Though Tolkien modeled much of his technique on the ancient sources he professed, it was also a fundamentally modern one. In spite of this sort of surprising overlap in prose strategy between Tolkien and more "canonical" writers, it remains difficult for many critics to judge Tolkien's literary merits. In the end, it may come down to the issue of taste and familiarity. Tolkien once said of *Beowulf* that it was "more like masonry than music," and perhaps the contrast is somewhat true of Tolkien's work as well (*MC* 30). But with an open mind and a critical eye we can acknowledge the artistry in Tolkien's use of untold tales and join C. S. Lewis, the man who nominated Tolkien for the Nobel, in quoting Gimli: "there is good rock here."

Explicitly Untold Tales

Types	Examples	Notes
Explicitly untold	"How Shelob came there, flying from ruin, no tale tells" (*TT*, IV, ix, 332)	Elegy, textual awareness/reflexivity[22]
Qualified and verifiable	"But [goblins] had a special grudge against Thorin's people, because of the war which you have heard mentioned, but which does not come into this tale" (*H*, IV, 60)	Intrigue, textual awareness/reflexivity
Qualified and unverifiable	"Shelob was gone; and whether she…this tale does not tell" (*TT*, IV, x, 339 my emphasis)	Intrigue (perhaps followed by frustration), textual awareness. We have here a strong sense of the maddeningly coy, and perhaps playful, narrator.[23]
Incomplete and verifiable	Strider's campfire tale: "I will tell you the tale of Tinuviel…in brief – for it is a long tale of which the end is not known" (*FR*, I, xi, 203)	Layered, intertextual depth, elegy
Incomplete and unverifiable	On the Entwives: 'yes, I will indeed,' said Treebeard, seeming pleased with the request. 'But I cannot tell it properly, only in short; and then we must end our talk…' (*TT*, III, iv, 78)	The characters themselves get in on the coy act, as we see from Treebeard's tantalizing remarks here.[24]

Implicitly Untold Tales

Undeveloped allusion (loose end)	Tom Bombadil's "fair" lady (*FR*, I, viii, 157)	Confusion, comedy, wrath (see above discussion)
Episode, developed within the primary text	Gandalf and the lights seen on Weathertop (*FR*, I, xi, 195, 200; *FR*, II, ii, 277)	Small, suspenseful cliffhangers, leading to epitomizing summation by Gandalf, but not, perhaps, wholly satisfactory revelation

Implicitly Untold Tales (continued)

Types	Examples	Notes
Allusion, developed in another text	"The blade scored it with a dreadful gash, but those hideous folds could not be pierced by any strength of men, not though Elf or Dwarf should forge the steel or the hand of Beren or of Túrin wield it." (*TT*, IV, x, 337-38)	Heightened sense of history, typological events, intertextual depth[25]
Digressive episode	Brego and the Paths of the Dead (*RK,* V, ii, 60 ; *RK*, V, iii, 70-71)	A literal, but memorable digression off the beaten path beyond Dunharrow, leading to a moving glimpse of the heroic cultural background of Rohan
Ellipsis, developed (partially)	Gandalf describes his duel with the Balrog: "if there were a year to spend, I would not tell you all" (*TT*, III, v, 104).	Indirection adds to the sense that some encounters are ultimately beyond the reach of words
Ellipsis, largely undeveloped	As battle is joined before the Gates of Mordor, Pippin's "thought fled far away and his eyes saw no more"… (*RK, V,* x, 169).	Cliffhangers or character development, indirection (common mediating technique in Tolkien's narration of battles)
Enigma	Mysterious old man seen by the three hunters (TT, III, ii, 45)	See Tolkien's letter to Mitchison (discussed above)
Artifacts, Fragments, Ruins	The Book of Mazarbul; Sword-that-was-Broken; The Dead Marshes, the "great battle long ago" (*FR,* II, v, 335-36; *FR,* I, x, 182, 184; *TT*, IV, ii, 235)	The lasting remnants of untold tales, standing in for (or in the case of the Book, telling) them, sparking curiosity[26]
"Epitomising summation"	Celebrimbor is mentioned at the Council (*FR,* II, ii, 255).	The sublime (see above discussion)

Notes

1 See Tom Shippey's discussion of the philological aspects of the asterisk reconstruction in *The Road to Middle-earth* (19-23).

2 The discussion of the vague and unsettling increase in tension at work in the Mines of Moria should also be mentioned: "What Tolkien does in such passages is to satisfy the urge to know more (the urge he himself felt as an editor of texts so often infuriatingly incomplete), while retaining and even intensifying the counterbalancing pleasure of seeming always on the edge of further discovery, looking into a world that seems far fuller than the little at present known" (*Author of the Century* 86-87). The presence of this counterbalance, I would argue, is ubiquitous to Tolkien's legendarium.

Likewise Shippey's online discussion of "lost tales" in "Tolkien's Two Views of Beowulf": "But there are two more Tolkienian reasons for not forgetting what the poem has to say about history. One is that the poem is absolutely full (and quite apart from the monsters) of something we know Tolkien liked very much indeed, which is, 'lost tales.' Again and again the poet hints at, alludes to, tells a bit of a story which we sometimes get hints of elsewhere, and sometimes know nothing about. I count about twenty of them."

3 Christopher Tolkien argues that putting pen to paper was never a question, and this viewpoint is perhaps strengthened by the imperative used by Tolkien in the letter—the story must be told. See the Foreword to *The Book of Lost Tales I* for more (*Lost Tales I*, ix-xi).

4 See the BBC article online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-16440150.

5 Rushdie's extended comments can be found in his review of the film at http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2003/jan/04/film.salmanrushdie.

6 They would of course have no knowledge at all of such matters, prior to the many posthumous publications of much of the material concerning the Elder Days.

7 A proper definition of the sublime would be the subject of one or more books, but, for the purposes of brevity, we may consider it a sense of unquantifiable power or the infinite, often characterized by contradictory sensations (such as terror and awe). I would argue that the sea in Tolkien's allegory for *Beowulf* criticism is an image of the sublime.

8 For an exploration of the suggestion of oral history and its importance to Middle-earth, see Prozesky.

9 See Nagy's "The Adapted Text" (21 and passim).

10 In "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," Tolkien praises Virgil's ability to project the "effect of antiquity (and melancholy)" so deftly that readers are prompted to say with longing: "Alas for the lost lore, the annals and poets that Virgil knew" (*MC* 27). Faramir says much the same of Gandalf in his talks with Frodo: "it is hard indeed to believe that one of so great wisdom … could perish, and so much lore be taken from the world" (*TT*, IV, v, 279).

11 More often than not they are partially verifiable. Thus I prefer this distinction over Nagy's similar "genuine" and "contentless," as untold tales are by nature somewhat "ingenuine." Furthermore, "verifiable" is a more cautious label than "contentless," given the inevitable questions of lost drafts or content that may well have existed on some level, if only in Tolkien's head.

12 Shippey has said that *The Lord of the Rings* "has in abundance…the Beowulfian 'impression of depth'" (*Road* 229).

13 Had many of these posthumous publications never come to light at all, it would in a sense only strengthen the argument that what remains unsaid is of great importance to our understanding of Tolkien's work.

14 Brljak singles this out as a keynote for all of Tolkien's mature fiction (5-6).

15 For the classic study on the importance of Beowulf's digressions (itself indebted to Tolkien's influential essay on the poem's literary qualities), see Bonjour.

16 They can be used as a method of character development, to evoke suspense, to confuse and frustrate, as an integral part of the metafictional aspects so compelling to Brljak, and more. For a few examples, see the chart included at the end of this text.

17 Here again the influence of *Beowulf* should be noted; Tolkien classified the Old English work not as epic, but heroic-elegiac. Furthermore, its "dark antiquity of sorrow" as Tolkien argued in his famous essay, could be seen as an "effect and a justification of the use of episodes and allusions to old tales" (*MC* 27).

18 While Rateliff touches on the importance of understanding

Tolkien's work as the "*lost* tales, the fragmentary sole surviving record of a forgotten history," he believes the mournful mood is due primarily to Tolkien's decision to place "Middle-earth on our own planet" (69, 67).

19 He says this, fittingly, in reference to a fragmentary poem with no extant conclusion.

20 Mountains themselves indicate untold tales in the legendarium as well as in Niggle's Parish. See for example the allusion to Aragorn's wandering in Appendix A, that "when he was last seen his face was towards the Mountains of Shadow" (*RK*, Appendix A, I, 336).

21 Incidentally, 1954 was also the year *The Fellowship of the Ring* was published. Hemingway's theory of omission is not mentioned in the Nobel Presentation Speech. For more see the Nobel archive website: http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1954/press.html.

22 For a discussion of the significance of this specific reference to Shelob, see Prozesky (30).

23 As Shippey says of the writers of *Beowulf*, the *Aeneid*, and other works influential to Tolkien, "there was a sense that the author knew more than he was telling, that behind his immediate story there was a coherent, consistent, deeply fascinating world of which he had no time (then) to speak" (*Road* 228-29**).**

24 Consider Nagy's remark on the relevance of illusory depth: "the fact that illusory depth also appears should not detract from the feeling of completeness: the ultimate base-text, as we have seen, is *always* a pseudo-text" ("The Great Chain" 252).

25 Nagy ("The Great Chain" 241).

26 For further discussions of Mazarbul, see Flieger (*Interrupted Music* 74) or Hammond and Scull (163).

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"Beneath the Earth's dark keel": Tolkien and Geology

Gerard Hynes

"O Valar, ye know not all wonders, and many secret things are there beneath the Earth's dark keel" (*Lost Tales I* 214). So Ulmo explained the Earth's structure to the Valar. It is curious that they, having materially participated in the making of the world, should be uncertain of its form, but Tolkien was himself uncertain how to depict Arda, at this stage (c.1919) and for decades afterwards.[1]

Henry Gee has rightly observed that it is unsurprising Tolkien was interested in the earth sciences given his own view of his profession: "I am primarily a scientific philologist. My interests were, and remain, largely scientific" (Gee 34; *Letters* 345). Tolkien, like any educated person of his generation, was exposed to and to a degree internalized both the scientific method and the scientific worldview. For example, in "On Fairy-stories" Tolkien chose to use a geologic metaphor when discussing the preservation of ancient elements in fairy-stories: "Fairy-stories are by no means rocky matrices out of which the fossils cannot be prised except by an expert geologist" (*OFS* 49). As Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson note in their commentary, "The geologic comparison here is both timely and intentional: geology and mythology being coeval disciplines arising in roughly the same period and out of the same human impulse to dig into origins" (*OFS* 106). The same could, of course, be said of philology. Further, Tolkien was a reader of science fiction and well aware of the expectations it engendered in readers in terms of coherent world building (see Gee 23-41). Given Tolkien's insistence that Middle-earth is our Earth (*Letters* 220, 239, 283, 376) the inclusion of geological references is part of the "hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun" (*OFS* 65) which is, according to Tolkien, fantasy's essential foundation.

But scientific understanding and the theories and discoveries on which it is based develop and change. The importance of scientific developments, and geology in particular, to Tolkien's account of the shaping of Middle-earth has been emphasized by Karen Wynn Fonstad, Alex Lewis and Elizabeth Currie, Henry Gee and Kristine Larsen (Larsen, *A Little Earth of His Own*, *Shadow and Flame*).[2] The geology Tolkien knew was not static in any way; new discoveries apparently influenced him as he revised his *legendarium*. The most far-reaching development in geological theory in the twentieth century, though it took most of Tolkien's scholarly lifetime to establish itself, was continental

drift and Tolkien's writing displays an awareness of and receptivity to it.[3] Both Robert C. Reynolds and William Sarjeant have offered explanations of the topography of Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age in terms of plate tectonics, but both articles are primarily descriptive and do not address the question of Tolkien's knowledge of geology, particularly the evidence for continental drift developing across the drafts of his *legendarium*.[4]

Indications of a growing concern with geological accuracy and a familiarity with continental drift emerge side by side in Tolkien's writings as they developed. Though Tolkien's geology would always have a strong catastrophist element, in the 1930s Tolkien began to incorporate into it a uniformitarian underpinning of geologic time as well as a dynamic theory of geological change. [5] The general uniformitarian consensus in geology in the second half of the nineteenth and opening decades of the twentieth century understandably formed the basis of Tolkien's treatment of geologic time. But the particular form geological change took in his developing presentation of Middle-earth in deep time may be in part the result of Alfred Wegener's then revolutionary theory of continental drift. Briefly put, "continental drift" proposes a lateral movement of land masses across the Earth's surface over geologic time. The notion of continental drift was suggested as early as 1596 in the third edition of Abraham Ortelius' *Thesaurus Geographicus* where he noticed the symmetry of the African and American coasts and reinterpreted Plato's *Critias* as referring not to Atlantis sinking but to it being dragged westwards, a cataclysmic event marking the rupture of the Old and New Worlds (Romm 408). While Ortelius' account has some points of contact with Tolkien's description of the downfall of Númenor and the removal of Valinor from terrestrial geography, there is no particular evidence Tolkien knew it.[6] Instead, we must turn to the main works of continental drift theory which certainly were known and debated in Tolkien's lifetime.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the dominant explanation for large scale geological features such as mountain ranges was that the Earth was gradually cooling from an original molten state causing its surface to wrinkle like the skin of an apple (Hallam 110ff.). The first modern theory of continental drift (which would automatically provide an alternative explanation of such features) was published by the American geologist F.B. Taylor in "Bearing of the Tertiary Mountain Belt on the Origin of the Earth's Plan" in the *Geological Society of America Bulletin* in 1910. The German meteorologist Alfred Wegener independently developed his own theory of continental drift, first published in 1915 in *Die Entstehung der Kontinente und Ozeone* (translated into English as *The Origin of Continents and Oceans* in 1924).

Of the two, Wegener became better known. *The Times*, one of Tolkien's regular papers (Scull and Hammond II 822), published an unfavourable article on Wegener's theory in 1923.[7] The paper later covered Wegener's final, and fatal, Arctic expedition throughout 1930 with an obituary for Wegener, containing a paragraph on continental drift, in 1931.[8] For these reasons, it is Wegener's version of the theory that will be addressed here.

Wegener was profoundly dissatisfied with the prevalent explanation for the existence of identical species of flora and fauna on separate continents: intercontinental land-bridges which subsequently sank (Wegener 5-6). Had such bridges existed, he argued, the water they displaced would have raised the ocean level and flooded entire continents, preventing the very land-bridges the theory depended upon (Wegener 13). Like Ortelius, Wegener observed the symmetry of the South American and African coasts and suggested that the two continents, "formed a unified block which was split in two in the Cretaceous; the two parts must then have become increasingly separated over a period of millions of years like pieces of a cracked ice floe on water" (Wegener 17).[9] Apart from dispensing with unnecessary land-bridges, Wegener's theory also had the advantage of offering a viable alternate explanation for the formation of mountain ranges. The leading edges of drifting continents would become compressed and folded by the frontal resistance of the plates into which they were pressing; for example, the Andean range extending from Alaska to Antarctica would have been formed by the westward drift of the two Americas (Wegener 20). The great weakness of Wegener's theory was the lack of an explanation for the forces behind the motion. In the fourth edition of his work he surveyed the proposals of other theorists who suggested the friction of tidal waves or the precession of the Earth's axis under the gravitational attraction of the sun and moon, or perhaps convection currents in the sima (the lower layer of the Earth's crust), although Wegener felt that assumed a very great fluidity in the Earth's substructure (Wegener 175-78). Ultimately Wegener had to admit that theory had not caught up with observation:

> The formation of the laws of falling bodies and of the planetary orbits was first determined purely inductively, by observation; only then did Newton appear and show how to derive these laws deductively from the one formula of universal gravitation. [...] The Newton of drift theory has not yet appeared. (Wegener 167)

Wegener's theory also faced the difficulty that accepting it would require geologists to reject almost completely the existing scientific

consensus which was based on a static Earth model (Kearey and Vine 3-7). Though the reception of Wegener's hypothesis was at best mixed (Hallam 147), his work incited debate, not to say controversy, with an international conference addressing continental drift in 1922 (Dineley 826).[10]

The earliest example (c.1919) of what might be called tectonic movement in Tolkien's *legendarium* occurs when Ossë and his followers drag the island upon which the Valar are standing westward towards Eruman following the flooding caused by the destruction of the two lamps (*Lost Tales I* 70). This passage probably owes more to the giantess Gefjon dragging Zealand out to sea in Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*[11] (Snorri 29), than it does to any modern geophysics.[12] This geological change represents the power of the Ainur rather than Arda's natural processes. Tolkien wrote in "The Coming of the Valar," "Now this was the manner of the Earth in those days, nor has it since changed save by the labours of the Valar of old" (*Lost Tales I* 68). Arda was originally conceived of then as essentially static according to its own natural laws, though capable of transformation by external, catastrophic intervention.

Tolkien's cosmology in these early drafts leans more heavily towards the metaphoric, analogical approach of myth. While writing *The Book of Lost Tales,* Tolkien produced both a map of Arda and a highly stylised diagram, *I Vene Kemen.* The earliest "Silmarillion" map seems to be purely geographical in intent, a "quick scribble" with "The Theft of Melko and the Darkening of Valinor" written around it (*Lost Tales I* 82). Context may explain its purpose. Tolkien was likely visualizing the relative positions of Valmar, the Two Trees and Melko's escape route while working out his narrative. *I Vene Kemen*, possibly to be translated as "The Earth-Ship,"[13] also provides geographical information but additionally positions Arda within a larger creation by including the Sun, the Moon and the three layers of air which surround the world. Over the course of a four page discussion of the difficulties and questions the diagram raises, Christopher Tolkien suggests the mast and sails may be a later addition to the drawing and the metaphor of a ship may post-date the diagram itself, merely being inspired by the coincidental shape of the world (*Lost Tales I* 87). While *I Vene Kemen* may be a mythologized depiction of a cosmology, its form, the Earth "in section," is relatively modern. The diagram is reminiscent of the geological cross-section, a form which only emerged in the nineteenth century.[14] Geological diagrams were pioneered by the German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt (Fara 208-209); a figure Tolkien may have been familiar with (Lewis and Currie 19-32). Even in this early, "mythological" stage in Tolkien's cosmology, science, at

least the tradition of scientific illustration, may have had an influence.

Whether or not it was an impulsive decision on Tolkien's part, the image of the world as a ship upon the waters is not without precedent or possible sources. Thales of Miletus (c.620-c.546 BC), offered just such an analogy. Thales, one of the pre-Socratic natural philosophers, identified water as the primary substance of the physical universe. Aristotle wrote, "Thales, the founder of this school of philosophy, says that the principle is water, and for this reason declared that the earth rests on water" (*Metaphysics* 983 b20-b21). In his *De Caelo*, Aristotle gives Thales's theory but finds fault with it:

> Others say that the earth rests upon water. This, indeed, is the oldest theory that has been preserved and is attributed to Thales of Miletus. It was supposed to stay still because it floated like wood and other similar substances, which are so constituted as to rest upon water, but not upon air. As if the same account had not to be given of the water which carries the earth as of the earth itself! (*On the Heavens* 294 a29)

It is possible Aristotle misinterpreted Thales (O'Grady 88-94) who may have meant that individual islands and land masses floated on water rather than the Earth itself. Either interpretation could fit Tolkien's drawing in which both the land mass and the world itself are shaped like a ship. It was only later in antiquity that the Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger (c.4BC-AD65) introduced the image of the world as a ship:

> The following theory of Thales is silly. For he says that this round of lands is sustained by water and is carried along like a boat, and on the occasions when the earth is said to quake it is fluctuating because of the movement of the water. (*Questiones Naturales* III.14)[15]

Nevertheless, one pre-Socratic does not a cosmology make, and there is no evidence to argue for an explicit connection between *I Vene Kemen* and Thales. The idea of the Earth floating upon water is still present in the *Ambarkanta* of the mid 1930s but it is no longer mythologized to the degree of *I Vene Kemen*: "Within these walls the Earth is globed: above, below and upon all sides is Vaiya, the Enfolding Ocean. But this is more like to sea below the Earth and more like to air above the Earth" (*Shaping* 236). The diagrams of the 1930s are, however, less pictorial metaphors than *I Vene Kemen* and begin to show the strong influence of modern geography and geology, particularly in presentation.

Dimitra Fimi has argued that there is a discernible shift in Tolkien's *legendarium* during the 1930s from a "mythological" to a "novelistic" or "historical" mode (Fimi 5-6). Fimi attributes this change to Tolkien's adoption of a novelistic style for *The Hobbit* and *The Fall of Númenor* (Fimi 117-121, 161) but claims that the cosmology of this period (such as the *Ambarkanta*) is still "clearly "mythological" and has no aspiration to be realistic in any way" (Fimi 124). This claim requires some qualification. The *Ambarkanta*, subtitled "Of the Fashion of the World," does mark a shift in Tolkien's cosmology away from the mythic to one more (tentatively) historical and scientific. Tolkien arguably adapted his cosmology to be more acceptable to a contemporary readership bringing to the text assumptions based on a more dynamic, geologically active world. Just as Tolkien became concerned with the reaction of his readers to a mythologized astronomy, he was evidently equally concerned that the geology of Arda should be acceptable to readers with a scientific worldview.[16] Each of the two maps which accompany this text depict the Earth at a specific point in its history, with the differences between Maps IV and V representing the changes caused by the first Battle of the Gods when the Valar destroyed Utumno and chained Melko (*Shaping* 239, 248-51). The Valar, however, are no longer the only force capable of changing the Earth's fabric. Tolkien wrote, "And the Earth was again broken in the second battle, when Melko was again overthrown, *and it has changed ever in the wearing and passing of many ages*" (*Shaping* 239-40, my emphasis). This sentence marks a subtle but significant change in Tolkien's cosmology. The *Ambarkanta* dates from approximately the same time as Tolkien began writing *The Fall of Númenor*,[17] and he added material to the *Ambarkanta* referencing the effect of that cataclysm upon the shape of the world (*Shaping* 240, 261). This particular passage indicates Tolkien, even while thinking about cataclysmic change by divine fiat, was also beginning to write of that geological change in terms conditioned by the slow regular change of early twentieth century geological uniformitarianism.

In the Council of Elrond there is another reference to slow change over geologic time. Saruman had claimed the Ring had been rolled down the river Anduin into the sea where it would lie forever. Glorfindel seizes upon this suggestion as a means to be rid of the Ring.

> "Then," said Glorfindel, "let us cast it into the deeps, and so make the lies of Saruman come true. […] Yet oft in lies truth is hidden: in the Sea it would be safe."
>
> "Not safe forever," said Gandalf. "There are many things in the deep waters; and seas and lands may change. And it

> is not our part here to take thought only for a season, or for a few lives of Men, or for a passing age of the world. We should seek a final end of this menace, even if we do not hope to make one." (*FR*, II, ii, 349)

Although they are both essentially immortal beings, Gandalf takes a longer view than Glorfindel and thinks in geologic time.[18] Sauron's threat is to all of Middle-earth through all its time and Gandalf's response is relevant to that threat across time. Having a statement of long-term geological change come from a figure of such authority and be accepted by the equally wise indicates Tolkien considered geologic time an established feature of Arda's nature by the time this scene was composed; that is probably late 1940 or early 1941.[19]

As well as a general sense of long-term geological change, Tolkien's writings from the 1930s also begin to indicate a knowledge of the specifics of continental drift. As can be seen from the title of F.B. Taylor's 1910 work—"Bearing of the Tertiary Mountain Belt on the Origin of the Earth's Plan"—one of the attractions of continental drift was that it could explain the source of mountains and relate them to the structure of the Earth. The Canadian geologist Reginald A. Daly (one of Wegener's early advocates) eagerly applied the theory to this task in his 1926 defence of continental drift, *Our Mobile Earth* (Daly 260-63). The relevance of all this to Tolkien will become apparent when this passage from *Our Mobile Earth* is considered:

> At the close of the Palaeozoic Era, almost 200,000,000 years ago, the east-west geosyncline of the northern hemisphere was intensely crumpled by the sliding together of the North Polar dome and the Equatorial dome.[20] The result was the Appalachian-Hyrcanian system of mountains, extending from west of Arkansas, through Alabama, New England, Newfoundland, Britain and France, Germany, Russia and all across Asia to China. It was a colossal, probably uninterrupted, chain of mountains all the way. (Daly 315-316)

Maps IV and V of the *Ambarkanta* depict the Iron Mountains, which Melkor had raised to fortify the north, as just such a chain running unbroken across the north of Middle-earth (*Shaping* 235, 239, 248-251).[21] In *The Silmarillion* they are described as standing "upon the borders of the region of everlasting cold, in a great curve from east to west" (*S* 134).[22] There is an intriguing similarity between Melkor ensconced in the far north raising the Iron Mountains and the North Polar dome forcing up the Appalachian-Hyrcanian mountains between itself and

the equator, indicating a familiarity with theories of mountain formation in general if not Daly's work in particular.[23]

This is not the only time the North Pole and the theory of continental drift appear together in Tolkien's writings. While Henry Gee is correct to point out that Tolkien's use of the word Gondwanaland proves he was aware of the theory of continental drift (Gee 59; *Letters* 409-410), this letter dates from 1971 when the controversy over drift theory had been largely settled and the theory of plate tectonics was gaining general acceptance. What is more interesting is a much earlier mention of continental drift in a letter Tolkien wrote to his children in 1932 under the guise of Father Christmas. Referring to cave paintings beneath the North Pole "Father Christmas" writes:

> Cave bear says these caves belong to him, and have belonged to him or his family since the days of his great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great (multiplied by ten) grandfather; and the bears first had the idea of decorating the walls, and used to scratch pictures in soft parts—it was useful for sharpening the claws. Then MEN came along—imagine it! Cave bear says there were lots about at one time, *long ago, when the North Pole was somewhere else.* (That was long before my time, and I have never heard old Grandfather Yule mention it, even, so I don't know if he's talking nonsense or not). (Tolkien 2009, 78, my emphasis).[24]

It is understandable Tolkien should be non-committal about the validity of the theory. Wegener's work had only appeared in English eight years earlier and the reaction from the geological community had not been entirely favourable (Hallam 143-147).

Despite references to slow geological change, Tolkien's fictional geography owes as much to catastrophism, sudden and violent disturbances, as opposed to the slow and regular change of uniformitarianism (see Hallam 30-64; Lewis and Currie 18-32). The destruction of Beleriand, and later of Númenor, though geological events, are not explained in plausible geological terms. In part this can be accounted for by interpreting Tolkien's geology as geomythological rather than just geological. Geomythology, a term coined by Dorothy Vitaliano, is "the geologic application of euhemerism" and interprets certain myths and legends in terms of geological events that may have been witnessed by the human cultures who recorded the myths. It also includes etiological myths i.e. those invented to explain various environmental features (Vitaliano 1). The myths and legends of the First and Second Ages are understandably mythological, rather than historical, sources. Just

as Tolkien would come to see the astromythology of the First Age as a garbled Mannish tradition (*Morgoth* 370), his geomythology can be seen as mythologized, and catastrophized, accounts of real geological events or etiological explanations for the current environment of the Mannish world. Wegener's theory, while intrinsically uniformitarian, allows for geological upheavals which bridge the gap between such mythologized cataclysms and the almost imperceptible change of geological processes. Plate tectonics are responsible, after all, for such catastrophic results as the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and more recently the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.[25] While many geological events in the *legendarium* can only be interpreted literally in catastrophist terms, certain geological events are most easily understood as metaphoric reflexes of Wegener's theory. In the *Ambarkanta* the Valar attempt to strengthen Valinor's defences by widening the Western Sea separating it from Middle-earth:

> For their further protection the Valar thrust away Middle-earth at the centre and crowded it eastwards, so that it was bended, and the great sea of the West is very wide in the middle, the widest of all waters of the Earth. [...] And the thrusting aside of the land caused also mountains to appear in four ranges, two in the Northland and two in the Southland. (*Shaping* 239)[26]

This is catastrophic (although its timescale is undefined) but its effects upon the continents of Middle-earth are the same as those of the relatively gradual processes of continental drift. Even in *The Silmarillion* as published there is this interesting sentence: "But the mountains were the Hithaeglir, the Towers of Mist upon the borders of Eriador; yet they were taller and more terrible in those days, and were reared by Melkor to hinder the riding of Oromë" (*S* 52).[27] Here Tolkien displays his knowledge that taller mountains are younger, an important geological principle and basic to continental drift, though not a concept limited to that particular theory.

In a letter to H. Cotton Minchin Tolkien wrote: "Having geological interests, and a very little knowledge, I have not wholly neglected this aspect, but its indication is rather more difficult – and perilous!" (*Letters* 248). The peril Tolkien referred to could be interpreted in two ways. Scientific theories can become obsolete all too easily, leaving their references in Tolkien's works hanging in thin air with no referent, thus robbing the texts of the grounding in reality they would have originally possessed. The other peril might be the temptation to subject the texts to constant revision in the hope of making them scientifically coherent at the expense of the mythological qualities of

the original conception. The first type of peril, understandable given the precarious status of Wegener's theory for so long, could be (along with generic considerations) what kept references to geological movement in the texts to a minimum, always leaning towards metaphor and analogy. The second peril caused Tolkien immense trouble when attempting to reconcile the creation of the Sun and Moon with modern astronomy. Perhaps for this reason he did not attempt to make the geology of Middle-earth conform entirely to uniformitarian principles. Tolkien wrote geomythology (and geomythology tends towards the catastrophic) because he was writing mythology. Instead of trying to force fantasy into the mould of science fiction, he managed to incorporate into his work, to the enrichment of his sub-creation, several basic geological assumptions as well as one theory that would later be vindicated. During the 1930s Middle-earth's cosmology may have wavered between mythological and historical terms but it was bolstered by sound geological foundations.

Notes

1 Admittedly the knowledge of the Valar is dependent on their own part in, and hence knowledge of, the Music of the Ainur. For a thorough outline of Tolkien's struggles with the shape of the Earth see (Noad). For the most likely date of Ulmo's comment see (Scull and Hammond II, 120-32).

2 Kristine Larsen has also argued convincingly that Tolkien was conversant with modern astronomy, especially with theories of lunar formation as demonstrated in Ainulindalë C* (See Larsen, *A Little Earth of His Own*, also *Myth, Milky Way*).

3 "Continental drift" has become a largely discarded term due to its association with discredited mechanisms of tectonic motion. Geologists and geophysicists, should any read this article, will hopefully tolerate the use of the outdated term due to its currency during Tolkien's literary career.

4 Sarjeant disregards the "Silmarillion" material entirely. "In contrast, the supplementary material in the successive volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* must be viewed as the equivalent of a geologist's field notes – unrevised and not to be trusted; so this must be discounted. (In any case, the additional geological information to be found therein is quite remarkably meagre)" (Sarjeant 334).

5 Catastrophism is the theory that the Earth has been shaped by

sudden, violent cataclysms while uniformitarianism is the assumption in natural science that currently occurring natural processes have always operated in the same manner and at the same rate (see Hallam 30-64).

6 In the first half of the twentieth century Ortelius was primarily remembered for his contribution to cartography with his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. The eleventh edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that Ortelius "laid the basis of a critical treatment of ancient geography" but does not mention his Atlantis theory (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol. XX 331-32). Numerous geological explanations for the destruction of Minoan Crete (the main contender for a historical source for Atlantis) emerged in the second half of the twentieth century (See Vitaliano 179ff.). It will require further research to determine whether Tolkien could have known of any while writing about Númenor.

7 *The Times* Feb 6, 1923, p.8B.

8 *The Times* May 16, 1931. p.14F.

9 Wegener may have developed his theory while observing ice floes during one of his numerous Arctic expeditions.

10 The theory was only confirmed and generally accepted in the 1960s with the discovery of sea floor spreading and the development of palaeomagnetism (see Kearey and Vines 6). After the late 1960s the term "continental drift" came to be replaced by "plate tectonics" (see Searle 158).

11 A text which similarly mythologizes geographical features.

12 Captain Shard's floating island in Lord Dunsany's 1912 "The Loot of Bombasharna" (364-368) provides a contemporary analogue.

13 An isolated note in a notebook refers to a "Map of the Ship of the World" (*Lost Tales I* 87).

14 I have been unable to find any medieval depiction of the world "in section." Michael Freeman traces the development of the geological cross-section from the work of William Smith in the 1790s and notes the emergence of three dimensional geological models from the 1840s onwards (Freeman 122-29).

15 See also VI.6: "The cause of earthquakes is said to be water by more than one authority but not in the same way. Thales of Miletus judges that the whole earth is buoyed up and floats on liquid that lies

underneath, whether you call it the ocean, the great sea, [...]. The disc is supported by this water, he says, just as some big heavy ship is supported by the water which it presses down upon." None of Tolkien's published texts connects the earth's watery support with earthquakes but the image of the world as a ship cannot help but imply a certain sense of movement.

16 Consider Tolkien's problems with "The Flat Earth and the astronomically absurd business of the making of the Sun and Moon." "But you can make up stories of that kind when you live among people who have the same general background of imagination, when the Sun 'really' rises in the East and goes down in the West, etc. When however (no matter how little most people know or think about astronomy) it is the general belief that we live upon a 'spherical' island in 'Space' you cannot do this anymore" (*Morgoth* 370).

17 Christopher Tolkien dates the *Ambarkanta* to the mid 1930s, after the "later Annals" but before *The Fall of Númenor* (*Lost Road* 9, 108) which would date it to 1936-1937 at the latest (See Scull and Hammond II, 42-43, 283-84).

18 Glorfindel may be thinking of the Silmaril lost in the sea (*S* 305). His claim could also be unintentionally ironic given the propensity for rings cast into the sea to turn up inside fish (one of Gandalf's "many things in the deep waters"?). Going back as far as the Ring of Polycrates the motif is sufficiently common to be classified as tale type 736A (Aarne 253). Tolkien could have read it in "The Fish and the Ring" in Joseph Jacobs' 1890 collection *English Fairy Tales* (Jacobs 137-40). Also, though this exchange immediately follows Galdor's comment that "Sauron can torture and destroy the very hills," Gandalf links the change of seas and lands to the passage of time more than to Sauron's actions. Even if Tolkien was considering a scenario based on folklore or mythology, he implied a geological explanation—perhaps tellingly.

19 Cf. Frodo's experience in Lothlórien, "hearing far off great seas upon beaches that had long ago been washed away, and sea-birds crying whose race had perished from the earth" (*FR*, II, vi, 460). Tolkien attempted to set down the full story of Gandalf's encounter with Saruman and failure to return to Hobbiton between the fourth and fifth versions of "The Council of Elrond" (*Treason* 130-136). Gandalf's comments most likely date from the fifth version (see Scull and Hammond I, 241-43).

20 By "domes" Daly means what would later be called tectonic plates.

21 The Iron Mountains had existed since *The Book of Lost Tales* but at that early stage they were not clearly distinguished from what would become the Ered Wethrin (*Lost Tales I* 81, 112).

22 Interestingly, the Appalachian-Hyrcanian mountain system was severed by the opening of the Atlantic Ocean. In Middle-earth the battles between the Valar and Melkor breached several mountain chains, most notably the Blue Mountains in the War of Wrath, but also the Iron Mountains (*S* 341-42).

23 This is not to claim that every mountain range in Middle-earth must correspond to a counterpart in our primary world; the Misty Mountains are not the Alps for example. Tolkien stated, "[...] though I have not attempted to relate the shape of the mountains and land-masses to what geologists may say or surmise about the nearer past, imaginatively this "history" is supposed to take place in a period of the actual Old World of this planet" (*Letters* 220). His concern was that Middle-earth's geology be scientifically possible rather than historically accurate.

24 There is a physical North Pole in *The Father Christmas Letters*—see the 1926 letter—so Tolkien must be referring to continental drift rather than shifting magnetic poles (Tolkien 2009, 20). Also the North Pole would have been more habitable at a different latitude.

25 As catastrophic in terms of geological upheaval as in loss of life.

26 Kristine Larsen has argued that G.H. Darwin's explanation for the moon's formation, which Tolkien likely knew, provided an alternative and catastrophic explanation for some geological features which would otherwise be explained by Wegener's theory (Larsen, *A Little Earth of His Own* 400). Darwin argued the moon had been ejected from the Earth's surface during the build up of a tide in the young molten Earth and his interpreters attributed features such as mountain ranges and ocean basins to this cataclysm (*Loc. cit.*). Prior to *Ainulindalë* C*, however, Tolkien does not use a geological explanation for the moon's formation. The *Ambarkanta*, the most important text for a Wegenerian reading of Tolkien, describes geological formations without recourse to the moon.

27 This sentence is taken from *The Annals of Aman* dating from 1958 (*Morgoth* 47, 83). The *Hithaeglir* did not yet exist at the time of the *Ambarkanta* (*Shaping* 256-57) and the sentence does not appear in the 1937 *Quenta Silmarillion*.

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Law and Arda

Douglas C. Kane

J.R.R. Tolkien famously wrote in his classic essay "On Fairy-stories" that to create a Secondary world in which a "green sun" was "credible, commanding Secondary Belief" was "story-making in its primary and most potent mode" (*OFS* 61). To create a truly successful Fairy-story, or work of Fantasy, the sub-creator must be able to seamlessly blend elements that firmly exist in the real world with elements that vary from the real world and exist solely in the secondary world, and do that in a way that is believable to the reader, who obviously brings with her a real world perspective. The term "green sun" has no meaning except in the context of the reader's knowledge of the yellow sun in the real world of her experience.

There have been a number of attempts to document different ways in which Tolkien has achieved this difficult goal. Kristine Larsen's extensive efforts to demonstrate the ways in which the astronomical dimensions of Tolkien's secondary world parallel that of the real world immediately come to mind.[1] There have been numerous other similar efforts to describe the physical elements of Middle-earth, whether botanical, or geologic, or geographic. [2] There have also been a number of attempts to document the "philosophy of Middle-earth," and of course, unending discourses on the religious aspects of Tolkien's *legendarium*, as well as his borrowing from other myths and traditions, and the ways in which his various invented cultures and languages borrow from real world cultures and languages. Another example is John Garth's compelling descriptions of Tolkien's blending of his own experiences of war at the Somme in his fiction, particularly in the Dead Marshes chapter of *The Two Towers*, as well as the Hill of the Slain in *The Silmarillion*, which Garth describes as "a grand myth-maker's flourish with an alloy of realism" (Garth 18).

However, one area that has not been extensively discussed is the ways in which Tolkien gives his invented world an aura of realism through incorporating real world legal concepts into his fiction, blending and adapting them in order to fit into his secondary world, thus making his "green sun" that much more credible, and making secondary belief that much more possible. Any reasonably complex imagined society is going to have issues arise in which that society addresses how disputes and other interactions between individuals are resolved and regulated. These types of legal issues are of particular significance because of the relationship that law has with moral, philosophical and psychological concepts that are important in Tolkien's writings. As such, the way that

he incorporates these legal concepts into his secondary world—and the way that this evolved over the course of the creation of his *legendarium*—is especially instructive.

Tolkien, of course, was not an attorney or a legal scholar, and there is no indication that he was any more familiar with the law than one would expect of an educated British man in the early to mid twentieth century. However, this does not render a study of his use of real world legal concepts less valuable (any more than the fact that he was not an astronomer renders Larsen's work uninstructive). In *The Hobbit* in particular he demonstrates a remarkably intuitive knowledge of legal concepts. However, it was when he transcended that understanding that his fiction really blossomed.

In their Introduction to *Tolkien On Fairy-stories* (their expanded edition of Tolkien's famous essay) Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson describe how Tolkien applied the lessons that he learned in writing the essay to improve his craft, particularly as seen in the advances from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*. They state, "All of these improvements can be subsumed under the heading of the most potent phrase in Tolkien's essay, "the inner consistency of reality." *The Lord of the Rings* has it; *The Hobbit* has it intermittently, but not consistently" (*OFS* 18). This evolution can be seen in the presentation of legal issues in the two works (and also the movement within *The Lord of the Rings* itself from the earlier portions which are much more akin to *The Hobbit*, to the more gritty later portions). In *The Hobbit* the legal issues closely parallel the real world, whereas in *The Lord of the Rings* they are more firmly rooted to the secondary world, thus better serving the 'inner consistency of reality.'

This development can be seen even more clearly in Tolkien's expansion of the tales of the Elder Days in the years following the completion of *The Lord of the Rings*, in which his use of what his fellow Inkling, Owen Barfield, called "legal fictions" to express concepts of morality, philosophy and psychology, reached its highest level. In "Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction," an essay which was initially written as part of the book dedicated to another fellow Inkling, *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, Barfield discusses "legal fictions" (such as the creation of a corporation that can be sued as a person) as a way of creating meaning, comparing these devices to the way that metaphors work in language. Barfield argues that this type of figurative expression is ubiquitous not just in poetry, but throughout language. He notes that Aristotle in his *Poetics* called the element of metaphor "far the most important" (Barfield 45), and metaphor goes to the heart of Barfield's own theory of poetic diction, in which he utilizes the study of the use of language as evidence of the evolution of human consciousness. In

the course of discussing how these legal fictions relate to the use of figurative expression in language, Barfield makes a number of observations that reflect how Tolkien's incorporation of legal issues in his fiction advanced.

Barfield noted: "Properly understood, are [legal fictions] not a telling illustration of the fact that knowledge—the fullest possible awareness—of the nature of law is the true way of escape from its shackles?" (Barfield 64). We see this idea increasingly demonstrated in Tolkien's work over time, with a clear emphasis on a higher morality that supersedes the letter of the law.

Barfield also wrote: "Here we begin to tread on metaphysical ground and here I think the analogy of legal fictions can really help us by placing our feet on one or two firmer tufts in the quaking bog. It can help us to realize in firmer outlines certain concepts which, like all those relating to the nature of thought itself, are tenuous, elusive, and difficult of expression" (Barfield 59). This idea is strongly reflected in Tolkien's later work, particularly in the essay "Laws and Customs among the Eldar" in which Tolkien specifically uses a "legal fiction" (the so-called "Statute of Finwë and Míriel") in order to facilitate the expression of some of his most "tenuous, elusive, and difficult" conceptions.

Finally, we also see a depth of understanding of psychology reflected in his treatment of legal issues that would be surprising to literary critics who dismiss Tolkien as a superficial fantasy writer. Quoting again from "Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction": "There is not much that is more important for human beings than their relations with each other, and it is these which laws are designed to express" (Barfield 63). Another characteristic of Tolkien's later work is the way in which he shows individuals relating to each other, both in engaging in (or suffering the consequences of) criminal conduct, and in the "legal fiction" of the marital relationship.

The Hobbit

Tom Shippey, with typical alliterative insight, describes Bilbo Baggins as "the Bourgeois Burglar" (55-93). This description captures very nicely the two main legal motifs in *The Hobbit*—one contractual and the other criminal—and the way that they intersect. Shippey notes that the early development of the story of *The Hobbit* depends on the "tension between ancient and modern reactions" (73). Bilbo's attempt to retreat into a modern, business-like air is defeated by the Dwarf song "Far over the misty mountains cold," which evokes the ancient world and awakens in Bilbo's heart "the love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic" (*H* i 22). He is then met with

a contract "more practical than Bilbo at his most business-like had thought" (Shippey 73). This contract is a good example of how Tolkien used a very real world legal meme in *The Hobbit.* It reads in full:

> Thorin and Company to Burglar Bilbo greeting! For your hospitality our sincerest thanks, and for your offer of professional assistance our grateful acceptance. Terms: cash on delivery, up to and not exceeding one fourteenth of total profits (if any); all travelling expenses guaranteed in any event; funeral expenses to be defrayed by us or our representatives, if occasion arises and the matter is not otherwise arranged for.
>
> Thinking it unnecessary to disturb your esteemed repose, we have proceeded in advance to make requisite preparations, and shall await your respected person at the Green Dragon Inn, Bywater, at 11 a.m. sharp. Trusting that you will be *punctual.*
>
> *We have the honour to remain*
>
> *Yours deeply*
> *Thorin & Co.* (*H*, ii, 28.)

In modern legal terms,[3] in order to form a valid and enforceable contract there must be a manifestation of mutual assent to an exchange with valid consideration. That manifestation of mutual assent usually requires an open offer with clear terms, which is accepted by the other party before being revoked.[4] Looking at the wording of the contract here, it would appear at first that Thorin and company are accepting an offer made by Bilbo; after all, they specifically state that they are. However, as so often is the case, the language of this written contract is deceiving. Even if the hobbit's actions the evening before, in which he agreed to accompany the dwarves on their quest, could be construed as an offer, the terms of the contract are certainly not clear until Thorin presents them in this letter: Bilbo would agree to provide his "professional services" in exchange for a one-fourteenth share of the profits of the endeavor, plus traveling expenses and funeral expenses, if necessary. By adding material terms to the agreement that had not previously been agreed to, this letter becomes a counter-offer, not an acceptance. It even provides a mechanism for Bilbo to demonstrate his own acceptance of the counter-offer, by appearing at the Green Dragon Inn in Bywater, at 11 a.m. sharp, ready to begin the adventure. Not until Bilbo does so—without making any additional changes to the terms of the contract—is there a valid acceptance to an offer. As for consideration, this is a contract to provide services in

exchange for payment, a classic form of consideration. The written contract is quite vague, of course, as to what "professional services" Bilbo was to provide. However, it is not an "integrated contract"[5]—it does not specify that it provides a final and complete expression of all of the terms. Thus "parol evidence," which is evidence of prior verbal statements, would be admissible to help define the terms. Whether the conversation the night before was sufficiently specific to define what Bilbo's "professional services" would be is another debatable point. The rest of the terms are fairly clear, even if Bilbo had little idea what a fourteenth share of the profits could possibly be.

So it appears likely that a valid contract was formed, but upon closer examination, there are some additional potential problems. One defense against the enforceability of a contract is that one of the parties to the contract is not competent to agree to the terms, or that he was subjected to undue influence.[6] It certainly could be argued that Bilbo was tricked into agreeing by a third party, Gandalf. Between his surreptitiously placing the mark on Bilbo's door to mark him as a "burglar" (and thus having the requisite "professional expertise"), and then inducing Bilbo to leave Bag End to go meet the dwarves at the Green Dragon before he knew what he was doing, a strong argument could be made that Bilbo never really knowingly consented to the contract. That is without even getting into the manipulation of Thorin and the dwarves that Gandalf engaged in, as detailed in the various versions of "The Quest of Erebor" published in *Unfinished Tales* (321-36) and in Douglas A. Anderson's *The Annotated Hobbit* (367-77).

Another defense is that a contract for illegal conduct (or conduct that is otherwise contrary to public policy) is not just voidable, but void, and therefore unenforceable.[7] That is where the two motifs cross: if the conduct that Bilbo is being paid to do is actually criminal (which will be discussed further below), then the contract is in fact void for illegality.

The final defense available is one that is actually pointed out by Smaug himself, who cleverly plants a seed of doubt in Bilbo's mind by pointing out that there is no way that the hobbit is going to be able to transport a one-fourteenth share of the vast treasure across Wilderland and back to the Shire. Smaug is not only a wily serpent, but he also apparently has a keen legal mind, because he is quite right on this point. A contract is not enforceable if any of the material terms of the contract are impossible (or impracticable, as legal authorities have tended in recent years to say), to fulfil.[8] The fact that Thorin claims to have not considered this salient point is irrelevant (and perhaps questionable), since Bilbo certainly would have been within his legal rights to refuse to perform any more "professional services" once he realized

that the consideration that he had been promised would have been completely impossible to deliver.

Turning back to the question of whether the services that Bilbo was contracting to provide were illegal, arguably from the Dwarves' point of view they were not. After all, they were simply seeking his help in regaining property that lawfully belonged to them, or at least their families, since it had been stolen from them by Smaug himself. However, Bilbo seems to have taken the role beyond where they anticipated.

Consider the first adventure, with the Trolls. True, the Dwarves seemed to be asking for services that went beyond those of the "expert treasure-hunter" who was described in the meeting in Bag End: they demanded that Bilbo investigate the light they had seen that turned out to be the Trolls' fire and find out what was there. However, Bilbo himself—perhaps out of his mind with fear, or perhaps just motivated by a kind of misguided pride—took the matter further, taking the title of "Burglar" to heart and attempting to pinch a purse from one of the Trolls' pockets. This gambit was defeated by the Troll's surprisingly effective anti-theft system: a talking purse that squeaked "'oo are you?" as Bilbo carefully lifted it from the pocket (*H*, ii, 31-34). This was clearly criminal behavior; even if the Trolls themselves were thieves and murderers, there is no evidence that they stole the purse, and even if they did (since Trolls are not known to make their own accoutrements), there certainly was no indication that Bilbo was trying to return the purse to its rightful owner. To be technical, this was not a burglary, since burglary requires the breaking and entering into some kind of a structure, whether through forcible entry or not,[9] and there was no structure that Bilbo entered, and thus no burglary, even if he had succeeded in stealing the purse. Nor was this a "robbery," since that crime requires the use of force or intimidation,[10] and one certainly cannot imagine little Bilbo intimidating three large Trolls. Instead, this was a simple case of larceny, or rather, attempted larceny, since Bilbo never successfully made off with the property. But he did in fact both form the intention of stealing the purse, thus having the requisite *mens rea* or "guilty mind" for an attempted crime, and he took a concrete action that went beyond mere preparation, thus committing the requisite *actus reus*, or "guilty act."[11] The trolls, however, were never likely to pursue the matter through legal channels, being more concerned with their next meal, and they were to soon lose the ability to do so forever due to Gandalf's intervention (see *H*, ii, 34-40).

The next action that Bilbo took in which he appropriated someone else's property has a much greater significance, not just in his story but in the wider history of Middle-earth: his finding of the Ring. As most Tolkien fans are aware, there are two different published versions of

this incident: the version published in the first edition of *The Hobbit* in which Gollum promised to give Bilbo a "present" if Bilbo won the Riddle contest, and the "real" story in which Gollum never intended to give Bilbo the Ring (see Anderson 128-131, n. 25, and Rateliff 153-163). Bilbo seems to have been motivated by a guilty conscience in devising the sanitized tale, and at first look it seems apparent why. The old adage "possession is nine-tenth of the law" is not really an accurate statement. Although Bilbo found the Ring as opposed to taking it from Gollum by force or stealth, once he learned for certain that it was property belonging to Gollum he would be duty-bound by law to return it to him; failing to do so was as much a theft as if he had taken it by force. On the other hand, one defense that a person accused of a crime can assert is the defense of necessity,[12] and it seems likely that Bilbo could have successfully claimed that it was necessary that he keep the Ring in order to avoid getting throttled and eaten. Moreover, he did not use more force than was necessary, since he used the Ring to escape Gollum by leaping over him instead of his original inclination of "stabbing the foul thing, putting its eyes out, killing it" (*H*, v, 81). As Gandalf would later tell Frodo, the forbearance that Bilbo showed Gollum here out of pity would go on to rule the fate of many (*FR*, I, ii, 69). This element, however, was entirely missing from the original version of the chapter, in which it is made clear that Bilbo was not actually in danger because Gollum is unwilling to break his agreement with Bilbo, and is therefore forced to agree to show the hobbit the way out as a substitute for giving him "his only present" after Bilbo "wins" the riddle contest. This is a good example of how Tolkien's writing advanced beyond a strict adherence to the "letter of the law" from the time of the writing of *The Hobbit* to the time of the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* (since the revision of this chapter was associated with the latter).

It is when Bilbo arrives at the Lonely Mountain with the Dwarves that he fully accepts the burglar role. As discussed above, burglary requires that a perpetrator enter a "structure" in order to carry out a theft, whether through forcible entry or some other means. Here, he and the dwarves did enter a structure, though they utilized a key and a secret entrance (not to mention some convenient moonlight to help in map-reading), rather than force in order do so. Bilbo went on to steal a valuable cup virtually out from under Smaug's nose, although arguably he was doing nothing more than returning property to its rightful owners (though this is a point that Smaug might have disputed) (*H*, xi, 193; xii, 199). Smaug then proceeded to take his ire out on the mostly innocent people of Lake-town, to both their and his own regret (*H*, xiv, 225-229).

All of this activity culminates with Bilbo's taking of the Arkenstone,

at which time he tells himself that "now I am a burglar indeed!" recognizing immediately that his claim to the stone as representing his one-fourteenth share of the treasure is nothing more than a weak justification. However, he is clearly enthralled by the Silmaril-like stone (*H*, xiii, 216-217). He knew from Thorin's earlier comments (see *H,* xii, 212) how much the Dwarf-lord valued the stone, and this point is borne out all the more after they learned that the dragon has been killed and they settled in for the siege, when Thorin stated that the stone "is worth more than a river of gold in itself, and to me it is beyond price. That stone of all the treasure I name unto myself, and I will be avenged on anyone who finds it and withholds it"[13] (H, xvi, 233). Bilbo's later giving up the stone to Bard and the Elvenking even at the expense of sacrificing his claim to his share of the treasure in a vain attempt to avoid war, although admirable (and presaging his later ability to give up the Ring voluntarily), probably is not sufficient to negate his criminal action, though of course that also becomes a moot point in the end. We see here a reflection of a major theme in Tolkien's work: the collision between fate or destiny and free will. Bilbo tries to turn his own criminal act to good in order to avoid the pending clash of arms. For all of his good intentions, he can not prevent a battle from occurring since it was "meant to be," just as he, and subsequently, Frodo, were "meant" to have the Ring, as Gandalf says (*FR*, I, ii, 65).[14]

After the Battle of Five Armies was won, the Arkenstone was buried with Thorin, and Dain honored the agreement that had been made with Bard, passing on to him one-fourteenth of all the silver and gold. An interesting sidelight is that the Emeralds of Girion and the other gems in the hoard were excluded in the calculation of the fourteenth share. Thorin had originally specified that he would give "one fourteenth share of the hoard in silver and gold, setting aside the gems" in return for the Arkenstone, as Bilbo's contractual share (*H*, xvii, 252). There is no logical reason why the gems should have been excluded, nor why Bard would have agreed to exclude them with no further negotiation; certainly there was no such stipulation in the original contract. It is one of those puzzling points that appear in various places in Tolkien's writings that seem to be too specific to be merely a random point with no deeper meaning and yet have no obvious significance. Perhaps Thorin specifically excluded them because the emeralds were so beloved by the Elves, and he was still so angry over his recent imprisonment in the halls of the Elvenking. That would not explain why, however, Bard agreed so readily to exclude them with no negotiation. One can only suppose that he concluded that it was the best deal they were going to get, and that it was not worth arguing over. The contrast here between Bard and Thorin is stark, particularly since Thorin

almost immediately begins pondering whether he can enlist Dain's help to regain the stone without having to give up any of the treasure. Instead, in the end, Dain not only honored the agreement to provide the fourteenth share of the gold and silver but also restored the gems to Bard, who passed the Emeralds of Girion on to the Elvenking (*H*, xviii, 265). This is yet another demonstration of how, for Tolkien, honor supersedes legal obligation. As for Bilbo, he refused Bard's offer to take a large share of the treasure himself, limiting himself to two small chests of silver and gold (which still made him immensely wealthy in the Shire). Despite the obvious changes to Bilbo's character that result from his adventure, his basic hobbit-sense remained untouched by greed and temptation. [15]

The Hobbit then ends with a bit of legal folderol, when Bilbo returns from his adventures to find that all of his possessions are being auctioned off by the lawyerly sounding gentlemen, Messrs. Grubb, Grubb & Burrows, as he was "presumed dead" (*H*, xix, 274). In most common law jurisdictions, a missing person generally is not declared to be presumed dead until five to seven years has passed, unless he or she is known to have been exposed to "imminent peril"—like a plane crash—and fails to return.[16] Of course to the Hobbits of the Shire, going off with Gandalf on an adventure probably was sufficient to be considered "exposed to imminent peril."

This is a rather detailed look at legal issues in *The Hobbit* in order to show that the presentation of legal themes in that book largely parallels the real world without always being smoothly incorporated into the secondary world. It does not so much constitute a credible "green sun" commanding secondary belief, as much as it does a mostly yellow sun with some green highlights.

The Lord of the Rings

The Lord of the Rings starts out in much the same place that *The Hobbit* ends in its presentation of legal issues, with another bit of legal folderol. After Bilbo disappears again, Frodo's inheritance of Bag End is confirmed by a ludicrously "clear and correct" will, complete with among other things seven signatures of witnesses in red ink, according to the legal customs of hobbits (*FR*, I, i, 47). Even as the story quickly darkens, with the revelations made by Gandalf in the "Shadows of the Past" chapter leading to Frodo's having to flee the Shire, the same lighthearted attitude dominates the legal themes, with the revelation of the "conspiracy" to invade Frodo's privacy by Merry, Pippin, Sam and Fatty Bolger (see *FR*, I, v, 113-116). Similarly, in the "Shortcut to Mushrooms" chapter Frodo's irrational fear of punishment for his trespassing on and stealing mushrooms from Farmer Maggot's land as a

child is also quite lighthearted (*FR*, I, iv, 100-102). However, this scene was presented in a much more absurdly comical manner in the earlier drafts of the story, in which Frodo's predecessor—Bingo Bolger-Baggins—uses the Ring to play a silly trick on the Farmer, picking up Maggot's mug of beer and drinking it while invisible, so that "the mug left the table, rose, tilted in the air, and then returned empty to its place" (*Shadow* 96-97).

The change in tone in *The Lord of the Rings* is very well illustrated by Boromir's assault on Frodo at Amon Hen in an attempt to take the Ring by force (*FR*, II, x, 413-416). Here a conflicted but essentially good character commits a criminal act—a violent assault and battery—that powerfully demonstrates one of the key themes of the tale, vividly illustrating the negative influence of the Ring. Similarly, we learn that Gollum/Sméagol, a conflicted but essentially evil character, first obtained the ring by murdering his friend Déagol, though it is unclear how much that was due to the evil influence of the Ring, and how much was due to his basic nature (*FR*, I, ii, 62-63). More significantly, later when Frodo encounters Gollum, he binds the creature to him by getting him to agree to lead him to Mordor, sealing the agreement by getting Gollum to swear an oath "by the Precious," which of course is what Gollum called the Ring (*TT*, IV, i, 224-25). This was not a contractual agreement; it is not an exchange of valid considerations. It is true that Frodo agreed not to kill or hurt Gollum, but even if such an agreement could be considered a valid form of consideration (which is highly doubtful), Frodo had already unilaterally decided, out of pity, not to harm Gollum, before Gollum had agreed to provide a service to him (see *TT*, IV, i, 221-22). Thus, this agreement did not have the force of law behind it. Instead, it relied on a higher moral force, such that even an essentially evil character like Gollum (but one that still has a small corner of light hiding in the midst of his dark soul) felt bound by it—although it did not stop him from betraying Frodo to Shelob, or from transferring his oath to himself as the "Master of the Precious" in the end.

Another good example of Tolkien using a legal scenario to show how moral compass transcends the law is Gríma Wormtongue's conspiring with Saruman to undermine Théoden. Gríma, a supposed counselor to the king, conspired with the king's enemy, Saruman, spied on the king, discredited his loyal vassals like Éomer, and possibly even used poison to reduce the king to a barren shell of himself—a much darker conspiracy than the one discussed earlier. The response to this darker conspiracy is particularly illuminating. Gandalf diffused the conspiracy by unveiling some of his hidden power, after first subverting the law of the land as set forth by Gríma by convincing the

doorward Háma to allow him to keep his staff. This helps make Gandalf's existence as a mysterious yet angelic or even divine being more credible. Even more significant, after Gríma's treachery was laid bare, Théoden showed him mercy, and rather than punishing him by death or imprisonment (as might be expected for such treason), he gave him the choice of either showing his loyalty in battle, or exile (see *TT*, III, vi, 125; see also *UT* 355). This is consistent neither with a modern implementation of the law,[17] nor with the Anglo-Saxon culture upon which Rohan is based.[18] This deviation helps to cement one of the main themes in Tolkien's long tale: the importance of mercy.

Perhaps the best example of mercy comes towards the end of *The Return of the King*. Beregond, a member of the Guard of the Tower of Gondor who befriended Pippin, was faced with the difficult choice of either subverting the will of his sovereign, the Steward Denethor, or seeing his Captain, Faramir, be wrongfully killed because of Denthor's madness. He ended up committing a number of crimes in his haste to save Faramir, the worst of which was killing the door warden and spilling blood in the Hallows, which was forbidden (*RK*, V, vii, 127-128). After the War of the Ring was done and over with, and Aragorn assumed the throne of Gondor as King Elessar, he sat in judgment of Beregond. Aragorn acts as judge, jury, prosecutor and defense attorney, all wrapped up in one (*RK*, VI, v, 247). To modern sensibilities, this is completely unacceptable. Yet in the context of Tolkien's secondary universe, it is not only believable, but admirable, once again emphasizing the theme of mercy, as well as highlighting the type of "unconstitutional monarchy" that Tolkien describes in a 1943 letter to his son Christopher as being one of his ideal types of governance (*Letters* 63). This scene is a fine example of Tolkien successfully creating a credible green sun commanding secondary belief, and by doing so delineating the parameters of his moral universe.

Elder Days

Tolkien's treatment of legal issues in the tales of the Elder Days are particularly instructive in showing how his writing evolved from before the completion of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* to after those works were finished. That development can be tracked by following the progression of several legal proceedings. As time went on, Tolkien became more and more interested in the philosophical and metaphysical implications of his sub-creation, and his discussion of legal issues becomes correspondingly more abstract.

There were two "trials" that took place during the days before the rising of the Sun and the Moon: the trial of Melkor after he was captured by the rest of the Valar and brought in chains back to Valinor,

and the trial of Fëanor after he drew his sword and threatened his half-brother Fingolfin. In both cases, Manwë, like Aragorn, had absolute power to impose judgment. He imposed on Melkor a term of imprisonment of three ages, a very long period of time (*S* 51-52). Nonetheless, several of his brethren—particularly Ulmo and Tulkas—disagreed with his decision to release Melkor at the end of the term, and of course we the readers, with the benefit of hindsight, can see that it was a foolish mistake (*S* 65-66). In the case of Fëanor, he was banished for seven years along with his seven sons, and his father Finwë chose to share his exile, thus essentially yielding the kingship to his second son Fingolfin, and making the lies of Melkor come true (*S* 70-71).

It is instructive to look at the development of these stories over the course of the writing of the *legendarium.* The Chaining of Melko is one of the original Lost Tales. In that first version, the Valar used deceit in order to capture Melko, pretending to do homage to him and even seeming to bring Tulkas bound in chains to get him to lower his guard (*Lost Tales I* 102-104). As the *legendarium* developed and took shape, Tolkien realized that the Valar would never use this type of deception; it is quite contrary to the morality so well expressed in *The Lord of the Rings* by Faramir, when he said to Frodo that he would not snare even an Orc with a falsehood (see *TT,* IV, v, 272). One element of this story that was developed further in the post–*Lord of the Rings* versions of the story is the nature of Manwë's blindness to evil that allows him to make the seemingly foolish decision to release Melkor from bondage. As I discuss in *Arda Reconstructed,* the older version is retained in the published *Silmarillion.* In the longer, newer version, it is acknowledged that Melkor's evil was beyond full healing, but noted that since he was originally the greatest of the powers of Arda, his aid would, if he willingly gave it, do more than anything to heal the hurts that he caused; and that Manwë judged (wrongly as it turns out) that Melkor was on this path, and that he would be more likely to stay on that path if he was treated fairly. This longer passage specifies that Manwë was slow to perceive jealousy and rancor since he himself did not experience these things (*Morgoth* 273; see also Kane 83). This passage is noteworthy in that it demonstrates Tolkien coming more to emphasize the value of goodness in and of itself, even when that quality leads to what in hindsight is clearly a miscarriage of justice.

The story of Fëanor and the Silmarils also goes back to the beginning, though the holy jewels did not have the significance in the Lost Tales that they were to later obtain (see *Lost Tales I* 128). The element of Melkor spreading lies among the Noldor and inciting their rebellion was present from the beginning, and Fëanor's feud with his half-brother Fingolfin, and his resulting banishment, is already present in

the *Quenta Noldorinwa*, which as mentioned earlier was written around 1930 (*Shaping* 90-91). The confrontation between Fëanor and Fingolfin was significantly expanded in later writings not incorporated into the published *Silmarillion* (compare *S* 70 with *Morgoth* 277-278; see also Kane 90). However, the part of the story that receives the most further development in the post–*Lord of the Rings* writings is the description of the subsequent theft of the Silmarils and murder of Finwë by Melkor, when Fëanor is summoned back to Manwë's halls to attend a festival that the Elder King hopes will help heal the divisiveness that has marred Valinor. In the older version contained in the published *Silmarillion*, these crimes are briefly reported with little detail by an unnamed "messenger." In the latest version of the *Quenta*, the description of this theft and murder is made by Fëanor's son Maedhros, and it is one of the most vivid and moving descriptions of a criminal act in all of Tolkien's writings (compare *S* 79 with *Morgoth* 293-294). As I write in *Arda Reconstructed*, "The descriptive detail and the fact that the story is told by a close member of Finwë's family both make it far more compelling" than the older version (Kane 107). The added detail in the later version also makes Fëanor's subsequent reaction to the report of his father's death much more sympathetic, with his sons chasing after him in haste, fearing that he will slay himself in his grief. It is noted in this more detailed version that those who saw his grief "forgave all his bitterness" and (most significantly) that later events might have been different if he had "cleansed his heart ere the dreadful tidings came" (see *Morgoth* 295 and Kane 108).

In addition, the "criminal" relationship between Melkor and Ungoliant is much more developed in the later writings. Considerably more detail is added to show how Melkor used a combination of threats and bribes to entice her into aiding him (see *Morgoth* 284-85 and Kane 93). A completely different version of the darkening of Valinor is told, in which Melkor much more explicitly used Ungoliant to accomplish his evil designs, with her destroying the Two Trees with no help from him at all, and his craven nature more clearly demonstrated (see *Morgoth* 285-88 and Kane 96-99). Finally, the subsequent "falling out of thieves" is also significantly expanded (see *Morgoth* 296 and Kane 108-109).

Another "trial" in the Elder Days is the hearing that Thingol conducted regarding the death of his counselor Saeros as a result of his confrontation with Túrin. This is another element that goes back to the original Lost Tales (see *Lost Tales II* 75-76, where the counselor's name is Orlog, not Saeros), but which received significant development in the later, post–*Lord of the Rings*, writing. In the most developed version of the story, the *Narn i Chîn Húrin* (versions of which are published both in *Unfinished Tales* and in *The Children of Húrin*), Thingol's

initial decision condemning Túrin is overturned when Beleg Strongbow is able to present a surprise witness, the elf-maiden Nellas who witnessed Saeros's waylaying Túrin and precipitating the events that led to his death (see *UT* 79-84 and *CH* 87-96). There is no suggestion at all—as there would be in a modern trial—that Nellas was not telling the truth because she clearly was smitten with Túrin, and therefore biased in his favor. For Tolkien the important point is that truth prevails over injustice, but even more that Túrin's arrogant pride refuses to allow that justice to be done, thus allowing Morgoth's curse to prevail.

Another legal proceeding is the trial of Túrin's father, Húrin, which is part of the post–*Lord of the Rings* work *The Wanderings of Húrin*, which was published in *The War of the Jewels* and only small parts of which appear in the published *Silmarillion*. To set the stage briefly, Morgoth released Húrin after thirty years of bondage following the deaths of Húrin's children, but only because Morgoth realized that Húrin could further his own cause. In the portion included in *The Silmarillion* Húrin revealed the location of Gondolin to Morgoth, and then found his wife Morwen just before she died at the foot of the "stone of the hapless," where Túrin is buried.[19] (See *S* 227-30 and *Jewels* 271-74 and 295-96; see also Kane 209 and 212-13.) *The Wanderings of Húrin* further describes how he then fell into a swoon and was found by the men of Brethil, and threatened with death by Avranc, the son of Dorlas (the warrior of Brethil who failed Túrin and then was slain by Brandir). However, he is befriended by Manthor, one of the chief warriors of Brethil and one of the kin of the Haladin. He is nonetheless taken prisoner, and he proceeds to assault Hardang, the current Chieftain of Brethil, with a stool. He is put on trial, after being drugged, with Manthor acting as his counselor. Húrin falsely charges the men of Brethil with failing to provide help to Morwen, and he eventually provokes an uprising against Hardang in favor of Manthor. Hardang is slain, but then Manthor is also killed, by Avranc, and Húrin goes on to Nargothrond, to eventually unwittingly wreak havoc on Doriath (see *Jewels* 274-295). This story contains some of Tolkien's most incisive political commentary, including Húrin's cold comfort to Manthor on his deathbed, in which he pointed out that Manthor's friendship to Húrin was rooted in Manthor's own self-interest in seeking to use his defense of Húrin to further his own ambition to become the Chieftain.

The downfall of Doriath in the published *Silmarillion* is largely an editorial construction (see "A note on Chapter 22 Of the Ruin of Doriath in the published *Silmarillion*" in *Jewels* 354-56 and Kane 207-18). However, one element that is present in all versions is that Thingol agreed with the Dwarves to compensate them for either creating or recreating the Nauglamîr, the Necklace of the Dwarves that

incorporated the Silmaril that Beren and Lúthien recovered from Morgoth (see, e.g., *S* 232-233 and *Shaping* 132-133). This is one of the only "contractual" relationships described in the tales of the Elder days, and we can see how well that worked out for the parties involved (all of them are eventually killed). Much more prevalent are binding oaths, such as the "oath of abiding friendship and aid in every need" made by Finrod to Barahir when the latter saved him during the Dagor Bragollach, the Battle of Sudden Flame, which eventually rebounds to lead to his death in the course of helping Barahir's son, Beren[20] (see *S* 152 and 169-176). Like the agreement that Gollum made with Frodo discussed above, this agreement was not backed by the force of law, but instead reflects a higher morality. Not only does this reflect the high importance that Tolkien placed on abiding by one's word at all costs, it is also another reflection of the ever-present theme of destiny in Tolkien's *legendarium*, as Finrod had long before predicted to his sister Galadriel that he would eventually swear an oath that would lead to his death (see *S* 130).

However, perhaps the most meaningful discussion of a "legal fiction" in the Elder Days is the essay "The Laws and Customs among the Eldar" mentioned earlier, the full name of which is "The Laws and Customs Among the Eldar Pertaining to Marriage and other Matters Related Thereto: Together with the Statute of Finwë and Míriel and the Debate of the Valar at its Making" (*Morgoth* 209). This work, and the associated writings about Finwë and Míriel—only a small amount of which can be found in the published *Silmarillion*—contain some of Tolkien's most profound ruminations, "tenuous, elusive, and difficult of expression" (to use Barfield's phrase) though they may be. It is perhaps not surprising that as a devout Catholic, Tolkien would be particularly interested in the sanctity of marriage. Finwë is the only character of in all of Tolkien's work who marries a second time, and explaining how that was allowed to come about gives Tolkien an outlet to express much profound thought not only about marriage, but about death, justice and healing. Because marriage is meant to be permanent, in order to allow Finwë to remarry, Míriel was required to renounce any chance of returning to her body—because otherwise there was a chance that Finwë would have two spouses, and that could not be. The Valar engaged in a great debate about what to do with this situation, since it had never come up before. In opening the debate, Manwë made it clear that the death of Míriel was a sign of the Marring of Arda by Melkor, and discussed the differences between Justice and Healing. He noted that

> in Arda Marred Justice is not Healing. Healing cometh

> only by suffering and patience, and maketh no demand, not even for Justice. Justice worketh only within the bonds of things as they are, accepting the marring of Arda, and therefore though Justice is itself good and desireth no further evil, it can but perpetuate the evil that was, and doth not prevent it from the bearing of fruit in sorrow.
>
> (*Morgoth* 239-240)

This sorrow was nothing less than the acceptance of Death that led to a lower road leading away from Arda Unmarred. The Valar conclude at the end of the debate that they can only offer Justice, not Healing, even though Justice leads to that lower road that Manwë describes. Nonetheless, Manwë concludes that the lower road resulting from the Marring of Arda still would lead in the end to a positive result, because "Arda Healed" will be greater and more fair than the original Arda Unmarred. At the end of the debate, Mandos makes is clear in declaring his Doom that a ruler cannot compel his subjects to walk the higher road that leads to healing, because that would simply lead to tyranny, and that "a ruler who discerning justice refuseth to it the sanction of law, demanding abnegation of rights and self-sacrifice, will not drive his subjects to the virtues, virtuous only if free, but by unnaturally making justice unlawful, will drive them rather to rebellion against all law. Not by such means will Arda be healed" (*Morgoth* 246).Thus, the Healing of Arda will come only through allowing the full Tale of Arda to play out to the end, and the Valar can only act as just rulers of Arda as it exists, without trying to compel others to walk the higher path. Moreover, each of the events that occurred—Míriel's death, Finwë's coming together with Indis and bringing her children into the world, the marring of Fëanor's birth and his subsequent rebellion, and even the unchaining of Melkor—were all necessary components of the eventual healing of Arda.

This is truly an example of using a legal fiction (the "statute of Finwë and Míriel") to express concepts that are "tenuous, elusive, and difficult of expression." It provides a reaffirmation and explanation of the ever-present theme of fate in Tolkien's work. More importantly, it establishes a firm division between Justice, which is all that can be expected from authority within the circles of the world (even up to and including the Valar themselves) and Healing, which must come from the Authority that is beyond the circles of the world. This is among the clearest expressions of Tolkien's metaphysical views in all of his writings, particularly the belief in a higher morality that transcends earthly authority. The essay also addresses the relationship between individuals within Arda. There is no provision made for Elvish divorce, but Tolkien notes in "The Laws and Customs of the Eldar" that no

ceremony was necessary for marriage; a couple was automatically married when they consummated their relationship (*Morgoth* 211-212). He also makes clear that marriage is a relationship of both body and spirit (*Morgoth* 225). The antithesis therefore can be presumed: that if a couple is separate both physically and spiritually, they can no longer be considered married.

Ironically, one of the only characters in the First Age whose marriage collapses while both parties still lived is Finwë and Míriel's son Fëanor, who becomes estranged from his wife Nerdanel over his rebellion against the Valar. Particularly interesting is the fact that Nerdanel elected to remain with Indis when Fëanor returns to Middle-earth (see *Morgoth* 279 and Kane 91). In one version of the tale, reported in the "Shibboleth of Fëanor" section of *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, she demanded custody of at least one of their twin sons but was rebuffed by Fëanor, to which she replied, "You will not keep all of them. One at least will never set foot on Middle-earth." Their son Angrod then died when Fëanor had the ships of the Teleri put to flames (*Peoples* 353-55 and Kane 113-14). What a telling comment on the danger of marital strife, not to mention the power of destiny in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

But the best study of the breakup of a marriage comes in the second age tale of Aldarion and Erendis, published in *Unfinished Tales* (see 173-217). This is perhaps Tolkien's most emotionally nuanced story, a tale of true love initially overcoming tremendous obstacles, only to eventually collapse under the weight of two prideful people with truly irreconcilable differences. Although this is a tale about humans, not Elves, there is again no provision for divorce, despite Aldarion and Erendis' eventual total estrangement—again perhaps not surprising coming from a devout Catholic. One of the most interesting elements of their separation is the issue of the custody of their daughter, Ancalimë, who would become the first ruling queen of Numenor. Ancalimë herself is described as having disastrous relationships with men, showing that Tolkien was well aware of how dysfunctional relationships tend to propagate themselves.

These examples show that in his later years, Tolkien was using legal fiction in a much more subtle manner than could be seen in his earlier work, both with the early versions of the tales of what would become the Elder Days, and *The Hobbit*. His ability to tailor these legal issues to his secondary world enabled him to more successfully express sophisticated concepts of morality, philosophy and psychology.

Conclusion

This is only a brief overview of a complicated subject, highlighting some of the ways that Tolkien has incorporated legal themes and issues

in a way that makes his secondary world more compellingly credible, as well as how his efforts to do so changed and matured over the course of the creation of his *legendarium*. *The Hobbit* has by far the most explicit references to real world legal processes. In *The Lord of the Rings*, particularly the latter parts, and even more in his later writings as he expanded the scope and breadth of his *legendarium*, Tolkien is much more successful at using the presentation of legal issues in order to "escape from their shackles," promoting and enhancing a moral vision that transcends the law of man, as well as using a legal fiction to help express ideas that are "tenuous, elusive, and difficult of expression," and using legal themes to illuminate the relations between individuals, be they criminal conspirators, victims of crime, or the partners in a failing relationship. It is in this later work that we see him most successfully using legal themes to generate a credible – not to mention compelling – secondary world.

Notes

1 For a listing of Professor Larsen's work in this area, see http://www.physics.ccsu.edu/larsen/tolkien.html.

2 See, e.g., Hazell, Hilton and Fonstad.

3 By "modern legal terms" I refer to the Anglo-American system of common law which has its roots in medieval Britain. In the common-law system (which is used in the United Kingdom and all of the U.S. states and Canadian provinces except Louisiana and Quebec, both of which utilize the French-based civil law system), law is generated largely through the decisions made by appellate courts. Because of the doctrine of *stare decisis*, in which courts are bound by prior decisions in most cases, the law changes slowly in this system. Specifics can often vary widely between jurisdictions; however over time a body of basic legal principles has been developed. In many cases common law has become codified into statutory schemes that complement (and sometimes replace) the body of case law. In 1923, the American Law Institute first began issuing "Restatements" of various areas of law in order to codify trends in common law. The second Restatement of Contracts was completed in 1979, and issued in 1981, and is probably the most cited non-binding legal authority in American jurisprudence. Similarly, The Model Penal Code was also created by the American Law Institute and while like the Restatements it is nonbinding, it has been adopted in part or whole as the basis for the criminal statutory scheme for more than two-thirds of the states. It was developed in

1962 and last updated in 1981. For ease of reference, I cite these generalized codifications of basic common law principles. Unless otherwise noted, the basic principles would have been applicable in Britain during the time that Tolkien was writing *The Hobbit* and the other works discussed herein. As discussed above, while there is no indication that Tolkien had specific knowledge of these legal matters, he demonstrates a remarkably intuitive understanding of the law.

4 See Restatement (Second) of Contracts §§ 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 30, 35, 36, 38-40, 42, 50, 60 and 71.

5 See Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 209.

6 See Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 177.

7 See Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 178.

8 See Restatement (Second) of Contracts §§ 261-72.

9 Model Penal Code § 221.1.

10 Model Penal Code § 222.1.

11 Model Penal Code § 5.01(1).

12 Model Penal Code § 3.02(1)(a).

13 It is worth noting how closely these words echo the oath of Fëanor and his sons regarding the Silmarils, which makes it first appearance in the circa 1930 (essentially contemporary with the writing of *The Hobbit*) *Quenta Noldorinwa* with language almost identical to that contained in the published *Silmarillion*: "They swore the unbreakable oath, by the name of Manwë and Varda and the holy mountain, to pursue with hate and vengeance to the ends of the world Vala, Demon, Elf, or Man, or Orc who hold or take or keep a Silmaril against their will" (*Shaping* 94).

14 Perhaps the most developed and explicit expression of Tolkien's views on interaction of fate and free will can be found in Ulmo's words to Tuor in "Of Tuor and His Coming to Gondolin" written in the early 1950s, when *The Lord of the Rings* was completed but not yet published. Note that although Ulmo's words appear at first blush to support the idea that there is room for free will within the divine plan—"in the armour of Fate (as the Children of Earth name it) there is a ever a rift, and in the walls of Doom a breach, until the full-making, which ye call the End"—a closer look at what he says reveals that even his own seeming rebellion against the will

of the rest of the Valar is in fact his appointed role to play in the greater scheme of things ("that is my part among them, to which I was appointed ere the making of the World"). Moreover, he makes it clear that the acts of Tuor (and by extension his son-to-be, Eärendil) are themselves a product of playing that appointed role: "And that hope lieth in thee; for so I have chosen" (*UT* 29).

15 Compare Bilbo's relative frugality to the fate of the Master of Laketown, who we later learn "took most of the gold and fled with it, and died of starvation in the Waste, deserted by his companions" (*H,* xix, 276).

16 See, e.g., California Probate Code section 12401.

17 See 18 U.S.C. § 2381.

18 See http://anthonydamato.law.northwestern.edu/encyclopedia/anglo-saxon-law.pdf

19 The last portion of the *Wanderings of Húrin* text included in the published *Silmarillion* is the burial of Morwen, which in the original text takes place at the end of Húrin's experiences in Brethil.

20 Finrod gives Barahir his ring in token of this vow, and this ring became an heirloom passed all the way down to the House of Isildur, playing a small but important role in *The Lord of the Rings.*

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"*Justice* is not *Healing*": J. R. R. Tolkien's Pauline Constructs in "Finwë and Míriel"

Amelia A. Rutledge

> ...none of the Dead will be permitted to be re-born until and unless they desire to take up their former life and continue it. Indeed they cannot escape it, for the re-born soon recover full memory of all their past. (*Morgoth* 227)

> Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Corinthians 6:7)

The second marriage of Fëanor's father, Finwë, is presented in *The Silmarillion* as the occasion for Fëanor's animus toward his half-brothers (*S* 65), but the philosophical ramifications of the death of Míriel, Finwë's first wife, are not discussed at that time.[1] In the scheme of the *Quenta Silmarillion*, the story of Finwë and Míriel is significant primarily as the source of the tension between Fëanor and his half-brothers. The Judgment of Manwë, the conclusion of a quasi-legal debate in the absence of precedents, permitted Finwë's second marriage, the rivalry among his sons, and the disastrous oath sworn by Fëanor that embroiled all of the Eldar in the fatal dissension resoundingly foretold in the Doom of Mandos ("Tears unnumbered shall ye shed...").[2]

The full significance of the story of Finwë and Míriel emerges in *Morgoth's Ring*. As Christopher Tolkien notes regarding his father's work:

> Among the chief 'structural' conceptions of the mythology that he pondered in those years were the myth of Light; the nature of Aman; the immortality (and death) of the Elves; the mode of their rebirth; the Fall of Men and the length of their early history; the origin of the Orcs; and above all, the power and significance of Melkor-Morgoth, which was enlarged to become the ground and source of the corruption of Arda. (*Morgoth* ix)

He further states, "in these writings is seen my father's preoccupation in the years following the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* with the philosophical aspects of the mythology and its systematisation"

(*Morgoth* 271). In Tolkien's multiple versions of the tale, Finwë requests permission to remarry when his spouse, Míriel, withdraws to Aman in exhaustion after the birth of Fëanor; she prefers this equivalent to death to continuing her life as an Eldalié. After lengthy deliberations, the Valar grant Finwë's request once they determine that Míriel has no intention of resuming bodily existence.

The present study will focus on "Finwë and Míriel" as Tolkien's specific case within the larger concept of theodicy, the study of justice and of the nature of evil, and the central concern of *Morgoth's Ring*, in the same way that cosmogony was central in the *Ainulindal*ë. The Valar rule in favor of Finwë's petition, but the most telling statement of the Valar's dilemma is Manwë's own: "*Justice* is not *Healing*" (*Morgoth* 239, Tolkien's emphasis). Manwë does not question the Judgment itself, but his ambivalence attests to his awareness that the law's inadequacies have been laid bare. Manwë states further that justice meted out in granting the wishes of both spouses is a product of Arda Marred, since Míriel's hopeless exhaustion and Finwë's disordered desire for remarriage[3] demonstrate the imbalance between order and disorder that has persisted despite the efforts of the Valar to stabilize Arda in the face of Melkor's disruptions. Although the Judgment of Manwë addresses the plight of the bereaved Finwë, the larger question of the meaning of death for *de facto* immortal beings is inescapably present in the deliberations of the Valar when they must face the consequences of yielding to Míriel's petition never to be reborn.

Both Elizabeth Whittingham and Douglas Charles Kane discuss the Finwë and Míriel story, but with special emphasis on eschatology: Whittingham in her chapter on "Death and Immortality,"[4] and Kane in his discussion of the scant textual presence of Mándos' eschatological "Second Prophecy" (236). In contradistinction to these two studies, I want to focus more precisely on the legalism that both frames debates in "Finwë and Míriel" and is criticized by Manwë as inadequate to the complexities of the relationships of Valar and Eldar in Arda, reading it through the lens of St. Paul's analyses of the inadequacy of the law. I do not suggest direct Pauline influence or a theological affirmation of Pauline arguments in Tolkien's fiction;[5] rather, I assert that Pauline teachings about the law's insufficiency in the economy of grace can serve as an heuristic that makes possible some clarification both of the Valar's debate and the judgments of Manwë and of Námo/Mandos, Manwë's voice in the judgments of Arda. Manwë's summation, especially his uneasiness with the inadequacy of a just decision to effect true renewal, "healing," of the parties involved, is consonant with Pauline assertions, discussed below, regarding the limitations of the law both in Christians' everyday lives and in the context of divine

grace. Tolkien's verbal constructs in "Finwë and Míriel" are analogous to texts such as Galatians 3:19 and 21 or Hebrews 7: 9,[6] which signal the law as needful but lacking. Manwë sees the Judgment as a *faute de mieux* for negotiating imperfect resolutions to moral dilemmas heretofore not encountered by the Valar. Beyond verbal analogies, however, Manwë is concerned that resolving the immediate problem, the results of bereavement in Finwë's case, falls short of healing the disorder, the "marring," of Arda occasioned by Melkor's revolt. There is also, within Tolkien's presentation of the Judgment, structural congruence with Pauline assertions that grace has succeeded where the law has failed. In the absence of such assurance, Manwë can only state that what the Judgment fails to accomplish must be left to hope: "But healing must retain ever the thought of Arda Unmarred ... This is Hope which, I deem, before all else the virtue most fair in the Children of Éru, ..." (*Morgoth* 239–40). The Valar have been forced to realize the limits of their power over the operations of Arda.

The terms "law" or "quasi-legal" are potentially misleading, as is Christopher Tolkien's term, "systematisation," which implies that the story of Finwë and Míriel provides a resolution of the quandary created by conflict between "permanent marriage" and the *liberum arbitrium* inherent in all rational beings of Arda. Since Tolkien's construct requires that neither concept be discarded, he presents quasi-juridical debates that pit choice and desire against the "laws" on which the existence of the Eldar is based. There is no final resolution and Finwë's summation is an acknowledgment of the limitations of what the Valar have achieved. What constitutes the "law" in the construction of the central dilemma is, in the absence of a system such as canon law, the concept of essentialist monogamy or "permanent marriage" as inherent in the nature of the Eldar. The "Finwë and Míriel" debates demonstrate the authorial work required to sustain such a construct simultaneously with Tolkien's construction of *liberum arbitrium*, "free choice" (generally translated "free will").

Whittingham, using *The Music of the Ainur* as it is found in *The Book of Lost Tales*, describes the "strange gift" given to men by Ilúvatar—freedom from the dictates of the Great Music—as:

> confusing since in the various stories Elves and all other creatures also seem to have the freedom to do as they wish, though that might be the difference between appearance and reality. Another possibility is that Ilúvatar is referring to some other potential beyond individual choice, a freedom perhaps of the race as a whole to shape its ends. (129–30)

There is no suggestion elsewhere that Elves lack the freedom to choose. The Valar refuse to compel the Eldar—those resisting the summons to Eldamar are allowed to remain in Middle Earth, and Fëanor is not forced to yield the Silmarils when the Two Trees are poisoned, even if the light from the jewels might restore the Trees. The confusion to which Whittingham alludes arises when one considers that what is dictated in the Great Music is what we would call "nature"; the Elves, one of the themes propounded by Ilúvatar alone, have an essence that conforms (or should) with the Music; permanent marriage is part of that "nature"—essentialism in its purest form—yet they have "freedom" as well. The Elves are permitted choice, but, for marriage at least, the assumption, prior to the occasion of the Judgment, is that their choice would not deviate from their nature as defined by the Great Music.

Contra Whittingham, this "freedom," whether for Eldar or Edain, cannot be simply a matter of "appearance and reality," since constraint obliterates the very freedom implied by *liberum arbitrium*. This necessary freedom can be misused, like all good, although not every misuse of *liberum arbitrium* goes so far as to be called "evil," unless one considers "willfulness," "sin," and "evil" to be synonyms.[7] To the extent that it is a good, then, *liberum arbitrium* must exist in tension with the (apparently) inherent monogamy that distinguishes the Eldar from humans. The Valar are slow to realize that nature does not and cannot trump free choice (in this, unfortunately, they fail to consider their most potent example, Melkor). Finwë cannot be described as evil in comparison with Melkor, but he has consulted his desires in a way that does not accord with the essential monogamy that has been constructed in Tolkien's depiction of the Eldar.

Tolkien and Theology

Absent the few references he provides to his own reading, sources and analogues for Tolkien's mythopoeic work are difficult to specify, so that claims regarding analogies to philosophical or religious sources must be advanced cautiously. On the other hand, the similarities between the *legendarium* and Neoplatonic philosophy or Augustinian theology have already been discussed,[8] and Whittingham notes similarities to classical, Norse, and Finnish mythologies in her chapter about death and immortality (123–27). In letter 200 (to Major R. Bowen), Tolkien describes the difficulties of literary sub-creation, while sounding rather pleased at the results of his efforts: "I am sorry if this all seems dreary and 'pompose' [sic]. But so do all attempts to 'explain' the images and events of a mythology...it is, I suppose, some test of the consistency of a mythology as such, if it is capable of some sort of rational or rationalized explanation" (*Letters* 260). The colloquy of the

Valar is a fictive reenactment of another such "rationalized explanation" in which the Valar define their positions on the subject of Elvish remarriage prior to Manwë's judgment.

Tolkien was not by training a systematic theologian, nor was the primary focus of his writing exegetical or polemical; as "sub-creator," he nevertheless brought to the texts collected in *Morgoth's Ring* some of the strategies of the speculative theologian. As a practicing Roman Catholic, he was familiar with scripture as embodied in the liturgy and in the Office, and he notes, in a passage about his schooldays to his son Michael (letter 306): "I was even allowed to attend the Headmaster's classes on the NT (in Greek)"; the theological content of these classes is not revealed, but one can assume that his mentors did not consider the experience detrimental to Tolkien's Catholicism.[9] In letter 131 to Milton Waldman, Tolkien explains the principle that prevents him from incorporating explicit Christian content (*Letters* 144)[10].

Manwë's awareness of legalism's failure to resolve remarriage among *longaevi*, a situation with implications for the very ground of Elvish existence, signals the Finwë/Míriel dilemma as an important nexus of theodicy, ontology (here, the inveterate essentialism of the Eldar's moral nature), and ethics. Ethical obligations are too complex for the very absolutes (e.g., the fantasy of inherent rectitude) that seem to elevate the Eldar above the human condition. Tolkien's commitment to two basic absolutes means that there can be no easy resolution of the conflict created in the narrative.

Even if neither Tolkien nor his speaker Manwë was satisfied with the legalisms of the debate, no easy appeal can be made—nor will I make one—to a "Pauline" negative view of the "law." A detailed discussion of current Pauline exegesis is outside the scope of this study, but it useful to note that contemporary scholarship views the extreme binarism of "law" versus "faith" as historically conditioned and even post-Pauline. Current scholarship has led to a more historically nuanced consideration of Paul's *dicta* about the supercession of law by the new dispensation: J. Louis Martyn notes that Paul's early proclamations regarding the inadequacy of the law necessitated careful qualifications in his later letters, Romans, I Corinthians, or Ephesians (42–43). Robert K. Rapa argues that readings of Paul's theology that rely on post-Reformation law/grace dichotomies require careful historical positioning in order to move beyond simplistic binary oppositions of "law" and "grace" (Rapa 5); it is necessary to recognize that Pauline texts are appropriated in contextually different polemical situations across time. Further, Panayotis Coutsoumpos cites Martin Luther's deep pessimism about human capacity to do good (40) as an example of the much later Protestant dichotomy, noting also that Paul himself did not take

an antinomian view of "grace" in opposition to "law" (49). There is no single Pauline text that can serve as a model for all of the questions raised in the Valar's debate; rather, there are key Pauline passages, to be discussed below, that are verbal parallels to Tolkien's formulations of the dilemma into which his efforts to achieve a coherent theology for his Secondary World had led him. Moreover, these same passages share perceptions both of the law's legitimacy and its inadequacies.

Marriage Among the Eldar

It is useful to define the contexts for the monogamy that is the source of Finwë's, and thus Tolkien's, dilemmas: Elvish lifespan, the possibility of rebirth, and the conditions upon which this rebirth is contingent. Under ideal circumstances, the lifespans of the Eldar are coterminous with Arda (*Morgoth* 270). Elvish existence offers the opportunity of once-only rebirth; in the event that it takes place at all, rebirth has as its purpose the "redress" of "the unnatural breach in the continuity of life" (*Morgoth* 227). The discussion continues: "...none of the Dead will be permitted to be re-born until and unless they desire to take up their former life and continue it. Indeed they cannot escape it, for the re-born soon recover full memory of all their past" (*Morgoth* 227).[11] The reborn always return to their own families, which leads, inevitably, to attachment to the same appropriate spouse when the reborn individual matures to marriageable age (*Morgoth* 234). For any of the married Eldar who die, then, Tolkien makes rebirth contingent on the will to continue their marriages.

When the question is raised whether a marriage can be ended after rebirth, Tolkien's speaker evades the matter, indicating that death is "a thing unnatural": "But perceiving their nature, as we now do, we hold that the love of the..." (*Morgoth* 227). The passage breaks off here, but one might infer that if the Eldar persist long enough, the wish to end a marriage would be seen for the "unnatural" thing that it is and would not be taken further.[12] What has not yet been encountered by Eldar and Valar, except theoretically, is death (the absolute refusal of rebirth instead of waiting in Mándos), which is Míriel's request.[13] In perpetuating the "unnatural breach" in her life's continuity, Míriel unilaterally removes herself from the possibility of realizing that her desire is, according to the "inference" just cited, unnatural. Faced with coercion by her essence, as it were, she opts to exist in stasis—her body uncorrupted and her marriage in hiatus—for the duration of Arda. Finwë is perforce co-opted into the same marital hiatus; as long as Míriel's rebirth is a possibility, he cannot marry another. Against the expected resignation to his state he sets his desire for a spouse and additional offspring.

Tolkien's discussion of marriage among the Eldar conflates ontology with ethics: as noted above, a convenient essentialism would have it that *by nature* the Eldar are desirous of marriage, exogamous, and chaste: all qualities toward which humans must strive. [14] To make of monogamy an essential component of Elvish being may, at first glance, make their condition of existence ethically ideal. On the other hand, to make the continuance of marriage the sole ground for return to bodily existence—that is, no one could return with the intention, or even desire, to take any other spouse, which is exactly what Finwë is requesting, involves both Finwë and Míriel in a situation that can only be resolved by special dispensation for Finwë, an annulment not just of a marriage but, if the ground rules are to remain consistent, of fundamental essence. If not the latter, then there would need to be an admission that Eldarin "nature" has been gravely misconstrued.

The truncated "B" text of "The Laws and Customs among the Eldar" asserts that marriage is grounded in the soul, or *fëa* (*in essentia* either male or female), and that marriage, contracted early, was entered only once in the existence of any of the Eldar (*Morgoth* 210). One "desire" (a concept central in Tolkien's definition of fantasy) enacted in this construct is for an essence not at war with itself.[15] This fantasy of wills in perfect harmony with right action is an arbitrary move in Tolkien's mythopoeic game; however, in the context of the *legendarium,* while the Eldar may indeed be created to be wedded beings, what they cannot be is *static.*[16] What seems, philosophically, to be the perfect situation for marriage—that is, to construct it as an ineluctable part of Elvish nature—is also susceptible to the Elvish willfulness that the Valar are never able fully to comprehend, as witnessed by their disastrous effort at transporting the Eldar to a haven safer than Middle-earth.[17] Truly free choice must be able to override an essentialist conception of "natures," and both spouses do just that: Míriel is obdurate in her refusal to return to life and marriage, and Finwë cannot be persuaded to accept a solitary existence. "Permanent marriage was in accordance with Elvish nature, and they never had need of any law to teach them this or enforce it..." and faced with a "permanent" marriage that was broken, "they did not know what should be done about it," hence the Finwë and Míriel episode (*Morgoth* 225). Such a statement of the Valar's perplexity suggests that Tolkien is not making a naïve blunder into an impasse, but, rather, recognizing it as an inevitable result of a sub-creative act within his Secondary World, he proceeds to "save the appearances," using the Valar's deliberations to shore up his ethical paradigm.

The Debate of the Valar

The Valar's extended debate has been praised by David Bratman in "The Literary Value of the History of Middle-Earth" for the honesty with which Tolkien presents the various positions of the speakers. He notes that Tolkien, dealing with a question of divorce and remarriage about which a devout Roman Catholic could not remain neutral, does not use the "trick so often found in bad novels in which the 'wrong' character offers only easily dismissed straw-man arguments" (76). Instead, the "Judgment" presents the opinions of each of the Valar, beginning and ending with Manwë,[18] who never yields his point that "*Justice* is not *Healing*": "The Statute was just, but it accepted Death...a thing unnatural in Arda Unmarred" (*Morgoth* 239). Yavanna agrees, against her spouse, Aulë, who attempts an alternate view: he questions whether Míriel's death is a result of Arda Marred or simply the result of Fëanor's exceptional birth and hence a dispensation of Eru (*Morgoth* 240). Aulë's argument in favor of a special dispensation is quashed by Ulmo, who asserts that death is an effect of the Shadow—it brings sorrow into Aman just as it brings sorrow to Middle-earth (*Morgoth* 240–41).

Ulmo is equally severe against Níenna, who defends the weakness of the Eldar despite the strength of their spirits: Finwë did not understand the purpose of death (*Morgoth* 241–42). Ulmo counters, blaming Finwë, who importuned his wife and hardened her Eldaic will; his fault is the greater (*Morgoth* 242–43). Injecting a lighter note, Vairë speaks for Míriel, her protégé, yet she tells the male Valar to judge Finwë when they are in his condition of abandonment (*Morgoth* 244). Manwë, at the end of the debate, comes full circle: The Eldar came into a marred world and are ordained to know death. Eru would not *need* an evil tool such as death (a conclusion that would follow for Aulë's attempted extenuations), but he will use what instruments are to hand. Still, Finwë, and by extension all the Eldar, should *not* be cast down by grief, since two aspects of Arda Unmarred remain: the vestiges of Arda Unmarred that can be discerned, and trust in the Promise (*Morgoth* 244–46). The relatively concise narrative of the debate behind Manwë's judgment[19] raised so many questions about the ontology of the Eldar, the relationship of marriage to embodiment, and the Valar's slow realization that the Eldar were not exempt from the "Marring" of Arda by Melkor, that Tolkien also wrote an extended, much-edited essay "The Laws and Customs among the Eldar" as an explication of the reasoning behind the Judgment of Manwë.

In Manwë's judgment, no permanent exception to the ground rules of Elvish existence has been made; nor does granting the wishes of Finwë and Míriel void the good of the marriage now dissolved.

Bratman, in his discussion of the same passage, likens the Valar to Supreme Court justices, "...the debate demonstrates the legal maxim that 'Hard cases make bad law'" (76). This may be so, but what I find notable is the consistently Pauline approach Manwë takes not only to the case under consideration but also the larger context, that of "Arda Marred" that underlies the cosmology and the theodicy of Tolkien's *legendarium*. The law is not *bad* law—there is no doubt that the ruling is just—however, what Manwë underlines is the *inadequacy* of a legal judgment in a case of bereavement and conflicting desires, so I want to focus attention on Manwë's full statement:

> In this matter ye must not forget that you deal with Arda Marred—out of which ye brought the Eldar. Neither must ye forget that in Arda Marred *Justice* is not *Healing*. Healing cometh only by suffering and patience, and maketh no demand, not even for Justice. Justice worketh only within the bonds of things as they are, accepting the marring of Arda, and therefore though Justice is itself good and desireth no further evil, it can but perpetuate the evil that was, and doth not prevent it from the bearing of fruit in sorrow. Thus the Statute was just, but it accepted Death and the severance of Finwë and Míriel, a thing unnatural in Arda Unmarred, and therefore with reference to Arda Unmarred it was unnatural and fraught with Death. The liberty that it gave was a lower road that, if it led not still downwards, could not again ascend. But healing must retain ever the thought of Arda Unmarred...This is Hope which, I deem, before all else the virtue most fair in the Children of Éru, ...(*Morgoth* 239–40)

It is not the case that Manwë's arguments simply quote Pauline maxims, but the core arguments are strikingly similar. Verbal correspondences to well-known verses are not, in themselves, compelling, as, for example, "Healing cometh only by suffering and patience, and maketh no demand, not even for Justice" (*Morgoth* 239), compared with "Charity suffereth long, and is kind... beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:4-7). Consider, however, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Corinthians 6:7). A court's decision may forestall contention, but it does not amend the underlying animus between opponents. Here, both of the quoted statements could serve as epigraphs to Manwë's pronouncement regarding the opposition between Justice and Healing,

and to Ulmo's criticism of Finwë's ill-considered importunacy in the face of Míriel's resistance. Moreover, Manwë's words imply a critique of Finwë's appeal to a "lesser" means, the mechanics of "court justice," as Paul criticized Christians' use of lawsuits instead of negotiations ruled by charity.

Regarding the insufficiency of the law, Manwë provides further exposition when he asserts that "Justice worketh only within the bonds of things as they are, accepting the marring of Arda..." (*Morgoth* 239), and further: "The liberty that it gave was a lower road that, if it led not still downwards, could not again ascend" (*Morgoth* 240). Compare "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions,...." (Galatians 3:19) or "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Galatians 3:21). Taking the analogies one step further, one might also compare Manwë's assertion "But healing must retain ever the thought of Arda Unmarred...This is Hope which, I deem, before all else the virtue most fair in the Children of Éru," (*Morgoth* 240) with "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God" (Hebrews 7:19). Juxtaposing Manwë's summation with Pauline verses also illustrates Tolkien's use of rhetorical style as a technique for appropriation; his sub-creative act is less *allegoresis* than *mimesis*. Making a shift from polemic—Paul's rhetorical questions and rebuttals—to authoritative summation preserves an ethos akin to the Pauline epistles while remaining within the specific narrative context of sub-creation.

In his essay on Galatians, Bruce Longenecker favors translating the word for law as "pedagogue," one whose duties end when the subject comes of age (69). The Judgment is provisional, a measure that the "Unmarring" will supersede. The analogy (and only this) to the Pauline "better hope" is the "Arda Unmarred" about which the Valar can only speculate, especially since it is unclear what part, if any, the Eldar will have in this transformed cosmos. In words similar to Paul's assertions, Manwë's rueful arguments ironically must limit the ultimate efficacy of law even as the Valar constitute a court of judgment. Justice can restore balance or equity, perhaps, but not heal; for Paul, the law may punish or exact compensation, but it does not conduce to salvation.

Manwë's judgment grants a special dispensation to two individuals while retaining a conviction of the rightness of the larger principle. The Valar have tended to operate in terms of large generalities, *e.g.*, the greater good of the Eldar motivated their removal from Middle-earth, to Eldamar, but the seeds of later disasters were sown by that act. Here, as in the case of their reasonable but unperceptive demand

that Fëanor break one of the Silmarils to release the primal light that will restore the Two Trees after they are poisoned by Ungoliant, the Valar are forced to consider particularity. Fëanor was overly proud and possessive of his work, but only one of the Valar, Aulë, realized the specific burden in what was being asked, even if the others perforce accept Fëanor's refusal (*S* 78). The Judgment does not mention either case, but the result of the deliberations shows a willingness to debate the terms of the specific dilemma, remarriage, held in tension with the larger question of the Marring. Of necessity, the case at hand dominates the discussion; for the Eldar and the Valar, there is no precedent for such a remarriage as Finwë requests.

It is possible to dismiss "Finwë and Míriel" as a wish-fulfillment attempt to create a case for divorce by mutual consent. The resolution of the case, in fact, invites such a conclusion: that the text also permits the *fëa* of Finwë a limited connection to Míriel (even if he can only contemplate her at a distance), once Morgoth has destroyed his body is an instance of special pleading that mars an otherwise rigorous exploration of weighty concerns.[20] This "solution," granting Finwë a mitigated return to the wife from whom he had asked severance, is awkward, a lapse in intellectual rigor from what has gone before. Nevertheless, as Bratman notes, Tolkien takes the question of remarriage among the Eldar seriously (76), even if he ends the revision (B-text) just as the discussion focuses on how a marriage can be ended with the possibility of rebirth, by stating "But herein there is indeed a difficulty, that reveals to us that death is a thing unnatural. It cannot be amended, but it cannot, while Arda lasts, be wholly undone or made as if it had not been" (*Morgoth* 226).

Tolkien has been honest enough to see the problems created by his premises and to work within his established system rather than simply to expunge the difficult elements. While not completely avoiding a loaded argument, he follows a good speculative practice to the point of impasse. As Bratman notes: "The difficulty of achieving simple answers is part of what makes Tolkien's sub-creation so intriguing" (77). To relinquish Elvish "nature" would require a radical reconstruction of the ontology of the race central to the early history of Arda as well as an excursion into eschatology made untenable by its inevitable similarities to Tolkien's living belief. Tolkien had already completed the narrative trajectory of the Finwë and Míriel story in the exile sequence of *Quenta Silmarillion*. Further theological realization was limited, here as in the similar case of the "Fall" of humans in the *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth* by the restrictions Tolkien invoked in the letter to Milton Waldron; the greater force of established doctrine always determined, for this author, the "event horizon" of speculation.

Notes

1 Elizabeth Whittingham presents, in the events' chronological order, the complex textual evolution of the Finwë/Míriel arguments. Her discussion (145 ff.) complements Christopher Tolkien's reconstruction of the textual evolution of the Judgment of Manwë. In, *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published* Silmarillion, Douglas Kane discusses the editorial decisions made by Christopher Tolkien in compiling the texts for *The Silmarillion*. He notes with regret the decision not to include in that volume the deliberations of the Valar that permitted Finwë to marry again when Míriel refused rebirth (82). Chapter 16 is a detailed discussion of the evolution of the relevant texts.

2 For the most accessible version of this text see *The Silmarillion* (88).

3 That Finwë would even consider remarriage is a sign of aberration in his essence, for reasons that will be discussed below.

4 Whittingham's valuable and broadly-based discussion of "immortality" includes a consideration of the *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth* debate between Finrod and Andreth (153 ff.), a work outside the scope of this study because of its focus on eschatology.

5 For a discussion of a range of approaches to the Christian and Catholic content of Tolkien's work, see Paul E. Kerry (234-45).

6 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions,...." (Galatians 3:19); "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Galatians 3:21); and "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Hebrews 7:19).

7 In *De libero arbitrio* I, xvi, 35, Augustine of Hippo states that "All sins are contained in this one category, that one turns away from things divine and truly enduring, and turns towards those which are mutable and uncertain." This same passage continues: "evil is the turning away of the will from the immutable good, and the turning towards mutable goods. And this turning away and this turning to are not forced but voluntary" (35). By a strictly Augustinian reading, then, "willfulness/sin/evil" are synonyms.

The "Melkor" passage in "Valaquenta," is especially significant: "From splendour he fell through arrogance to contempt for all things save himself, a spirit wasteful and pitiless. Understanding

he turned to subtlety in perverting to his own will all that he would use, until he became a liar without shame. He began with the desire of Light, but when he could not possess it for himself alone, he descended through fire and wrath into a great burning, down into Darkness..." (*S* 31).

8 See, for example, essays by Gergely Nagy and John William Houghton.

9 Whittingham refers to Christian analogies in Tolkien's description of rebirth among the Elves, and in his considerations of an afterlife (126–27), noting several letters, including the letter to Milton Waldman but in particular letter 355 in which he states that he wanted a world "consonant with Christian belief" (168).

10 "For reasons which I will not elaborate, that seems to me fatal. Myth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not the in the known form of the primary 'real' world. (I am speaking, of course, of our own present situation, not of ancient pagan, pre-Christian days...)" (*Letters* 144). Although Tolkien did drop discussions to avoid similarities that were too obvious (his hints about the Fall of Man are one such instance), it is a small step from "consonance" to similarity.

11 For some, the stay in Mándos' realm is long enough to equate to permanent exile from life: "... the wrong-doers,...were held long in 'waiting', and some were not permitted to take up their lives again" (*Morgoth* 222). Fëanor, whose body "fell to ash" when he died, is apparently one such person: "and his likeness has never again appeared in Arda, neither has his spirit left the halls of Mandos" (*S* 107).

12 The "A" text that continues the passage notes that *desiring* the continuation of marriage is not the point; it is the essence of uncorrupted Eldar to resume a union that has been interrupted (*Morgoth* 233). Remarriage to a different partner is not simply impermissible, it is impossible as long as rebirth can occur.

13 Míriel's refusal, then, is the only possible grounds for even considering Finwë's request, since earlier, the text had noted that the dissolution of any marriage, which would require the departed never to seek return, must be grounded in the will of the departed, since the living cannot compel the decision (*Morgoth* 226).

14 MS A of "The Laws and Customs among the Eldar" uses "essential"

chastity in another, much more problematical, instance of a wish-fulfillment solution in the case of rape. The act is declared (1) completely unknown, since it is foreign to Elvish nature so to force another, and (2) were it to occur, "one so forced would have rejected bodily life and passed to Mandos" (*Morgoth* 228), a solution that erases the victim rather too conveniently, as in the example of sun-maiden who is raped by Melkor and who disembodies herself (*Morgoth* 380-81).

15 Cf. Romans 23:7: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

16 Tolkien's using "mutability" explicitly would have aided the clarity of his exposition. He does allude the concept in one of his discussions in the later chapters of *Morgoth's Ring* (270), when he notes that unlike the Biblical concept of the "Fall" as rebellion, the rebellion of Morgoth occurred before Arda was brought into physical being by Ilúvatar's *fiat* and resulted in an instability, or "sub-creatively introduced evil," within the new creation. However, since the events of the early struggles against Morgoth are presented as a narrative, there is little philosophical exposition in the texts themselves.

17 The Valar's decision results in the sundering of the Eldarin kindred between those who go to Eldamar and those who remain behind—divisions that contribute to the mutual distrust that fuels, in part, the conflicts surrounding the Silmarils.

18 Whittingham also provides a synopsis of the deliberations (149–50), but the current discussion emphasizes different aspects of the debate.

19 Mándos' defining statement of Manwë's Judgment focuses on justice, not on metaphysics (Whittingham 150).

20 Finwë and Indis, his second wife, had already separated once their children matured—a permissible act according to the custom of the Eldar (*Morgoth* 248–50).

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Book Reviews

Carl Phelpstead, *Tolkien and Wales: Language, Literature and Identity.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011. 224 pages hardcover $148.00, trade paper $25.00. ISBN 978-0708323915.

During the early days of Tolkien scholarship, little recognition was paid to influence from the Celts. A few writers noted similarities between Merlin and Gandalf, as Ruth S. Noel did in her 1977 *Mythology of Middle-earth* and Verlyn Flieger did in her 1978 dissertation, but the emphasis was on Arthurian connections rather than Celtic influence behind Arthurian tales. Ten more years passed before J. S. Ryan (in an essay on perceptions of the ancient Celts) wrote that "serious attention" should be paid to Celtic elements, particularly Welsh elements, in Tolkien's writing. Even then, well over a decade passed before the serious attention Ryan called for began to make a difference in Tolkien scholarship.

Knowing what we know now, this reluctance to give the Celts their due seems odd, to say the least; but as Dimitra Fimi points out in a 2007 article on Tolkien's "Celtic type of legends," the dislike Tolkien expressed for "Celtic things" in a 1937 letter seems to have turned most researchers away (*Letters* 26). Readers took Tolkien at his word, focusing on this one derogatory comment without taking note of far more favorable statements expressed in other letters and without paying attention to the full range of Tolkien's scholarship, lectures, and writings.

Today it is no longer possible to claim familiarity with Tolkien and not believe the Celts—their language, literature, and mythology—had a major influence on him. And since we now know that the Welsh meant more to Tolkien than any other branch of Celtic people, a Tolkien book focused specifically on Wales is a welcome book indeed.

Carl Phelpstead's *Tolkien and Wales: Language, Literature and Identity* (2011) is an important book for scholars as well as for serious followers of Tolkien. It is not a long book (116 pages of text), but within those pages Phelpstead brings together all essential information about Tolkien and his relationship with Wales.

Before and after the text are two persuasive additions. The first, a chronology, is not a full accounting of Tolkien's life but sets out "the main events and publications discussed in this book." What the chronology makes obvious is how early in Tolkien's life a Celtic interest—especially a Welsh interest—began and how persistent this interest remained. As Phelpstead points out, Tolkien's "last significant

contribution to scholarship" (of those pieces Tolkien saw through to publication) was "English and Welsh," a 1955 lecture published in 1963. After Phelpstead's final chapter comes an appendix, a list of Welsh-related books once owned by Tolkien and now found predominantly in the English Faculty Library in Oxford. Like Phelpstead's Chronology, this three-page appendix offers quick, convincing proof of Tolkien's attachment to Wales.

The text is divided into three parts. Part I (Language) includes "Encountering Welsh," "Linguistic taste" (primarily on Tolkien's preference for Welsh), and "Inventing language" (with much to say about Welsh influence on the Elves' Sindarin language). Part II (Literature) covers "Mythological sources," "Arthurian literature" (focusing largely on the Welsh roots of Arthurian tales), and "Breton connections" (a chapter on Tolkien and the Breton Celts and how they connect to the Welsh). Part III has only one chapter "Insular identities." This final chapter circles back to earlier material, summarizing and expanding on Tolkien's allegiance to that area of England bordering on Wales, the area he identified with home.

Much of what Phelpstead writes about has been dealt with by earlier scholars or by writers focusing on Tolkien's life, but in order to give a full accounting of Tolkien and the Welsh, Phelpstead needed to cover what was already known before moving on to new discoveries and new information (including material from unpublished Tolkien drafts). It is also true that Phelpstead is more an investigator than an interpreter, more a gatherer of information than a literary critic. This does not lessen the value of Phelpstead's book. Both skills are needed. Few writers (Tom Shippey and Verlyn Flieger being two exceptions) are masters of both, presenting us with new material—textual, linguistic, mythological—and at the same time giving that information a literary context and a literary perspective.

But new or familiar, Phelpstead says it well. His history of changing attitudes toward Celtic cultures (in "Linguistic taste") is particularly informative, as is "Inventing language," an accessible chapter in spite of Phelpstead's warning that some "may find parts of this chapter too technical." His accountings of Tolkien's time at Oxford, first as a student and later as a professor, are well worth reading. (Among other achievements, Tolkien was instrumental in bringing medieval Welsh into the curriculum, where it remains today.) A short section on dragons, found in "Mythological sources," is nicely done. (Welsh dragons, unlike the more familiar Germanic ones, are associated with mountains, giving an appropriately Welsh hint to Smaug on his Lonely Mountain.) And I especially appreciate the close attention Phelpstead pays to Tolkien's 1955 lecture "English and Welsh" in Chapter 2. This

extremely important lecture—one of the most telling pieces Tolkien ever wrote—is not nearly as well known as it ought to be and says more about Tolkien and Wales than any other work.

Now and then Phelpstead misses an opportunity or stops short, omitting material that might well have supported his argument or better informed the reader. When he writes, for example, about Frank Riga's "detailed" comparison of Merlin and Gandalf, saying that Riga recognizes both similarities and differences and finds "different aspects of medieval traditions about Merlin" scattered among Tolkien's wizards, the reader (or this reader, at least) would like to have learned more. What exactly were the similarities (or differences) Riga found, and what are the various traits (according to Riga) Tolkien shared among his wizards?

There are other small deficiencies. In his chapter on Arthurian literature, Phelpstead connects Aragorn's "Sword that was Broken" with Arthur's sword pulled from the stone. Both swords are an indication of their owner's kingship, he argues. Fair enough, but it would have made sense to mention as well the broken and reforged sword found in *Volsunga saga* (a work that greatly influenced Tolkien). Phelpstead's decision to ignore Sigurd's sword in *Volsunga saga* may have boosted his argument for Celtic/Welsh influence, but the reality is more complex.

In one place (a footnote to page 92), Phelpstead claims Marjorie Burns (myself, in fact) "includes both Shelob and the Corrigan in a discussion of webs in Tolkien's work but does not mention the phials." But on page 116 of her book, *Perilous Realms*, the book Phelpstead is referring to, she makes precisely this connection, writing that the Corrigan's phial is "much like the phial of Galadriel."

In Chapter 4, Phelpstead introduces the Welsh concept of the Wild Hunt (a variation of the more familiar Northern European Wild Hunt, where supernatural huntsmen race on horseback across the sky). He then indicates from where Tolkien drew from the Welsh motif but cites only the hunt for the white hart in *The Hobbit* and the peril of Lothlórien. He does not mention the hunt from *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun* (Tolkien's original poem in the Breton tradition). Later, in his chapter "Breton connections," he covers *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun* and covers it well, even commenting that a hunt for a white doe leads to the witch. He does not, however, link that hunt with the Wild Hunt tradition.

There are other hunts that Phelpstead might have mentioned as well, hunts that could help to strengthen connections between Welsh and Elvish hunts. "Of Beren and Lúthien" ends with a hunt that takes both Beren and Huan's life. In *Farmer Giles of Ham*, Tolkien uses the perilous hunt for comic effect, first through Giles' reluctance to hunt

for the dragon and later through inept and ill-prepared knights who accompany him over "the Wild Hills and the borders of the dubious lands."

Though it is not a major point, Phelpstead's index could use some improvement. An entry for *hunts* or the *Wild Hunt* would have been helpful. *Corrigan* (or *korrigan* or *Gorrigan*) does not appear in the index, though much is made of that figure. And certain works, such as *Hrólfs saga kraka* and *Parzival*, and certain names, such as Hengest and Horsa, Lludd, Uther Pendragon, or Myrddin could well have been included.

Here and there Phelpstead's criticism of other scholars who have written on Tolkien and the Celts takes on a note that might almost be called chiding. What troubles him is a perceived failure to distinguish clearly enough between various branches of those people we call the Celts. But the matter is not that simple; Tolkien himself uses *Celtic* inclusively (though he elsewhere makes distinctions); and even today, with our greater awareness of cultural differences, the question of Celtic unity or Celtic diversity is not a settled matter. There are some who emphasize distinctions among branches of the Celts and others who focus more on similarities.

But whatever the case—whether Celts are to be carefully separated into various Celtic types or seen as essentially a single race—those who first published on Tolkien and Celtic influence helped the cause along. By opening up a subject previously much ignored, they paved the way for Phelpstead's more specialized book (a well-written, helpful book) on Tolkien's favorite Celts.

Marjorie Burns
Trout Lake, Washington

Middle-earth and Beyond: Essays on the World of J. R. R. Tolkien. ed. Kathleen Dubs and Janka Kascáková. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. xii, 245 pp. $52.99 (hardcover). ISBN 978-1-4438-2558-0.

This book follows on the heels of *The Mirror Crack'd* (ed. Lynn Forest-Hill, 2008) and *Truths Breathed Through Silver* (ed. Jonathan Himes, 2008) as one of what has now become a series of similar volumes from Cambridge Scholars Publishing: slim, expensive collections of essays from a wide array of scholars—including, in this case, several from eastern Europe. The Introduction promises this current collection "takes new directions, employs new approaches, focuses on different texts, or reviews and then challenges received wisdom" ([ix]), while

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"consider[ing] the vast range of Tolkien's works" rather than focusing on just what may be called the Big Three: *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Silmarillion* (ibid.).[1] Of the eight essays gathered here, half survey broad topics (food and drink, laughter, staying and going, the grotesque) while the rest focus more narrowly (source-study of one of Tolkien's cosmological concepts, a linguistic interpretation of the Turin lay, identifying Tom Bombadil).

Among the broad surveys, the best (and best essay in the volume) is co-editor Kascáková's "'It Snowed Food and Rained Drink' in *The Lord of the Rings*," which both documents just how many references to food are in the book and shows how Tolkien uses such references to establish character—e.g., her observation that it's difficult to catch Strider eating, and when he does, he's always in a hurry. It's not just that Aragorn carries the sword-that-was-broken while Sam carries cooking gear; the hobbit obsession with food is such that the very first word in Treebeard's lines adding them to his Long List of free peoples is "hungry." Kascáková has mastered her subject, and found more in it that might have been expected—for example, showing that hobbits think in terms of food even on a metaphoric level, then demonstrating how true this is by giving the very telling example of Bilbo's comparing his state to "butter . . . scraped over too much bread" (92). Kascáková also includes a passage about how *The Lord of the Rings* mediates between *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*: a truism often stated but rarely so succinctly put (97).

Similarly, in "'No Laughing Matter'" the volume's other editor, Dubs, compiles an extensive listing of places in *The Lord of the Rings* that mention characters laughing. She certainly shows how ubiquitous this motif is and demonstrates that there are far more comic moments than previous critics had realized, but she is generally content just to list; more commentary on the significance of this element would be welcome. Her most interesting contribution comes towards the end of her essay when she points out how Tolkien's evil characters also laugh, albeit gloatingly or mockingly, from Old Man Willow and the Nazgûl to Saruman and Gollum to Sauron himself. Unfortunately, her tally is somewhat compromised by the inexplicable inclusion of Ghân-buri-Ghân among the "evil foes" who laugh and her mistaken assertion that "the Balrog produces 'hoarse laughter' before the attack in Moria" (121).[2] Her piece is also unusual for its slim bibliography, consisting solely of an entry from *The Tolkien Encyclopedia* in addition to *The Lord of the Rings* itself.[3]

By all rights, Sue Bridgwater's "Staying Home and Travelling: Stasis Versus Movement in Tolkien's Mythos" should be a mess, but in fact it is one of the highlights of the whole collection. Bridgwater starts out

by choosing an impossibly large topic: characters in Tolkien who stay at home (e.g., Rosie, Smith's Nell) versus characters who leave (e.g., Bilbo)—two categories that include every single character in all Tolkien's books! She then complicates this by dividing the travellers into those who plan for their journeys (Frodo) versus those who abruptly go off (e.g., Niggle); those who are destined for their travels (Smith) versus "the wrong person taking the wrong journey for the wrong reasons" (Boromir, who usurps his brother's quest). If this were not enough, she expands her two motifs into a figurative sense as well—e.g., in her claim that for all his journeying Sam never really leaves home, since he remains a stay-at-home hobbit in his heart (23). That may be, but can it really be said that a rabble-rouser like Fëanor is similarly a figure of "stasis," since he never changes inwardly wherever he goes (24–25)? Here Bridgwater seems to muddy her own waters, expanding her terminology's inclusiveness beyond useful limits. Yet while her piece would have benefited from a tighter focus and more structured presentation, she is exploring what is undeniably a major theme in Tolkien's work, and does offer occasional insights along the way, such as her observation that Eowyn "[fulfills] a *geas* of which she has never heard" (36). And there's a certain fascination in seeing Ar-Pharazôn the Golden linked to "The Sea-Bell" on the one hand and *Ofermod* on the other (32).

With "Grotesque Characters in Tolkien's Novels *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" by Silvia Pokrivcáková & Anton Pokrivcák, we reach the last of the surveys and the first of the two essays in this collection to rely heavily on literary theory. This particular piece devotes a third of its length to summarizing the history of critical theory on the grotesque; this is a case where less would have been more. Taking Men to represent the real and Elves the ideal (80), they quickly survey various departures from those norms: trolls, orcs, Gollum, dwarves, hobbits, ents.[4] They conclude that sometimes an ugly exterior reflects inner evil, while at other times outer ugliness is at odds with inner wisdom; something every reader of the book already knew. Their point of view—that hobbits display "physical deformities" in being freakishly short, pointy-eared, and large-footed, or that "[their] physical appearance . . . suggests that there is something wrong with them" (83)—seems to me to clash with Tolkien's, given how careful he was to construct a world in which what might seem abnormal in the average human is quite natural in another race.

The second essay weighted with literary theory, Roberto Di Scala's "'Lit.', 'Lang.', Ling.', and the Company They Keep: The Case of *The Lay of the Children of Húrin* seen from a Gricean Perspective," centers on Tolkien's early alliterative Túrin poem. Di Scala (the Italian translator

of this lay) first discusses the 'Lit and Lang' opposition and suggests it can be transcended by adding a third element, 'Ling' (linguistics), which he finds closer to philology as Tolkien practiced it. He then segues into a discussion of the ideas of the late Paul Grice regarding the potential gap between "speaker's meaning" (what the author intended) and "utterance meaning" (what the words literally say); surprisingly, he makes no reference to the book *Speaker's Meaning* by Tolkien's fellow Inkling, Owen Barfield, whose ideas we know Tolkien treated with respect. If I understand him rightly, Di Scala concludes the alliterative lay is more successful as a work of art than has hitherto been generally granted. I think he is wrong, however, in his assertion that the Túrin lay "was originally not intended for publication . . . the *Lay* was meant . . . exclusively [for] its author's ears and no one else's" (136; cf. also 126 & 137). Certainly Tolkien never finished the work, but Di Scala's claim here exceeds the evidence.

The best of the essays focusing on specific points, Jason Fisher's "Sourcing Tolkien's 'Circles of the World': Speculations on the Heimskringla, the Latin Vulgate Bible, and the Hereford Mappa Mundi" seeks specific sources for Tolkien's phrase and concept "The Circles of the World," suggesting possible influence from Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, from an apocryphal book in the Latin Vulgate, and from a thirteenth century map from the West Midlands. Here we have an interesting topic that would have benefitted from either a broadening or narrowing of focus. Surveying these three possibilities doesn't fully do justice to the topic: this essay would have been more compelling had it focused entirely on the strongest of the three parallels, the medieval worldmap,[5] with perhaps support from the others. Even better would be to delve deeper to include Tolkien's whole concept of the Flat World, its debt to classical and medieval thought, and ways in which Tolkien's creation departed from those models. Over all this essay is best taken as preliminary findings (as perhaps hinted at in the use of the word "Speculations" in its title); it is to be hoped Fisher will return to this topic one day to give it the more extensive treatment it deserves.

Finally, the two essays by Liam Campbell and Kinga Jenike are both devoted to the apparently perennial problem of Tom Bombadil's identity and function. Campbell's approach in "The Enigmatic Mr. Bombadil: Tom Bombadil's Role as a Representative of Nature in *The Lord of the Rings*" is the more traditional; he surveys previous attempts to identify Bombadil's nature before offering up his own solution: Bombadil represents beleaguered nature (61) and derives primarily from the medieval 'Green Man' legend (62). Ironically, perhaps, in a piece devoted to someone who turns away from mastery and domination, Campbell's piece suffers from a tendency to review leisurely

what others have written, content to pass lightly over previous material rather than coming to grips with it. For example, he mentions Shippey identification of Bombadil as a *genius loci* (43) and then passes on without seeming to realize the implications of that identification (the most perceptive to date), as if checking items off a list rather than deeply engaging the subject. The latter part of Campbell's piece relies heavily on the controversial work of new-age writer John Matthews, whose speculations and assertions Campbell takes uncritically, at face value.[6]

The second Bombadil piece, "Tom Bombadil—Man of Mystery," will probably generate more discussion than any other essay in this collection. Jenike takes the novel approach of choosing to proceed by a process of elimination. Is Bombadil a goblin? No, because goblins are evil. Is he a troll or dragon? No, because trolls are stupid and dragons greedy, and Tom is neither. He is not a Man or one of the Dwarfs (sic), because he's immortal, nor one of the elves because they're affected by the Ring. After similarly rejecting ent and hobbit and Maia, she makes an imaginative leaps and concludes that he must be J. R. R. Tolkien himself (72), written into the book (just as Chaucer wrote himself into *The Canterbury Tales* as one of the pilgrims) but kept isolated from the main narrative.[7] If this were not enough, Jenike offers a second bold theory that, having created the character of Bombadil in the early 1930s, Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings* specifically to provide a setting into which that character could be inserted, an interesting variant of the oft-repeated claim that he wrote the tale in order to have a setting in which a character could offer a line of dialogue in Elvish. I doubt that Jenike's solution will gain many (any?) adherents, but it does have the virtue of being original, taking even a confirmed Bombadologist like myself by surprise.[8]

Errata

Perfection being unachievable in this world, there are inevitably some errors. *Studies in Words* is by C. S. Lewis, not Jared Lobdell (16). Michael N. Stanton, not Michael Drout, is the author of *The Tolkien Encyclopedia*'s entry on "Humor" (105). Snorri Sturluson did not write the *Völuspá* (7), although he based part of his *Prose Edda* on this work in the *Elder Edda*. What Tolkien published in 1925 was not his translation of *Sir Gawain & the Green Knight* (as stated on page 58) but his edition of the original Middle English text; the translation was posthumously published in 1975. One author expresses doubts about Goldberry's being Tom's wife, saying "it is not clear that Goldberry is, technically, a wife" (69). Actually, the poem "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil," which the same author cites just two pages later, ends with an account of Tom's "merry wedding" and describes "his bride" in her wedding

finery (*The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, 16). These are minor flaws that do not detract much from the main work, but it's good for anyone who might want to cite from these essays to be aware of them; any more serious problems are discussed above in the evaluations of the individual essays.

Conclusion

This book's main virtue is that it provides an outlet for rising new scholars—this is one contributor's first publication in English—and thus is valuable for offering new points of view. In the end, this is a worthwhile but non-essential volume. Considering its slim size and hefty price, if you're on a limited budget you might want to give this one a pass. But if you have the budget and the shelf-space, or have access to a good-sized university library, you should consider checking this one out and reading through the essays that interest you; it's well worth your while.

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Notes

1 Despite this claim, the bulk of these essays focus exclusively on exactly those three works, with only occasional references to other works like Smith of Wootton Major and "Leaf by Niggle" (Bridgwater,22, 29–30) or the poem "Once Upon a Time" (Jenike 73).The chief exception is Di Scala's essay, which centers on Tolkien's early alliterative poem *The Lay of the Children of Húrin*.

2 In fact, as Tolkien himself observed in his comments on the Zimmerman script, "The Balrog *never speaks or makes any vocal sound at all*. Above all he does not laugh …" (*Letters* 274; emphasis Tolkien's). Dubs garbles another example when on the same page she writes "… the Haradrim, driven to the brink, fierce in despair, laughed at the dwarves attempting to escape down the river" (121); here she seems to have conflated a genuine reference from "The Last Debate" with memories of Beren's ambush in *The Book of Lost Tales*.

3 Dubs seems to have missed entirely Derek Robinson's "The Hasty Stroke Goes Oft Astray: Tolkien and Humour," which appeared in Robert Giddings' *J. R. R. Tolkien: This Far Land* (1983). While admittedly poor (indeed, downright bad), Robinson's piece is the most notable previously published essay on the subject, and refuting his claims (his thesis runs directly counter to her own), could

have provided her with a good starting point from which to argue her thesis.

4 Oddly enough, they include no mention of Ghân-buri-Ghân, one of Tolkien's best examples of his 'look foul, feel fair' dichotomy.

5 A reproduction of the Herefordshire *mappa mundi* would also have helped.

6 Campbell's essay has since been incorporated into his recent book *The Ecological in the Works of JRR Tolkien* (Walking Tree Press, 2011), where it forms the first half of chapter two (pages 73–96).

7 She offers as additional evidence the fact that Tom is called "Fatherless," while Tolkien was an orphan.

8 For those seeking another startlingly untraditional (but not altogether serious) interpretation of Bombadil, see http://km-515.livejournal.com/1042.html.

Liam Campbell, *The Ecological Augury in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2011). 324 pp. $24.30 (trade paper). ISBN-13 978-3905703184.

At this late date there can be no serious Tolkien scholar who denies the environmental themes in Tolkien's legendarium. After countless essays and conference presentations on the topic, and an entire conference devoted to it at the University of Vermont in 2011, saying that Tolkien was concerned about the environment is like saying that *The Lord of the Rings* contained rings. But to date there have been only a handful of book-length treatments of the topic, the most well-known being Patrick Curry's *Defending Middle-earth* (1997) and Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans's *Ents, Elves, and Eriador* (2006). Both works are written in accessible language, and represent different sides of the argument whether Tolkien's writings reflect a standard interpretation of Catholic teachings as to the balance between stewardship and domination in terms of the environment. A third book-length treatment of the topic is certainly welcome, especially if it treads new ground. One way that such a work could accomplish this is by examining works of Tolkien not covered by Curry and Dickerson and Evans. Campbell's volume does that, by examining all of the *legendarium* (admittedly the History of Middle-earth volumes to a much lesser extent) as well as non Middle-earth writings such as his letters and *Leaf by Niggle*. The

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volume also boasts a lengthy bibliography of secondary sources in the fields of ecology, psychology, religion, and Tolkien criticism: a valuable resource for both students and scholars alike.

The work is divided into an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, and an afterword. The introduction summarizes critical and public responses to Tolkien's works, while Chapter 1 focuses on his childhood and love for trees. Neither discussion breaks new ground, but they provide good summaries of both aspects of Tolkien's life, especially for those who are new to either topic. The chapter continues by setting up Tolkien's belief that evil "lay not in the machine but in the machine-wielder" (57). The chapter concludes by discussing some aspects of religion in Tolkien's *legendarium* (including references to the Valar) and acknowledges the importance of Tolkien's religion in his worldview and writings. Again, these topics are not viewed in any fresh light, but they do form an important foundation to any argument concerning environmental/ecological themes in Tolkien's works.

The second chapter is an examination of the role of Tom Bombadil that sets him in opposition to the characterization and motivations of Saruman. Campbell argues that the two characters represent "the struggle between the ecologically sustained landscapes of Middle-earth and the mechanized powers which threaten them" and "represent positive and negative environmental models" as well as "inverted mirror reflections of each other" (73). Campbell's examination of the enigma that is Tom Bombadil brings together Tolkien's original words and the interpretations of other Tolkien scholars, and offers his own thoughts as to the central meaning and relative importance of the character to the story. The most original of Campbell's ideas seems to be the suggestion that Bombadil owes much to the ancient archetype of the Green Man. This hypothesis is worthy of further consideration and exploration. Where Campbell's argument falls flat is at the end, in a table that attempts to contrast Bombadil and Saruman as embodying various aspects of his "Ecologically Positive Presentation/Ecologically Negative Presentation." My argument is not with the table itself, but rather that it has an equally defensible explanation as contrasting Bombadil as the embodiment of pure science and Saruman as the misuse of science in destructive (subjugating) technologies. Campbell even cites the quote from Tolkien's 1954 letter to Hastings that supports this interpretation, but does not acknowledge the alternative reading. In it Tolkien explains that Bombadil is "a particular embodying of pure (real) natural science: the spirit that desires knowledge of other things, their history and nature, *because they are 'other* 'and wholly independent of the enquiring mind, a spirit coeval with the rational mind, and entirely unconcerned with 'doing' anything with the knowledge"

(*Letters* 192). Campbell leaves out the continuation of the quotation in which Tolkien explains that the difference is between "Zoology and Botany not Cattle-breeding or Agriculture" (*Letters* 192), i.e. between scientific knowledge and the application of science. Campbell is certainly free to focus on his own interpretation, but he should not ignore alternatives in the process.

Chapter Three also focuses on a comparison between two characters, Gandalf and Sauron. Campbell notes that this comparison does have a natural basis in Tolkien's writings, as "The Istari" in *Unfinished Tales* notes that they are both Maiar and that Gandalf is "coeval and equal" to Sauron (*UT* 395). As in the case of the previous chapter, the argument concludes with a summary table that contrasts the two characters as depictions of "Ecologically Positive Presentation/Ecologically Negative Presentation." Again, the table does not add to the strength of the argument, in this case because the contrasting points seem forced at times. For example, how is being "obsessed with regaining the One Ring" in and of itself an ecologically negative presentation (151)? Rather, it is the potential of what Sauron will do once he has the Ring that presages a probable ecological disaster. Perhaps such alternate phrasing would have made the contrast between the two characters stronger.

In chapter three Campbell also begins to set forth his interpretation of the previous arguments presented by Curry and Dickerson and Evans as to what extent Tolkien's ecological vision is a purely Christian one. In my reading of all three works, it appears that Campbell takes a middle-road between the two previous books. In the third chapter he argues that Gandalf is a steward of Middle-earth's environment, and in the following chapter posits that this stewardship is not a classical Catholic interpretation; by exploring the relationship of the elves to nature, and Gandalf to other characters in the texts, he offers that Tolkien "incorporated his green philosophy into his Catholic faith and promoted, through the culture of his elves and others, an environmental ethos which can legitimately consider the natural world to be a valued creation of God in its own right" (173). Campbell's discussions of connections between Gandalf, Radagast, and Saint Francis of Assisi are worthy of further consideration, and his reflections on the connections between Tolkien's "races of elves" (156) (both in the *legendarium* and in others of his works) are perhaps among the best in the book. To this scientist one of the most thought-provoking connections Campbell draws in his final chapter is between *The Lord of the Rings* and Rachel Carson's seminal environmental work *Silent Spring*, especially his ecological cautionary tale entitled "A Fable for Tom." My sole criticism is that Campbell buries in a footnote the fact that he is not arguing that

Carson's work was influenced by Tolkien. This is an important point and deserves to be made clearer to the reader.

The work's "conclusion" summarizes his argument, but it is not the end of the story. Instead, the author continues with an afterword that devotes most of its space to Verlyn Flieger's essay "Taking the Part of Trees: Eco-Conflict in Middle-earth." Campbell attempts to address Flieger's criticism that Tolkien is not seemingly consistent in his ecological message, specifically as it relates to tree-felling. Flieger makes a compelling (and troubling) case in her essay; Campbell synthesizes the rebuttals of several authors as well as his own thoughts to make an equally coherent argument. For example, in discussing the tension between the hobbits and the Old Forest, Campbell reminds the reader of one of Tolkien's letters, in which he explains that hobbits "are not a Utopian vision; or recommended as an ideal in their own or any age" (*Letters* 197). While Campbell's argument is solid and worth considering, it would have been better served if it had been integrated into the main body of the work. In its current location it appears to have been an afterthought rather than an afterword, written in response to comments from an editor or pre-publication reviewer.

Unfortunately, the afterword does not end with his thoughts on this matter, but rather continues on with a rationalization of Gandalf's actions in *The Hobbit* chapter "A Journey in the Dark" in which he sets fire to trees in order to save Bilbo and the dwarves. Again, this argument would have been much better served if it had appeared within the main body of the work, and as a less well-developed section than the one on Flieger's essay, it ends the work on a weak and apologist tone. This brings me to one of the most distracting aspects of the work, namely the exorbitant number of explanatory footnotes. Many are digressions that could have been omitted, some of which take up a half a page of text. The work itself even ends on an explanatory footnote.

Another complaint I have about this work is what I consider to be a significant "road not taken," or rather a false promise, starting with the title of the work itself. An "augury" is generally an omen or portent; if we read Tolkien's works as a cautionary tale of how the Age of Machines has adversely affected nature and our connection to it, then the title is well–deserved. But Campbell further explains that Tolkien's "ecological augury, which I argue is the most representative way of characterizing the nature of the green dimension of Tolkien's fiction, calls for a recovery of environmental values and a reconnection with nature" (21). The idea that these two "key aspects of Tolkien's environmentalism: recovery and augury" are, as he calls it "two sides of the same coin" (21) certainly can be argued from the point of view of Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-stories," which places an emphasis on recovery as

part of the central importance of fairy-stories. But this emphasis on recovery and augury also owes much to the author whose famous poem "Auguries of Innocence" was brought to mind upon reading the title of the book—William Blake. Campbell does reference Blake a number of times in his book, for example noting that "Tolkien's work should be placed alongside Blake's, Thoreau's and Wordsworth's as among the most significant green texts ever committed to print" (204) and that "Like William Blake before him, however, he distrusted machine-wielders and builders, and trailblazing engineers who seemed indifferent to the ecological cost of their endeavors" (28). However, he never makes deeper connections to Blake's emphasis on recovery as well as augury. This is an avenue for exploration that Tolkien scholars should consider more deeply.

I have no doubt that Campbell's book will spark renewed interest in Tolkien's environmental themes. In retrospect, I did not concur with all of the author's connections and conclusions; for example, a lengthy (half page) footnote on page 40 attempting to connect the ents' attack on Isengard with James Lovelock's Gaia theory is an example of serious overreach. But in such cases I was forced to consider why I did not agree, and in the process thought more deeply about Tolkien's works. This in itself is one reason to recommend the work.

Like the hobbits themselves, this book is not a "Utopian vision; or recommended as an ideal." It is not, as it claims, a "complete study of the environment themes in Tolkien" (21), but neither have its two predecessors been.[1] It is, however, thoughtful and thought-provoking, well-documented, and eminently readable. As such it deserves to have a place in any Tolkien criticism library, as do the previous two works by Curry and Dickerson and Evans. The reader can read all three and take away something unique from each volume; having noted this, I fully expect there to be a fourth volume in the next few years that will attempt to synthesize the arguments of all three and put forth yet another new take on the environmental themes in Tolkien's work, for there is still much to consider in this area of Tolkien criticism.

Kristine Larsen
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Notes

1 Curiously, in his introduction Campbell calls Dickerson and Evans's work the only other "complete study" (21) in this area, despite the fact that Dickerson and Evans clearly state in their own work that they feel they did not take their argument "far enough" (266).

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Curry, Patrick. *Defending Middle-earth. Tolkien: Myth and Modernity.* London: HarperCollins, 1998.

Dickerson, Matthew T., and Jonathan Evans. *Ents, Elves, and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006.

Tolkien and the Study of His Sources, edited by Jason Fisher. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. 2011. 240 pages. $40.00 (trade paperback). ISBN 978-0786464821.

J.R.R. Tolkien is that rare sort of writer who makes us intensely curious about the texts that he liked most. Therefore it seems oddly contradictory that the man who did so much to point his readers to the sources of his own inspiration for *The Lord of the Rings* had a hearty dislike of literary source criticism. In 1966 Tolkien compared a source critic to "a man who having eaten anything, from a salad to a well-planned dinner, uses an emetic, and sends the results for chemical analysis."[1] A long-held opinion, Tolkien had expressed it in another culinary metaphor more than three decades earlier. Quoting in his essay "On Fairy Stories" a metaphor coined by George Webbe Dasent from *Popular Tales from the Norse* Tolkien says "we must be satisfied with the soup that is set before us, and not desire to see the bones of the ox out of which it has been boiled," and then changes Dasent's meaning (Dasent was discussing philological analysis) when he glosses the metaphor: "By 'the soup' I mean the story as it is served up by the author, and by 'the bones' its sources or material." (*OFS* 47). Tolkien preferred attention focused on the new work, not on its sources: "To my mind it is the particular use in a particular situation of any motive,[2] whether invented, deliberately borrowed, or unconsciously remembered that is the most interesting thing to consider" (*Letters* 418).

Given the evidence of Tolkien's censorious view of source criticism, a collection such as this volume might seem to start out at a moral disadvantage; and, indeed, Jason Fisher and his co-contributors in *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources* appear, at first blush, to be overly apologetic and deferential to Tolkien's pronounced opinions. "If Tolkien wished to proscribe our rooting around among 'the bones of the ox' out of which his works were made," Fisher cautions, "what right do we have to gainsay him?" But this impression quickly dissipates when Fisher follows his hesitant query with a refreshing declaration of his own: "I

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believe scholars have every right . . . with all due respect to the author, we can, and should proceed" (1). Then Fisher and his colleagues turn a potential vulnerability into a strength by tackling the issue head on. "This collection of essays is concerned with both the theory and practice of source criticism," says Fisher, and, accordingly, the first forty-five pages are devoted almost purely to theory, with an Introduction by Tom Shippey and essays by E.L. Risden, and Fisher.

Shippey's Introduction, "Why Source Criticism?" serves to introduce the whole work. He surveys the contributions on a high level and finds three veins of source criticism in the collection: essays on the cultural background for Tolkien's work, essays on Tolkien's professional interests as scholar and philologist, and essays on the global traditions of narrative and story. It might be tempting to characterize Shippey's introduction simply as bestowing on this book an avuncular blessing of legitimacy from the world's foremost Tolkien scholar, but Shippey always rewards close reading, and even his asides provoke thought, such as, for example, when he describes Tolkien, professionally, as "a controversialist all his life" (7). Here Shippey addresses, with valuable insight, the reasons why Tolkien disliked source criticism, and yet in concluding he supports Fisher's prefatory declaration for the validity of the pursuit, and tells us, in a gentle riposte to Tolkien's culinary metaphors that "you can learn a lot from seeing what a great cook has in his kitchen" (15).

Risden's essay, "Source Criticism: Background and Applications," focuses on the scope of source criticism as a method and points out examples of its applicability, ranging from Biblical studies to Shakespeare, and he distinguishes source criticism from biographical and historical criticism. To the extent that Risden discusses Tolkien, he generally reiterates information provided by Shippey in Appendix A of *The Road to Middle-Earth*. Fisher's essay, "Tolkien and Source Criticism: Remarking and Remaking," is one of the most spirited in the volume, focusing on how source criticism should be practiced in regard to Tolkien, and the benefits that can be obtained from it. Even more so than Shippey's introduction, Fisher's essay epitomizes the essential spirit of this book.

The three theoretical essays that open the book provide a foundation for the eight practical essays that follow, and so one of the best aspects of this volume is the critical self-awareness of the contributing scholars. This reviewer does not possess the breadth of historical and literary knowledge that would be required to evaluate in detail the accuracy of the source scholarship of this eclectic group of contributions, for the examined sources in this volume have a diversity ranging from *Gilgamesh* to the history of the Byzantine Empire to John

Buchan's novel *Midwinter*. Nevertheless, these eight diverse essays can be evaluated by other objective standards. One such objective measure is the extent to which the essays demonstrate Tolkien's use of the sources they examine, which should be a helpful analysis in a review like this because, presumably, a general reader who picks up this book will be motivated more by an interest in Tolkien than by a direct interest in a particular source (which, if that were the dominant motivation, would likely lead to choosing a different book). Direct influence stands implicit in this test: the argument and evidence that Tolkien not only knew the source but that it also affected his thought and writing in some manner must be strong. Measured by this analysis, the most informative essays about Tolkien in this volume are Thomas Honegger's contribution on "The Rohirrim: Anglo-Saxons on Horseback"; John D. Rateliff's essay "*She* and Tolkien, Revisited," documenting Tolkien's use of motifs from H. Rider Haggard's novels *She* and *Ayesha*; Nicholas Birns' "The Stones and the Book: Tolkien, Mesopotamia, and Biblical Mythopoeia," analyzing Tolkien's use of Biblical myth and Mesopotamian history; and Diana Pavlac Glyer and Josh B. Long's chapter on "Biography as Source: Niggles and Notions," looking at Tolkien's use of his own life experiences in his writings.

Another such objective measure is the extent to which the essays provide a detailed and informative description of the source or sources they examine. By this standard, the most useful essays in this book are Miryam Librán-Moreno's "Byzantium, New Rome!: Goths, Langobards, and Byzantium in *The Lord of the Rings*," a summary of and commentary on certain aspects of the history of Constantinople from the 4th to the 11th century, and Judy Ann Ford's discussion of "William Caxton's *The Golden Legend* as a Source for Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*."

A third objective measure is the persuasiveness of an essay in regard to Tolkien's use of a particular source, especially when the evidence of the source's influence on Tolkien is more tenuous and conjectural than it is in the context of sources which we know Tolkien studied closely. The prominent essays in the volume under this standard are Kristine Larsen's "Sea Birds and Morning Stars: Ceyx, Alcyone, and the Many Metamorphoses of Eärendil and Elwing," a fascinating and imaginative exploration of Ovid and astronomy, and Mark T. Hooker's "Reading John Buchan in Search of Tolkien," an exhaustive analysis of motifs and ideas from three novels by John Buchan that Tolkien may have adopted and adapted for use in his own novels.

While each of these diverse essays has its strengths, it must be conceded that not every part of these essays will be helpful to readers who do not know the examined sources well before starting in.

Nevertheless, in their best parts, and there are many, all of these well written, well researched essays not only show us the breadth and depth of Tolkien's thought and reading, but also they remind us many times over of the extraordinary imaginative uses Tolkien made of the sources that influenced his thought.

Paul Edmund Thomas
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Notes

1 I had never before encountered this jocular quip until reading it on page 30 of the collection under review here, which alone makes the book worth the price of admission: Fisher quotes from Daphne Castell, "The Realms of Tolkien," *New Worlds* Vol. 50, No. 168 (November, 1966) 146.

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Picturing Tolkien: Essays on Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings *Film Trilogy*, edited by Janice M. Bogstad and Philip E. Kaveny. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, August 2011. 302 pp. $35.00 (trade paperback). ISBN 978-0786446360.

Picturing Tolkien is a collection of sixteen essays tackling Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy from a ten-year perspective not possible for earlier attempts at assessing its merits and misfires. The Jackson versus Tolkien debate may not be as heated now as it was in those early days after the films rolled like a deep ocean tsunami over the consciousness of Tolkien scholars and fans worldwide, but it has certainly not abated. It is, instead, more measured and thoughtful.

A quick scan of the Table of Contents of *Picturing Tolkien* will reveal a number of familiar names from the academic community, heavyweights all. You might be tempted to think, "Oh boy, here we go." You'd be wrong.

Instead of the long-expected evisceration of Jackson's film trilogy, what you'll discover in these pages is a fascinating cross-section of opinion—and expert knowledge—on this monumental visual retelling of Tolkien's Middle-earth saga. You may learn things you didn't know. You may also find that ten-year-old hindsight counts for a lot. You will definitely find compelling arguments on both sides of the Great Peter Jackson Divide. There are many voices in *Picturing Tolkien*, and it is well worth the reader's time to listen to them all.

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When evaluating a book of this nature, given the crowded field of books about Tolkien, it's helpful to apply certain benchmarks. Does the structure of the book work—is the collection even in content and not weighted more toward one topic to the exclusion of others? Are the articles equally strong, with no filler or weak arguments sandwiched among the stronger ones? Are new perspectives offered, and do old arguments carry new weight? Within each essay, is the intent clearly stated and satisfactorily reasoned. Does the conclusion effectively pull all the threads of the discussion together? Although your mileage may vary depending on which side of the Divide you find yourself on, it's safe to say this collection wins a solid "Yes" to all these questions.

The collection is conveniently structured into the two main points of argument surrounding Jackson's version of Tolkien's sprawling novel: story/structure and character/culture, with eight essays in each section. The book begins with the strongest film defense (Kristin Thompson), followed by the strongest book defense (Verlyn Flieger), essentially establishing the two opposing points of view up front. This is a valuable way to begin, because it helps put all the other essays in perspective, setting a point of reference for how well Jackson's adaptation has succeeded or not.

Thompson's contention that "it's better to have a film with energy and entertainment value that takes liberties than one that sticks to the original with bland respect" immediately invites the counter-argument that once you begin to unravel the carefully woven tapestry of Tolkien's fiction by taking those liberties, you end up with a tangle of unhooked plot points that keep requiring new material to repair the rip in the fabric of story. Thompson cleverly relies heavily on Shippey, the gold standard for Tolkien scholarship, to set her point that Jackson's screenplays are a satisfying alternate road to Middle-earth. As evidence, she gives a detailed analysis of Jackson's successful and creative solutions to some of the adaptation's most difficult challenges, in particular the "Gollum talks to himself" scene. Flieger's succinctly argued essay (it's one of the shortest in the collection) clearly sets the opposing viewpoint that the "constraining literality" of computer-generated fantasy filmmaking makes it unsuitable for adaptation of a work such as Tolkien's, which is so heavily dependent on language and its role in creating the world of the mind. Her evidence is the Tom Bombadil sequence, which treads "close to whimsy" in prose, but would unavoidably fall into the worst of parody on the screen. The ineffable quality of Bombadil, whose presence "resides in theme rather than plot," simply could not be adequately translated to the screen, yet his imperviousness to the Ring is at the very core of what the written story is all about. Tom Bombadil is essence, not actor. The psychological attraction of

the One Ring is accomplished through layered impressions, not fiery letters on the screen, and therein lies the problem with any cinematic rendering of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Following this setup of the opposing camps, John D. Rateliff further examines how Jackson's choices of elision and exclusion affect the films overall. Rateliff's conclusion that "Tolkien's story is too tightly woven and interlinked for whole episodes to be removed without consequences down the line" points directly to what this reviewer has called Tolkien's "fearful symmetry." And it is this intricately constructed nonlinear symmetry that E.L. Risden's essay examines through a discussion of film linearity vs. book complexity, to "uncover essential differences in media" and expose the "exigencies of adaptation."

Dimitra Fimi addresses the ways in which folklore *in* film and folklore *about* film affected the Jackson films, bringing into play the huge body of myth, fairy-tale, and legend outside Tolkien's *legendarium* (external folklore) as well as Jackson's personal take on Tolkien's use of the deep well of folklore (internal folklore). Her detailed examination of Jackson's Elves as neo-Celtic beings, in addition to an explication of how Tolkien's oathbreakers in the Paths of the Dead end up as pop-culture "cinematic zombies," demonstrate graphically the ways in which Jackson's films have "imposed a definitive, solidified version of Tolkien folklore."

Yvette Kisor tackles the problem of interlacement, the non-linear story structure that makes Tolkien's novel such a complex and satisfying read. Kisor explains how interlacement works, demonstrating Tolkien's use of "chronological leapfrogging," and suggests that Jackson's use of intercutting serves a similar purpose for the films, so that abandoning Tolkien's non-linear narrative technique achieves "a fidelity to Tolkien's message, or theme."

Sharin Schroeder takes both Tolkien and Jackson to task in their portrayal of monsters, pointing out that both are inclined to bring these illicitly made creatures into the foreground—Jackson through his background as horror filmmaker and Tolkien through his eloquent defense of the monsters in *Beowulf*. She demonstrates how Frankensteinian monster creation and its moral implications haunt the work of both men, as demonstrated in a comparison of Tolkien's Gollum and Jackson's invented super-orc Lurtz.

From Lurtz, the all-purpose killing machine, we move to Robert C. Woosnam-Savage's chapter on arms and armor, which closes the first section of the book. This essay touches on a nagging criticism concerning Jackson's films— that they are so astonishingly real and viscerally gritty that those images are burned forever into the mental landscape of anyone who has seen the films, supplanting the evocative

qualities of Tolkien's language and becoming canonical for both imagery and story. For film-firsters, this is a non-issue; for book-firsters, not so much. Woosnam-Savage's point is well taken, however, that this sense of reality achieved by "treating the *matériel* of the War of the Ring as part of a real, grounded, history" is what helped Jackon's trilogy ascend to classic cinema status, especially when compared to past "war" movies and their treatment of armaments and battle sequences.

Section two of *Picturing Tolkien* opens with an essay co-written by Judy Ann Ford and Robin Anne Reid that looks at "Frodo's journey into the West" and how that scene was recast for cinema. The difference in approach to the concept of "afterlife" and religious redemption in book versus film is significant, having specifically to do with Tolkien's Scandinavian-tinged "spiritual pessimism" and Jackson's optimistic presentation of the new age of men coming into play as the melancholy Elves depart. Both paths, the authors assert, can put viewers and readers "in the same emotional location when the stories ended."

Philip E. Kaveny returns to the problem of Gollum. Kaveny compares Gollum's role and character development as handled by Tolkien and Jackson, pointing out that both were constrained by issues of time and money, preventing them from presenting the complete history of Middle-earth that might have been. Gollum serves as both backstory conduit and bridger in both book and film, "integrating the big picture of what is at stake on a moral, ethical, and spiritual level."

Character studies of Gandalf and Aragorn are presented by Brian D. Walter and Janet Brennan Croft, respectively. Walter demonstrates how the films dilute the authority of Gandalf as a sort of "wizard angel" in both his Grey Pilgrim and White personas to allow a "fuller, richer depiction of numerous other characters"—Gandalf's loss is their gain, especially Aragorn's, who must become the films' human authority figure. This brings us to Croft's study of Jackson's Aragorn, which considers the reasons for significant character changes made in the films. Contrasting Joseph Campbell's myth of the hero to that of the modern superhero monomyth expounded by Lawrence and Jewett, it becomes clear that the latter is much more cinematic and acceptable to today's movie audiences (and thus more profitable) than the former. As Croft argues, Jackson recast Aragorn to appeal to an audience that would respond to "the irresistible power of the American [Hollywood] version of the monomyth."

And speaking of Aragorn, what about his love life? He certainly had one onscreen. Richard C. West examines Jackson's use of the scant source material (mostly Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*) to craft a love story between the films' human hero and his betrothed, the

daughter of Elrond. Having to invent mostly a character for Arwen, Jackson's initial impulse to turn her into "Arwen, Warrior Princess" was luckily deflected by online fan outrage, allowing her to be more Aragorn's "helpmate and inspiration" from a distance, making the wedding scene all the more satisfying when they are reunited. This version of the Aragorn/Arwen love story, asserts West, "resulted in a distinct work of art that is worthwhile in its own right."

Establishing cultural settings in the films is addressed by both Janice M. Bogstad and Michael D.C. Drout. Bogstad demonstrates that horses serve a greater narrative function than "the establishment of preindustrial but post-Iron Age culture." From the mundane (Bill the Pony) to the mythic (the Mearas, Shadowfax, Brego), the characters' relationships with horses not only establish the culture of Rohan, but more broadly enforce the liminality of both Gandalf and Aragorn. In Drout's discussion of Tolkien's disavowal of Anglo-Saxon influence in crafting the Rohirrim, six pages of setup may seem daunting to those not linguistically inclined, but keep reading—the connection to Jackson's films is worth it. The point Drout makes is that "a great many readers (critics and others) are influenced in their understanding of the Anglo-Saxons by the Rohirrim," a fact that colors interpretation. Enter Jackson. Once again, we are back to "reducing or eliminating the ambiguity inherent in prose that is used to describe sensory data." In other words, once an image becomes as a visual icon, such as use of the Sutton Hoo headgear to model Théoden's helmet, it essentially becomes the *only* image (and cultural correspondence) accepted. Drout encourages a rereading of the books (and particularly Appendix F) to offset this disambiguation that is the natural parlance of film.

The collection is brought to a close by Joseph Ricke and Catherine Barnett, whose co-authored essay confronts the ultimate criticism of Jackson's film epic—whether the numinous can satisfactorily be filmed. Through extensive discussion of the difference between "magical" and "numinous" and film techniques for establishing the intangible, their conclusion is that "some things are untranslatable," but overall Jackson has created his own beautiful and iconic scenes that give viewers a satisfying sense of the numinous.

It is unlikely that this collection of essays will radically change the minds of those who believe Jackson played too fast and loose with Tolkien's story and characters (this reviewer is still in that category), and that ultimately numinous, interlaced fantasy narrative cannot be successfully transitioned to the flattening, visual medium of film. On the other hand, there is much to be appreciated here and there are new perspectives to add to the growing discussion of Jackson's take on Tolkien's ageless tale of loss and redemption.

Does this book belong on the shelf alongside your other trusted Tolkien reference materials? Absolutely.

Anne C. Petty
Crawfordville, Florida

The Ring and the Cross: Christianity and The Lord of The Rings, ed. Paul E. Kerry (Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), pp. 310; *Light Beyond All Shadow: Religious Experience in Tolkien's Work*, ed. Paul E. Kerry & Sandra Miesel (Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), pp. xii + 220.

Is *The Lord of the Rings* a Christian work? Patrick Curry's answer—"yes, but not only that"[1]—is probably the best and most succinct response; but the issues implied by the question and Curry's answer are by no means uncomplicated. The 29 essays gathered in these two volumes demonstrate the validity of both sides of Curry's summary: the contributors to *The Ring and the Cross* explore various dimensions of "the influence of J.R.R. Tolkien's Christianity, even his Roman Catholicism, on his writing" (17), while the essays in *Light Beyond All Shadow* expand the inquiry to investigate more broadly "how Tolkien's writing opens up the nature of religious experience and the spiritual" beyond the strictly Catholic or Christian to include transcendental values at the most general level (vii). Regarding the first volume, *The Ring and the Cross,* the fact that Tolkien was a Christian "and indeed a Roman Catholic" (*Letters*, 255) is undeniable—primary evidence is abundant in his essays and letters; this evidence has been much discussed in recent decades, and much of it is rehearsed over again in this volume. What *is* deniable, and what some scholars have attempted—without much success—is the degree to which this fact constrained what Tolkien wrote or determined how his works should be read. The vast secondary literature that has grown up around Tolkien's imaginative writing explores virtually every doctrinal, ontological, theological, and soteriological topic extending from this fact, and in light of the tangle through which one now must make one's way, it can be stated in truth that *The Ring and The Cross* assists substantially in cutting a swath. A similar metaphor, that of mapping spiritual territory, governs *Light Beyond All Shadow.*

The question that hovers over both volumes is just how to measure the influence of Tolkien's religious views and commitments on the products of his creativity and his readers' response to them. Must we regard *The Lord of the Rings*, the Middle-earth *legendarium*, or the Tolkienian *oeuvre* as a whole as *exclusively* Christian? To that question

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one may join Curry and many contributors to these two books in saying, "no," perhaps adding "not necessarily." This question might have been posed just as easily as, "is *The Lord of The Rings* a pagan work," to which Curry's answer mentioned above would apply just as well. There are essays in these two collections by noted Christian theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, by writers claiming positions sympathetic to atheism, paganism, and by writers trying valiantly to preserve neutrality by positioning themselves (with or without the label) as "agnostic" on the foundational issues. With only a slight modifications either question—"Is it Christian?" and "Is it pagan?"—might be answered justifiably: "Yes—but it is more than that." The power and the brilliance of Tolkien's judicious combination of constituent elements in constructing his work are evident in the breadth of positions exemplified in these two books and in scores of publications preceding them. Both of these questions are posed honestly by the contributors to these two essay collections; they are answered with satisfactory evidence backing up either approach. But, for some, therein lies the problem.

In a word, the decisive, underlying issue is that of *specificity*. In his essay in *The Ring and The Cross,* Stephen Morillo asks, "why should Christianity have a *special* claim on ideas common to so many religions," and "where . . . are the *specifically* Christian features" (emphases mine) in *The Lord of the Rings*, beyond what he calls "the commons of spirituality"? Are the broader spiritual—arguably, "pagan"—implications of the book necessarily incompatible with the more explicitly Christian doctrinal and theological implications often claimed for it? People of many kinds of Christian faith, both orthodox and heterodox, people committed to other religious or quasi-religious systems—e.g., paganism—and those with no specific faith tradition have found much to appreciate in Tolkien's works. While disagreements about particulars seem to animate the (sometimes) rancorous debate, a sequential reading of these two volumes hints at a wide zone of either unrecognized or unacknowledged common ground shared by the "Tolkien-as-Christian-apologist" and the "Tolkien-as-Pagan-sympathizer" positions.

The Ring and the Cross is divided into two sections, "Part I: The Ring" and "Part II: The Cross," and contains 15 essays, several by respected writers of already well-known books on the subject of Tolkien's Christianity and its influence on *The Lord of the Rings*: Joseph Pearce, Ralph C. Wood, and Bradley Birzer, whose essay–as contrasted with several others—appears to have been written *de novo* for this volume. While several of the key essays here cover ground already covered in earlier books, some topics that have seen relatively little coverage hitherto in discussions of Tolkien's religion. In the 36-page "Introduction" that opens *The Ring and The Cross,* Kerry surveys some 114 scholars, some

with multiple citations, who have written on Christian approaches to Tolkien's works from the beginnings of Tolkien scholarship in the 1960s down to 2008. At once both thorough and extremely well-organized, the survey alone is almost worth the whole volume. Thereafter, "Part I: The Ring" opens the volume with a three-essay exchange between Ronald Hutton and Nils Ivar Agøy on paganism and *The Lord of the Rings*. In "The Pagan Tolkien," Ronald Hutton analyzes Tolkien's diverse positions on his identity as a Christian writer and his mutually contradictory assertions about his work as Christian or not. The cosmological roots of the *legendarium* and its underlying mythology derived from various sources ranging from pagan neo-Platonism to a form of Christianized neo-Platonism, ending up with a work in which the ingredients contributing to its mythic structure were about one-third Christian and two-thirds not, with a theology which was "so unorthodox . . . as to merit the term heretical." Nils Ivar Agøy's response ably answers many of Hutton's critiques, including the connection Hutton draws between the period in Tolkien's life in which the principal mythic components undergirding the narratives were developed and the period of time in which, Tolkien says, he all but ceased to practice his faith. Agøy concludes that Tolkien's comments reflect fatherly sympathy for Michael's own wrestling with flagging faith and indicate merely that Tolkien became less regular in his attendance at Mass—something far less ominous than a temptation to give greater credence to competing mythologies or to cease believing altogether.

The essays by Stephen Morillo, John R. Holmes, and Ralph C. Wood in "Part II" are all new essays, while Chris Mooney's is reprinted from a 2002 *Boston Globe* column. Catherine Madsen's essay is an expanded, thoroughly recast revision of a 1987 Mythopoeic Society paper and thus represents a lively dialogue not only with her original interlocutor Charles Huttar but also with her own 2004 article. This part of the book, then, introduces new material to the debate concerning the ratio of pagan and Christian elements in Tolkien's work; here, the balance of the argument favors an appreciation of how Tolkien the Catholic Christian fruitfully used "pagan" material in *The Lord of the Rings* without either betraying his deepest Catholic commitments on the one hand or, on the other, denouncing pagan beliefs as hopelessly benighted and therefore useless to an orthodox Christian perspective. Noteworthy in this section, Stephen Morillo develops the idea—with expressed indebtedness to a 2003 talk by Martha Bayless—that in Middle-earth, Tolkien invented not an imaginary medieval world *per se* but rather an invented world as it might be imagined by a twentieth-century academic medievalist. John R. Holmes's essay on "Religion as Palimpsest" draws an analogy connecting the relationship between Tolkien's

Christianity and the mythopoeic elements of *The Lord of the Rings* with the philological problem of religious language in the history of English. Jason Boffetti"s essay in Part II, "Catholic Scholar, Catholic Sub-Creator" and Carson L. Holloway's "Redeeming Sub-Creation" present familiar data and repeat well-worn arguments involving sub-creation, eucatastrophe, and the redemptive implications of Tolkien's theories of language, myth, and literature drawn from the implications of his foundational essay "On Fairy Stories." (Incidentally, given this essay's importance for both sides of the discussion, it is surprising to find no reference to Verlyn Flieger and Douglas Anderson's 2008 expanded edition—which offers significant and nuanced insights—anywhere in the volume). Boffetti's essay might have worked better to introduce the volume's second half. Most interesting, however, are the essays by Michael Tomko and Joseph Pearce, which present new material situating Tolkien in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history of Roman Catholicism in England. Tomko elucidates the impact on Tolkien's sense of the variable fortunes of Catholicism in English history—in particular, Cardinal John Henry Newman and the Oratory in England (and specifically, the Birmingham congregation)—on his own scheme of four "ages" in Middle-earth (or, properly, Arda). Pearce charts the influence of Catholic writers and apologists G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, whose "distributism" (a set of positions set against industrialism, mechanism, urbanism, and their dehumanizing effects) no doubt played a role in the development of the young Tolkien's romanticism, nostalgia for community, and insistence on the integrity of "the individual and the family at the very heart and center of political life." Kerry's article on "Tracking Catholic Influence" is thought-provoking but perhaps less useful overall than his encyclopedic editorial introduction; Marjorie Burns's "Saintly and Distant Mothers" traces mother-figures–chiefly as stand-ins for Mary the Mother of God—to whom Tolkien was fervently devoted and who thus looms large in *The Lord of the Rings*—through female figures in George MacDonald, who, despite his own sometimes contradictory accounts, influenced Tolkien's significantly.

Light Beyond All Shadow paraphrases in its title a passage in *The Return of the King* from one of the darkest stretches of narrative in the whole epic narrative. In it, Sam sees a star shining high above the dark land of Mordor: "like a shaft, clear and cold," reminding him that the Shadow hanging over that benighted land and threatening all of Middle-earth is only "a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty beyond its reach." Sandra Miesel's "Introduction" does not match Kerry's introductory essay in *The Ring and The Cross* in the sense that it does not offer as exhaustive a review of previous scholarship; its

value lies instead in its balanced, well-crafted panorama of Tolkien's sub-created world, in which *The Lord of the Rings* is called "but one peak in a mighty range of mist-wreathed mountains." Her chronological survey of what she calls aptly "the Terrain" of Middle-earth's cosmogony, cosmography, and geography is useful even to veteran explorers for its large-scale map of that imagined world. One is reminded how vast is the landscape through which many of us have been tramping most of our lives. Roger A. Ladd's "Divine Contagion" analyzes the nature of Power in the Middle-earth legendarium in terms of Michel Foucault's theories of power as a function of "force relations" between social unequals and "pastoral power," which Foucault identifies as an "old power technique" originating in Christian institutions. Power can be passed, though diluted, through contact between greater and lesser agents and can be used either for Domination or for Art; Tolkien favored the latter, and in his works Ladd identifies a transmission model in the attenuating (or, via Verlyn Flieger, "splintering") of light from its origins in Eru through systematic diminution into the light of the Two Trees, the Silmarils, and the phial of Galadriel. This transmission model is observable also in the transference of the primary creative power of Eru to the ever lesser and lesser sub-creative acts of the Ainur, the Valar, the Maiar, and ultimately the Elves and Men.

Matthew Dickerson's essay on "Water, Ecology, and Spirituality" wades through every significant reference to water as an index of the "salvific mystery" in the depths of spirituality plumbed in Tolkien's works; given its specific discussion of that spirituality as an outworking of Tolkien's Christianity, the essay might have been more at home in *The Ring and The Cross*, than in this one, whose more general focus is indicated in the subtitle on "religious experience." This same observation also might be applied to several other essays in this collection, raising a question concerning the editors' conceptual methodology allocating essays between the two companion volumes. Given its more general approach to the broadly mythico-religious issues raised there, the opening exchange between Hutton and Agøy in *The Ring and the Cross*, to take another example, might have worked as well or even better in *Light Beyond All Shadow*. Other essays in "Part I" of the previous volume including Morillo's on "the spiritual core" of *The Lord of the Rings*, John R. Holmes's "Religion as Palilmpsest" and Catherine Madsen's "Eru Erased" on "the minimalist cosmology" of *The Lord of the Rings* also reach beyond the scope of the specifically Christian in Tolkien's work as a whole and again might have been more at home in *Light Beyond All Shadow*. But this is a trivial quibble: for prospective users of these two essay collections, the larger point is this: regardless of where they appear, all the essays in both volumes—even those

presenting already well-established arguments over again—are of significant value to anyone tracking through the terrain. Whether our explorations are characteristic of meandering across the immense expanse or of conducting a pilgrimage towards some specific objective, Kerry and Miesel's surveys in these two books provide good guidance.

The essays in Miesel's volume adumbrate or illuminate various features of the territory mapped out in her opening remarks: Anne C. Petty's on the "Mythopoeic Iconography of Middle-earth" and Glenn R. Gill's essay on "Biblical Archetypes" make useful connections between types and images within the legendarium and in Tolkien's conscious and unconscious sources. Jared Lobdell's *Ymagynatyf* and J.R.R. Tolkien's Roman Catholicism," said by the editor to be "sure to arouse controversy," suggests that in his concept of Original Sin, Tolkien—influenced by Cardinal Newman, St. Philip Neri, Fr. Francis Morgan, and the Catholic Oratorians to which he belonged—may not have been as Augustinian as is sometimes assumed. Julian Eilmann's "Music, Poetry and the Transcendent" keys from Sam Gamgee's metaphorical remark in Lothlórien that he felt himself to be "inside the song." Eilmann admits the essay does not examine Tolkien's lyrical work "in its totality and variety"–"[t]he book *Tolkien: The Lyricist* has not been written yet." But numerous narrative scenes illustrate the power of music and songs, the mythic source of this power originating ultimately in the significance of music in the creation myth in the *Ainulindalë*. Interestingly, Eilmann echoes some of Matthew Dickerson's assessment of water imagery in a section titled"Music that Turns into Running Water: Music, Water, and the Transcendent." The romantic association of water and the sea appear to be central expressions of this transcendent quality, and "sensitive individuals are able to sense the echo of the cosmic tune in the roar of the sea."

John Warwick Montgomery's somewhat brief "Tolkien: Lord of the Occult?" confronts the minor but persistent strain of resistance to "the pagan Tolkien." When, "in the face of all the evidence," some regard Tolkien as having compromised his religious commitments by accommodating modern, broadly pagan ideas in too friendly a fashion, Montgomery says Tolkien brought this on himself. The essay appeals, as expected, to "On Fairy Stories" and (dis)credits misreadings of Tolkien's works to those who are "compelled to make [Tolkien] tell their own story instead of his own." In "Life-Giving Ladies: Women in the Writings of J.R.R. Tolkien," Sandra Miesel deals with another arguably spurious objection to Tolkien, his failure to include many important female characters in his narratives. Expanding an earlier version published in the *St. Austin Review*, Miesel begins "J.R.R. Tolkien idealized women," attributing the paucity of female characters partly to the

times in which he lived and the institutions to which he belonged and partly to a corresponding elevation of the female principle to the level of idealization. Though "[n]o female says a word in *The Hobbit*," Miesel directs attention to significant characters in the other works–predictably, Arwen, Galadriel, Goldberry, Rosie Cotton, Nienna/Niënor, and others–interpreting them in mythic terms suggested by Mircea Eliade, Georges Dumézil, and Robert Graves. The mythic importance of the seven female demiurges–the Valier–appears as a counter-balance to the relatively smaller narrative roles of female elves, dwarves, and hobbits; in many positive examples, "Tolkien exalts feminine gifts" in the shield-maidens, wise queens, lore-mistresses, artists, and fruitful wives that populate his works, equaling or even surpassing male characters in their courage, loyalty, patience, and tenacity."

Robert Lazu's essay on "Literature and Jesuit Spiritual Exercises" demonstrates Tolkien's affinity, if not indebtedness, to ideas of visual imagination in Plato, Aquinas, and Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. Colin Duriez's "Tolkien and the Inklings" suggests the Christian character of this group has been overemphasized by some commentators and highlights the centrality of the group's literary discussions. The essay not only provides specific details concerning the rather fluid "membership" of this group, it also shifts some attention away from arguably the most influential friendship with C.S. Lewis to highlight the "subtle but not negligible" interdependence between Tolkien "lesser Inklings" Owen Barfield, David Cecil, Warren Lewis, Hugo Dyson, Colin Hardie, Charles Williams, R.E. Havard, and many others known to have participated.

Happily, implications of the film versions of the trilogy are not ignored in this volume, which concludes with Russell W. Dalton's, "Peter Jackson, Evil, and the Temptations of Film" and Christopher Garbowski's "What Remains of Tolkien's 'Catholic' Tale in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*." These two essays echo the opposed assessments of Jackson's adaptations found in Janet Brennan Croft's edited anthology *Tolkien on Film*; Dalton explores the Manichaean and Boethian concepts of evil developed in Tom Shippey's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* and elsewhere, arguing that Jackson successfully resisted reducing the story to a dualistic conflict climaxing with the defeat of power by greater power. Garbowski appropriates central ideas from "On Fairy Stories," demonstrating how Jackson captured Tolkien's emphasis on ideas of community, place, self-transcendence through self-sacrifice, and ultimate eucatastrophe.

Tolkien's religious views, his views of paganism "versus" or "in relation to" Christianity, and their literary implications, as is well known, were developed in the context of discussions over many years with

his fellow Inklings. Tolkien shared a perspective whereby a simplistic distinction between elements in his created mythology influenced by pagan mythic patterns and those found also in Christianity would have been regarded by Tolkien either as nonsensical or irrelevant. Commenting on the question of specificity or exclusivity, C.S. Lewis famously said "Christian literature" might exist as a separate category only in the same sense that Christian cookbooks might: boiling an egg is the same for Christians as for pagans; analogously, we might add, *eating* the egg would be a similar experience for both. This must be seen as equally true whether one is cooking, sculpting, painting, writing a work of literature, inventing a fictional mythology, or enjoying the results of these and other such creative occupations. Specificity and exclusivity may be useful for the purposes of some kinds of discussion, just as generalization and inclusion may be for others; both approaches have purposes and effects consistent with and appropriate to their underlying objectives in discussing Tolkien's works; both may be valid for different reasons.

Following this line of argumentation, we may find a way out of the simple dichotomy of "Tolkien as Christian apologist" versus "Tolkien as pagan sympathizer." The archetypal mythic patterns exhibited in Tolkien's works—e.g., death and rebirth, vicarious interdependency, exaltation of the small or humble, and the heroism of self-sacrifice—are also observable in nature: not *analogously*, not in terms that dictate allegory, but preternaturally, and illustrated both in Christianity specifically and more generally in most other religions, including various forms of paganism. Tolkien believed mythic consciousness provides the only direct access to the truth of abstract principles we attempt to verify through the exercise of rational intellect, discursive thought, or reason. Every myth is, or may become, the father of innumerable truths on the abstract level. For Tolkien as well as for other Inklings, verifying the efficacy of Christian faith did not require falsification of all other faiths. In fact, such verification necessarily includes abstract truths exemplified in other mythic and religious traditions outside Christianity *per se*–including, but not limited to, the other mythic traditions, including those–like Tolkien's—invented for the purposes of fiction.

For this reason, the dichotomy distinguishing J.R.R. Tolkien's personal religion from either his invented mythology or from "heathen" mythologies–a dichotomy which scholarly proponents of one view or the other generally take great pains either to emphasize or to explain away–can be seen as simplistic. According to Tolkien's views of myth analyzed and explained in these essays, any similarities, echoes, resonances, or parallels between the mythic elements of Tolkien's own

personal religion and the fictional myths he invented can be attributed not to an effort—conscious or not—to ground the latter in the former but to the inevitability that both would express the same abstract truths, originating perhaps (as Tolkien believed) in the same ultimate source. For Tolkien, Christianity was the religious tradition that expressed these truths most clearly, completely, and *specifically*. But this kind of specificity does not necessitate the rejection of these same truths reflected elsewhere in other myths. Christians must assent to the Christian myth with imaginative sympathy similar to that which we grant to all myths of whatever origin. Conversely, non-Christian readers must accept—without prejudice—patterns at the deepest levels of Tolkien's mythopoeia as they appear in parallels and affinities with other mythic traditions and in echoes from the biblical beliefs to which Tolkien subscribed. Many of Tolkien's readers, Christian or not, derive at least as much—if not more—spiritual sustenance from Tolkien's legendarium as from whatever religion—if any—they may profess to believe or disbelieve.

Pagan? Christian? Considered this way, the distinction hardly seems to matter. Though some of the 29 essays collected by Miesel and Kerry in these two books draw energy rather too much from a false dichotomy, on balance they all in one way or another fulfill the injunction implied by Lewis's 1944 rhetorical question "If God chooses to be mythopoeic . . . shall we refuse to be *mythopathic*?"

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The Year's Work in Tolkien Studies 2009

David Bratman and Merlin DeTardo

Tolkien studies in English of 2009 included an unusually large number of articles on *The Hobbit* and on war and violence, thanks to the appearance of theme anthologies on these subjects in the form of issues of *Hither Shore: Jahrbuch der Deutschen Tolkien Gesellschaft*, partly in German but each including many articles in English. Volume 5, titled *Der Hobbit* (no English translation of this title seemed necessary), is dated 2008, but appeared in 2009. Volume 6, titled *Violence, Conflict, and War in Tolkien*, is dated 2009. Both are conference proceedings edited by a team headed by Thomas Fornet-Ponse.

Other continental European publications in English of the year included *Arda Philology* 2, edited by "Beregond" Anders Stenström, second in a series of conference proceedings on Tolkien's invented languages, and the 2009 issue of *Lembas-extra*, from the Dutch Tolkien Society, Tolkien Genootschap Unquendor, edited by Cécile van Zon. The latter has the theme of *Tolkien in Poetry and Song*, foreshadowing the musical topic of theme anthologies in later years.

Rather unusually, no other theme anthologies not in semi-periodical form appeared in 2009, not even from Walking Tree Publishers, an industrious Swiss organization with some personnel overlap with the Deutsche Tolkien Gesellschaft. Walking Tree's only book of the year was a retrospective collection of articles by the Australian Tolkien scholar J.S. Ryan. This was their second collection of this kind, the first having been Tom Shippey's *Roots and Branches* in 2007.

On the Anglo-American side, the Tolkien Society in the U.K. produced issues 47 (dated Spring) and 48 (dated Autumn) of its journal *Mallorn*, edited by Henry Gee, and the Mythopoeic Society in the U.S. produced Vol. 27, no. 3/4 (issues 105/106, dated Spring/Summer) and Vol. 28, no. 1/2 (issues 107/108, dated Fall/Winter), of its journal, *Mythlore*, edited by Janet Brennan Croft. *Mallorn* is generally entirely focused on Tolkien, though including fiction and poetry, not covered here, while *Mythlore* also covers C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and other mythopoeic literature; each of this year's issues included three articles on Tolkien. Also appearing this year was Vol. 6 of the journal in hand, *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review*. Lastly, and returning to Tolkien's invented languages, came *Parma Eldalamberon* 18, from a team of editors headed by Christopher Gilson, eighth in a series of annotated primary texts of Tolkien's own philological writings.

Of book-length monographs of the year, the most attention has gone to Christopher Tolkien's edition of the previously unpublished,

and indeed previously almost unknown, *Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*. Among secondary scholarly studies, there has been much interest in and some contention over the portrait of Christopher Tolkien as an editor in *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion* by Douglas Charles Kane, an attempt to put in narrative form a lengthy and thorough table tracing the sources in *The History of Middle-earth* texts of the work published as *The Silmarillion* in 1977. Other noted books of the year include *The Power of Tolkien's Prose: Middle-earth's Magical Style* by Steve Walker, part of a movement seen also in this year's shorter papers to extend Tolkienian language studies to include his English, and *Languages, Myths and History: An Introduction to the Linguistic and Literary Background of J.R.R. Tolkien's Fiction* by Elizabeth Solopova, which gestures in the direction of Tolkien source studies, this year as always a rich topic. Source studies merge imperceptibly into comparative studies, and the other author most compared to Tolkien this year, not always to her advantage, is J.K. Rowling, whose *Harry Potter* series, completed in 2007, is passing more rapidly into grist for the critical mill than *The Lord of the Rings* did when it was new in the 1950s.

Authorship of the individual sections of the "Year's Work" that follow are designated by their author's initials: David Bratman [DSB] and Merlin DeTardo [MTD].

Works by Tolkien [DSB]

The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún, edited by Christopher Tolkien (London: HarperCollins, 2009), is a notable addition to J.R.R. Tolkien's published oeuvre. This is only his fourth full book of poetry, and only his second (counting his translations of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo* as the first) to consist of his versions of previously existing stories. Very little information was available on or attention drawn to the contents of this work prior to the announcement of this volume's publication. The book primarily consists of two long poems forming a narrative sequence. *Völsungakviða en nýja eða Sigurðarkviða en mesta* ("The New Lay of the Völsungs, or The Longest Lay of Sigurd," 57-180) and *Guðrúnarkviða en nýja eða dráp Niflunga* ("The Lay of Gudrún, or The Slaying of the Niflungs," 251-308), both apparently dating from the 1930s, are Tolkien's attempt to retell, in a unified and consistent manner, the legendary story known from the Norse *Völsunga saga* and Eddaic poetry and the German *Nibelungenlied*, all of them sources Tolkien drew on in forming his version. Though the titles are in Old Norse, the poems are in Modern English, using the Old Norse eight-line alliterative stanza and attempting the style and impact

of the Icelandic poems of the *Codex Regius*. *Völsungakviða en nýja* begins with Ódin's plan to create the clan of the Völsungs and takes the famous tale through the deaths of Sigurd and Brynhild. *Guðrúnarkviða en nýja* carries on with the later adventures of Gudrún and the Niflungs and their strife with the Huns. Appendices present two shorter poems by Tolkien: *The Prophecy of the Sibyl*, a rhymed Modern English version of part of the Eddaic poem *Völuspá* (364-67), and what Christopher Tolkien has titled *Fragments of a Heroic Poem of Attila in Old English*, with his editorial translation into Modern English (368-77). The *Prophecy* is probably also from the 1930s, the *Fragments* apparently from the late 1920s. Extensive forewords and commentaries by Christopher Tolkien as editor on the main poems incorporate numerous quotations from his father's lecture notes and other writings, most prominently an entire lecture titled "Introduction to the 'Elder Edda'" (16-32).

Contemporary critical attention to this book, apart from book reviews, begins with an interview with Christopher Tolkien, by journalist Alison Flood, concerning also other works of his father's that he has edited, published as "Christopher Tolkien answers questions about Sigurd and Gudrún," along with a short article by Flood based on the interview, "Tolkien breaks silence over JRR's 'fierce, passionate' poem" (both in *Guardian*, May 5, 2009). "Tolkien's *Sigurd & Gudrun*: Summary, Sources, & Analogs" by Pierre H. Berube (*Mythlore* 28 no. 1/2: 45-76) is a useful table, rather akin to the ones for *The Silmarillion* in Kane's *Arda Reconstructed* (discussed below) identifying which source texts Tolkien used for individual sections of his two lays, including citations of elements he rejected; plotting and thematic analogs in his own fiction; and most prominently a detailed and fairly sardonic plot summary, divided into chunks covering a few stanzas each. Mention should also be made here, although the item was not published until the next year, of Tom Shippey's thorough discussion of Tolkien's adaptation of his sources in a review (which, as Shippey notes, "considerably exceeds the boundaries of a review") in *Tolkien Studies* 7 (2010): 291-324.

Tengwesta Qenderinwa and Pre-Fëanorian Alphabets, Part 2 (Mountain View, CA, 2009) is *Parma Eldalamberon* 18, an entry in a roughly chronological survey of Tolkien's linguistic texts with editorial commentary. The "Part 2" in the title applies just to "Pre-Fëanorian Alphabets," edited by Arden R. Smith, of which Part 1 appeared in *Parma* 16 in 2006. This part (109-48) presents a variety of alphabets, similar to the later Tengwar, apparently dating between 1924 and 1931, all of them adapted for writing English, and thus, as Smith notes, not strictly part of the Elvish mythology. A few appear as tables of sound values, but most are short texts, appearing in facsimile, and presented by Smith with both phonetic transcription and modern-spelling transcription. These

include some fragments of known Tolkien poems and a small allusion to the story *Roverandom*, plus several copies of the Lord's Prayer. "Tengwesta Qenderinwa" ("Quendian Grammar"), edited by Christopher Gilson and Patrick H. Wynne, is a treatise on the "base structure" or morphology of the Elvish languages. Like the lays, it is itself in English, despite its title. It comes in three texts, "Tengwesta Qenderinwa 1" (23-58) from the late 1930s, "Tengwesta Qenderinwa 2" (69-107) from the early 1950s, and a briefer intermediate text titled "Elements of Quendian Structure" (59-68). An editorial foreword (6-21) gives details on the complex, multi-layered texts, significantly altered in revision and differing from each other considerably in contents and theoretical bases.

"Fate and Free Will" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 183-88), edited by Carl F. Hostetter, is a previously unpublished note written 1968 or later, outlining the Eldarin view of the relationship between these concepts. The philosophy expressed is one in which certain actions or outcomes may be fated, without restricting the free will of conscious actors to make deliberate choices. As usual with Tolkien's late philosophical essays, this arose out of linguistic discussion, and Hostetter places as preface an additional linguistic definition and note that allude to the main text.

"The Clerkes Compleinte," an anonymous 60-line poem (signed "N.N."), a Chaucer pastiche in Middle English, was published in *The Gryphon*, a Leeds University student magazine, in 1922. It was uncovered, identified as Tolkien's, and reprinted in the hard-to-find journal *Arda* in 1984. A slightly revised text, dated 1924 or later, was printed in facsimile in *Arda* in 1986, and is now for the first time printed in a more generally-available source in Jill Fitzgerald's article (see below) in *Tolkien Studies* 6: 49-51. It depicts the woes of a philology student trying to register for classes in a crowded university.

General Works and Biography [DSB]

Like *Roots and Branches* by Tom Shippey (from the same publisher, 2007), *Tolkien's View: Windows into His World* by J.S. Ryan (Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers, 2009) is a collection of articles on Tolkien by a notable scholar, albeit one less well-known than Shippey. Ryan is a professor of English in Australia who attended Oxford in Tolkien's time and knew him there. His primary research topics in Tolkien studies, as reflected in the contents of this book, are Tolkien's scholarly interests, which Ryan often approaches biographically, and their application as influences and themes in his fiction. This book contains twenty essays on Tolkien, most of them reprints modified from their original

publication. Seventeen of the essays originally appeared in Tolkien or Inklings journals between 1981 and 1992; one, a pioneering study in Tolkien's use of Germanic mythic names and their accompanying ethos, appeared in the journal *Folklore* in 1966; another, a study of the application of the principles of "On Fairy-stories" to "Leaf by Niggle," was a chapter in Ryan's 1969 book, *Tolkien: Cult or Culture?*; and the final essay, "Trolls and Other Themes: William Craigie's Significant Folkloric Influence on the Style of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*" (33-46), is newly published. This last item is a rather loose argument that Tolkien derived many of the folkloric themes in *The Hobbit*, including the behavior of trolls and dragons, from Craigie's 1896 book, *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*. The remaining papers in the book include studies of Oxford figures such as Elizabeth Wright, George Gordon, and Christopher Dawson, and their possible influences on Tolkien; essays on myth and folklore and their application to such features in Tolkien's fiction as the Barrow-wights and the Púkel-men; and biographically-focused analyses of Tolkien's undergraduate English examination topics, his early romantic poems, and the topic listings for his Oxford lectures on Old Norse.

At 24 pages and about 2,000 words, *J.R.R. Tolkien* by Jill C. Wheeler (Edina, MN: ABDO Publishing, 2009), part of the "Children's Authors" series of the "Checkerboard Biography Library," is the shortest and most elementary children's biography of Tolkien yet. It is difficult to imagine a child who can grasp *The Hobbit* needing this book's level of discourse. In her brief space, Wheeler concentrates on the life rather than the works, saying of the latter only that *The Book of Lost Tales* was later renamed *The Silmarillion* and that Tolkien set it and other works in "a magical world he called Middle-earth" (12). The only story described is that of Lúthien, who, we are told, "gave up her magic to be with" Beren (20). The account of writing *The Lord of the Rings* (18-19) also has some distinctly mangled facts, but the biographical portion of the text otherwise generally avoids inventions.

The Inklings of Oxford: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Their Friends, text by Harry Lee Poe, photography by James Ray Veneman (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), is a slick-paper coffee-table book. Poe's text begins as a tourist's love letter to Oxford, and then runs through a history of the Inklings' friendship, focusing primarily on Lewis and secondarily on Tolkien, and frequently bringing in some, but not all, of the other Inklings. The biography is conventional, drawing mostly on Humphrey Carpenter's portrait in *The Inklings*, though some more recent books are cited, and it is consequently mostly reliable. One odd statement is a suggestion that Allen & Unwin outwitted itself financially with its offer of a profit-sharing agreement to Tolkien when *The Lord*

of the Rings later turned out to be successful (136-37); in fact, Rayner Unwin always declared himself thoroughly satisfied with this outcome. There is a little literary commentary; an attempt to find similar themes in *The Hobbit* and Lewis's *The Pilgrim's Regress* on the grounds that they were roughly coeval poses Poe an interesting challenge (64-71). There is nothing specifically geographical in this history, though each page is decorated in Veneman's sumptuous color photographs, informatively captioned, of Inklings sites and other buildings in Oxford, with a very few historical photographs. Spotty walking tours through Oxford and environs are relegated to an appendix. At least once the tourist is directed to turn left where it should have been right.

Tolkien's Bag End by Andrew H. Morton (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 2009) is a short volume serving as a sequel to *Tolkien's Gedling, 1914*, by Morton and John Hayes (from the same publisher, 2008). It is a local history nugget carrying the previous book's biography of Tolkien's aunt Jane Neave into 1923–1931, the period when she was the owner-operator of a Worcestershire farm called Bag End, a name which Tolkien borrowed directly for his fiction. Available information on Tolkien's connection with the farm is essentially nil, so Morton does what he can with local history and description, intending an illustration of the character of the English countryside fictionalized in the Shire. He builds Chapter 1 out of Tolkien's declared love for and connection with the county of Worcestershire, and at the end, in Chapter 5, he at last gets to the only real point of Tolkienian interest in his topic, the origin of the name. This, disappointingly, appears not to be, as often reported, because the farm "was at the end of a lane that led no further" (Carpenter, *Biography* 106; Morton sources this in an uncollected Tolkien letter of 1968 [17]), a condition Morton states was temporary anyway. But, to the frustration of the reader, Morton cannot securely provide any other etymology either, though this does not prevent him from speculating.

The most hermetically biographical Tolkien book of the year is *Black & White Ogre Country: The Lost Tales of Hilary Tolkien*, edited by Angela Gardner (Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire: ADC Publications, 2009), a very small volume with large print and many imaginative illustrations by Jef Murray, offering a transcription of a brief autobiographical notebook written by Tolkien's younger brother. The opening sections, recalling the author's early childhood, are mostly written in the first-person plural, presumably meaning the two brothers. The stories bear a fairy-tale air and describe the children playing in the countryside, encountering and often avoiding resident adults who are seen as ogres and witches. The editor's introduction suggests that J.R.R. Tolkien's childhood inspirations may be reflected here, but

she does not go so far as to offer specific parallels. Later parts of the notebook discuss the author's World War I service and his work as a farmer. An unsigned "Brief Biography of Hilary Tolkien," with several family photographs, concludes the volume, including an excerpt from a 1971 letter from J.R.R. Tolkien to Hilary recalling family harvest-season celebrations in the 1920s (71).

Amy H. Sturgis contributes the Tolkien entry (vol. 2: 301-03) to *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, edited by Robin A. Reid (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2009). Sturgis summarizes the views of "some" critics and "others" (unidentified in the entry, though a few of the relevant articles are listed as a bibliography) that either Tolkien puts female characters on a pedestal and omits them altogether when possible, or that he is following mythic traditions to create women who lead and are capable of growth. Sturgis notes the gender balance among the Valar, and (unlike some writers on this topic) lists Erendis and Ancalimë as well as Éowyn as important female characters. Lúthien is only mentioned in passing. The magnified female roles in Jackson's movies raise the question of why these changes were considered necessary.

"Tolkiens of My Affection" by Lance Strate (*ETC.* 66 no. 3: 278-94) is a rambling general appreciative article focused on *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. The tone may be conveyed by noting Strate's use of words like "uplifting." Strate admires the *History of Middle-earth* series but finds it difficult to read. He praises the variety of individual spiritual journeys of the various heroes of *The Lord of the Rings*. Then he forces in a biographical comparison to Marshall McLuhan to introduce the idea that Tolkien, in his use of language, was aware of it as a medium that controls the message in a McLuhanesque sense. Strate claims Tolkien as an advocate of spoken over written communication, citing as evidence the Music of the Ainur, Treebeard's oral lore, and Frodo's encounter on Amon Hen with the Eye (apparently here representing the evil of reading) and the Voice (representing the good of speaking).

General Criticism: *The Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien's Work as a Whole [MTD]

Languages, Myths and History: An Introduction to the Linguistic and Literary Background of J.R.R. Tolkien's Fiction by Elizabeth Solopova ([New York]: North Landing Books, 2009) is a slender book (107 pages) describing four cultural traditions that have influenced Tolkien's work. Much of this is familiar but capably presented. A section on Old Norse literature and language emphasizes Tolkien's use of descriptive names, which give his stories the feel of historical texts. (However, Solopova

errs in claiming that Tolkien borrowed the name "Balin" from *Völuspá* [20] and that "Aragorn" means "Royal Tree" [21].) Solopova's comments on Old English include summaries of Tolkien's views on *Beowulf*, particularly his creative responses to literary and linguistic problems that "defeated a scholarly approach" (39), and on *The Battle of Maldon*, concerning which she likens Túrin's bridge, built so Nargothrond can war more openly against its enemies (but which ultimately gives Glaurung easy access to the city), to the tidal spit that Beorhtnoth allows his Viking opponents to cross uncontested. From Finnish also comes a more widely-acknowledged influence on Túrin, in the person of Kullervo from the *Kalevala*; like Verlyn Flieger (considered later in this survey), Solopova is particularly interested in Tolkien's interweaving of fate and free will. Solopova's discussion of Gothic mainly concerns similarities between Tolkien's Battle of the Pelennor Fields and the historical Battle of the Catalaunian Plains (with a long, helpful quotation from a translation of Jordanes's *Getica*) including the usual overemphasized comparison of the deaths of Theoderic the Visigoth and Théoden the Eorling, which are only broadly alike. Her remarks on the Gothic language would be improved by reference to Arden R. Smith's "Tolkienian Gothic" in the collection *The Lord of the Rings 1954–2004: Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Blackwelder* (2006). In Solopova's opening section, she summarizes Tolkien's philological work and his thoughts on heroism and myth; her general remarks on archetypal imagery are superior to those in the Jungian studies by Robin Robertson and Pia Skogemann (see below). A concluding chapter introduces Tolkien's invented languages, with particular attention to the nature of Quenya.

Pia Skogemann's *Where the Shadows Lie: A Jungian Interpretation of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 2009) is the author's own translation of her Danish work, *En Jungiansk Fortolkning af Tolkiens Ringenes Herre* (2004); this is only occasionally noticeable in the text (as when she has "Torben" for "Ted" [36] or refers to a "flock" of orcs [44]). More problematically, Skogemann claims that Tolkien's "so-called" trench fever (a well-known bacterial disease) was probably post-traumatic stress disorder (68), and she believes that Tolkien adapted the word "hobbit" from "hobby" (9), because hobbits provided him a way to tell stories involving the invented languages he described in his lecture, "A Hobby for the Home" (better known as "A Secret Vice"). The most significant trouble with Skogemann's work is that she forces *The Lord of the Rings* into her Jungian plan, in which Tolkien's four hobbit protagonists represent the ego (Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin are thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition, respectively), with the Shire as the consciousness, unaware of

and yet menaced by the collective unconsciousness which is Middle-earth (x-xii, 14). For example, because groups of four have Jungian significance, Skogemann determines the Fellowship to consist of eight genuine members (deliberately omitting Boromir) and describes the heroes as crossing four rivers (missing the Greyflood among others) and passing through four forests (which requires designating the area where the hobbits meet Glorfindel as the "troll forest" [60]). An unduly large part of Skogemann's text is devoted to plot summary. As she proceeds through the story, she identifies Bombadil as a trickster figure free of conscious control; Aragorn as inner resources drawn from the unconscious; Goldberry, Arwen and Galadriel as representations of the anima; Elrond, Théoden, and Denethor as worn-down archetypal images in need of refreshment; and the Rings of Power collectively as the self. Bombadil and Goldberry also provide a glimpse of the transcendent, Gollum represents a "loss of meaning" (26), Merry and Pippin grow through traditional rites of passage, and Sam's defeat of Shelob shows him overcoming his fear of women and thus able to accept Rosie's love. Overall, Skogemann feels Tolkien's work, like Jung's, is a response to modern horrors; she identifies R.B. Cunninghame Graham, H.G. Wells, Franz Werfel, Ursula K. Le Guin, Michael Ende, and Hanne Marie Svendsen as authors with similar concerns. Skogemann says nothing about why *The Lord of the Rings* is particularly valuable for Jungian interpretation as compared to other texts, except for a remark that *The Silmarillion* lacks a "conscious perspective" (154). She also compares *The Silmarillion* stylistically to the illustrated notebook that Jung kept early in life, which coincidentally is known as *The Red Book*. Despite some swipes at Timothy R. O'Neill's *The Individuated Hobbit* (1979), Skogemann's book represents no advance on his work.

Nor does a sequence of eight articles published over three years in the journal *Psychological Perspectives*, in which Robin Robertson applies a more narrowly-focused Jungian model to Tolkien. Each article has the main title "Seven Paths of the Hero in *Lord of the Rings*" and is differentiated by subtitle. In the "Introduction" (50 no. 1 [2007]: 79-94), Robertson also calls the entire series *Frodo's Quest*. Citing Ursula K. Le Guin on fantasy's interior journeys, Robertson describes each of Tolkien's characters as "a possible individual human solution to a more than human situation" (87). His remaining articles are lessons in self-actualization structured as plot synopses interspersed with Jungian interpretation. As in Skogemann's book, the symbolism is inconsistent: characters sometimes represent parts of the psyche and sometimes have psyches of their own. Merry and Pippin travel "The Path of Curiosity" (50 no. 1 [2007]: 95-112) with a sense of wonder that enables their growth, meet a kindred spirit in Treebeard, and

separate as a necessary step toward maturation. Robertson claims that Théoden dies "thinking he has killed" the Witch-king (109). "The Path of Opposites" (50 no. 2 [2007]: 276-90) chronicles the reconciliation of Legolas and Gimli as symbolic of the need for emotional balance. Their shared journeys underground are encounters with inner darkness necessary for advancement. "The Path of the Wizard" (51 no. 1 [2008]: 119-40), discussed in this survey last year, contrasts Gandalf with Saruman (whose multi-colored robes show an inability to make choices). Robertson's comments on "The Path of the King" (51 no. 2 [2008]: 316-39) trod by Aragorn (whose triumph over the Dead is contrasted with Boromir's fate) are marred by the movie idea that he "turned aside from his destiny" as king (319). Gollum's story is "The Path of Tragic Failure" (52 no. 1 [2009]: 93-110). In this installment, Robertson announces without explanation that "Tolkien was not an introspective man" (95) and asserts that Gollum is "totally grey" in appearance (96) and is the shadow glimpsed at the Buckland Ferry (100). "The Path of Love" (52 no. 2 [2009]: 225-42) is Sam's journey in support of Frodo; Robertson contrasts Sam's naturally-achieved deep insights with his occasional narrow-mindedness, and emphasizes the value in taking risks, as when he looks into the Mirror of Galadriel. Finally, Frodo experiences "The Path of Transcendence" (52 no. 3 [2009]: 351-71). Bombadil demonstrates to Frodo that the world was originally good and that "words are where the human meets the divine" (360). Frodo will forget these lessons at times, as he is educated through harsh experience until self-sacrifice elevates him to the status of Buddha or Jesus. Both Robertson and Skogemann should be pleased to learn that a brief note (129) in *Tolkien on Fairy-stories* (2008) shows that Tolkien was at least aware of Jung's theories.

In "The Destiny of a King: Multiple Masculinities in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Handbook on Gender Roles: Conflicts, Attitudes and Behaviors*, edited by Janet H. Urlich and Bernice T. Cosell [New York: Nova Science, 2009]: 221-33), Chris Blazina applies a version of Georges Dumézil's trifunctional hypothesis about the structure of proto-Indo-European societies to Aragorn, who Blazina sees as incorporating the roles of ruler, warrior, and farmer/hunter; Blazina compares Aragorn's healing powers and the restoration of the White Tree to the Fisher King myth.

In "The Unique Representation of Trees in *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 91-125), Cynthia M. Cohen proposes that Ents are creatures unlike all earlier authors' sentient or ambulatory trees; her literary comparisons range from Ovid to T.H. White. Bringing an arborist's expertise to her subject, Cohen also argues against the usual reading of the Old Forest trees as intelligent and hostile—except for

Old Man Willow, whose textual history she traces carefully (as she does also for the Ents). She offers some further botanical and symbolic commentary on many of Tolkien's other trees, particularly in Hollin and at the Cross-roads in Ithilien.

Emma Hawkins discusses "Tolkien and Dogs, Just Dogs: In Metaphor and Simile" (*Mythlore* 27 no. 3/4: 143-57), noting Tolkien's canines in *Roverandom*, *Mr. Bliss*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. In the last work, Hawkins finds few actual dogs but many dog metaphors, which she sees as subtle tugs on the reader's sympathy.

Andúril, Gurthang, and Sting demonstrate "The Legacy of Swords: Animate Weapons and the Ambivalence of Heroic Violence" for Judith Klinger (*Hither Shore* 6: 132-52). Studying Tolkien's personification of weapons, Klinger shows a keen eye for details (such as Tolkien having the Witch-king stabbed not by Merry but by "Merry's sword" [*RK*, V, vi, 117]), imaginatively interprets connections between his works (Aragorn and Túrin are contrasted to show heroes as agents of both order and destruction), and references a veritable armory of earlier research (with 62 footnotes and 34 works cited) but leaves too many of her fascinating strands incomplete.

Annie Birks seeks "Perspectives on Just War in Tolkien's *Legendarium*" (*Hither Shore* 6: 28-41) but often misapplies the standard criteria for evaluating the justice of initiating conflict to Tolkien's stories. Fëanor's war against Melkor, for instance, fails the test not because he lacks a just cause, as Birks argues (she thinks the Elvish flaw of resisting change outweighs Melkor's crimes of theft and murder), but on the grounds that he has no chance of success. Birks does recognize that this criterion is irrelevant to the War of the Ring, where the only alternative for the forces of the West is annihilation.

Before it tails off into the jargon of literary theory, Martin G.E. Sternberg's "Language and Violence: The Orcs, the Ents, and Tom Bombadil" (*Hither Shore* 6: 154-68) intelligently speculates on the Black Speech and Entish, both of which may restrict the action of their speakers: the former emphasizes doing over thinking and reduces memory and individuality, while the latter is so overly descriptive that acting is perpetually delayed. Similarly, Bombadil's refusal of generalities explains why Gandalf thinks him an unsuitable keeper for the Ring.

Two other essays in *Hither Shore* 6 take somewhat opposing views on Tolkien's presentation of war. Anna Slack's "Clean Earth to Till: A Tolkienian Vision of War" (118-30) argues that *The Lord of the Rings* shows the justice of war, so long as it is waged with moral clarity and deals fairly with unintended consequences, to a world that questions the value of heroism. In "The Problem of Closure: War and Narrative

in *The Lord of the Rings*" (170-81), Margaret Hiley can't decide if Tolkien intentionally uses the very structure of the story, which she sees as overwhelmed by the violence it purports to examine and condemn, to convey war's uncontrollable nature, or if this shows the text as itself dependent on conflict.

Frank Weinreich tries to quantify the "Violence in *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Hither Shore* 6: 10-26) by electronically counting the words that describe present or incipient violence (using World Health Organization definitions); he finds that these account for roughly one-third of the text, some of it, however, minimized in effect by being described after the fact. Weinreich would like to compare these figures to those for other works.

Bringing experience as a military chaplain to his examination of "Éowyn's Grief" (*Mythlore* 27 no. 3/4: 117-27), Brent D. Johnson thinks that Tolkien describes her case in psychologically realistic terms. With symptoms that manifest too quickly to be post-traumatic stress disorder, Éowyn suffers rather from "traumatic grief," a condition that develops through the years of Wormtongue's manipulation of Théoden and intensifies when he is killed. Faramir helps her to heal with patient commiseration. Johnson thinks Éowyn's portrayal is influenced by Tolkien's knowledge of the many Great War widows.

"Your Own, Someone Else's, and No One's (On the Problem of Memory in J.R.R. Tolkien and J.L. Borges)" by Sergey Zenkin (*Social Sciences* 40 no. 3: 31-41) is translated from Russian by Natalya Perova, having first appeared in 2008 in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski*. Zenkin differentiates between the "profane" personal memories of the hobbits and the "sacral" cultural memories of Middle-earth revealed to them in *The Lord of the Rings*; he contrasts both with the machine-like, paralyzing hyperthymesia of the title character of Borges's 1942 story "Funes the Memorious."

General Criticism: Other Works [MTD]

Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion by Douglas Charles Kane (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2009) is a valuable work of reference. Kane closely compares *The Silmarillion*, as edited for publication in 1977 by Christopher Tolkien (with assistance from Guy Gavriel Kay) to the inconsistent "Silmarillion" manuscripts published in (mainly) *The History of Middle-earth* series. With the caveat (which might be expressed more strongly) that even those apparent sources are themselves edited and incomplete, Kane discusses in turn each of the 28 chapters in *The Silmarillion*. He includes tables that identify every paragraph's principal and supplementary sources for all

but five chapters (where Christopher Tolkien had already performed a similar analysis, or for which no sources can be traced). With Kane's work as a guide, no researcher examining *The Silmarillion* with reference to Tolkien's motives or his other works should again be daunted from the necessary task of checking against the relevant history. Doggedly, skillfully, Kane shows that most of the words in *The Silmarillion* are those of J.R.R. Tolkien, while much of their arrangement, at all levels, is editorial. Working mainly from 1950s historical annals associated with the "Quenta Silmarillion," but reaching back to the 1910s "Lost Tales," Christopher Tolkien spliced chapters, paragraphs, and even sentences; Kane explicates one paragraph that has been combined from six different sources (76). In all, he finds *The Silmarillion* is assembled from more than 20 texts. The only chapter whose words are not primarily J.R.R. Tolkien's is "Of the Ruin of Doriath," where the last version completed dates from 1930 and disagrees with later "Silmarillion" developments. This has been known since the 1994 publication of *The War of the Jewels*, where Christopher Tolkien says (356) he was "overstepping the bounds of the editorial function" (Kane tends to repeat himself and cites this phrase three times). However, as Kane acknowledges, this pastiche is quite skillful, and the description of Thingol's death in particular has been widely praised—but usually as the work of J.R.R. Tolkien (see Verlyn Flieger's *Splintered Light* and Brian Rosebury's *Tolkien: A Cultural Phenomenon*, in addition to, as Kane notes [216], Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth*). Kane's evaluation of the constructed *Silmarillion* is less rigorous than his source-tracing. By seldom questioning the work's large structure, he implicitly endorses the text; his chief complaints, summarized in a concluding chapter, are that it is edited too much for the sake of consistency, condensation, and literary convention, thus omitting philosophic passages (particularly the Second Prophecy of Mandos and the "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth"), lively details, and a needed framing structure; he also bemoans the reduction in the already limited role of female characters. Apart from the last point (which is unsystematically considered) these are reasonable conclusions to which Kane responds mainly with astonishment, expressing too little consideration for Christopher Tolkien's uncertainty (mentioned repeatedly in *The History of Middle-earth*) as to the scope and purpose of the posthumous editing of his father's texts and for the sheer difficulty of interpreting them.

Michaël Devaux cites Kane's work in "Dagor Dagorath and Ragnarök: Tolkien and the Apocalypse" (translated from French by David Ledanois in *Hither Shore* 6: 102-17), an attempt to make sense of Tolkien's comment (*Letters* 149) that the "Silmarillion" mythology would conclude in a final battle that was indebted to and yet not particularly

like the old Norse tradition of Ragnarök. Examining Tolkien's changing eschatological conceptions as presented in *The History of Middle-earth* volumes (like Elizabeth Whittingham's book, *The Evolution of Tolkien's Mythology*), Devaux finds Tolkien reducing the role of the Valar as the story becomes less like Ragnarök and more like the Christian Apocalypse. He also identifies apocalyptic imagery used earlier in *The Silmarillion* narrative.

"Subcreation as Synthesis of Language and Myth: The Power and Purpose of Names and Naming in Tolkien's *The Children of Húrin*" by Stephanie Ricker (*Explorations: The Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities for the State of North Carolina* 4: 35-61) is a study of the many names given to or assumed by Túrin and several other characters in different versions of his story. Ricker offers Biblical onomastic principles as a guide, tracing particularly names that show the role of Túrin's pride and despair in his unhappy fate. For all Ricker's attention to detail (including interesting comments on Túrin's father, Húrin Thalion, and friend, Beleg Cuthalion), she repeatedly confuses Doriath and Gondolin.

Allan Turner, with "*The Hobbit* and Desire" (*Hither Shore* 5: 83-92), seeks understanding of "the desire of the hearts of dwarves" (*H*, I, 45), a phrase present in the first drafts, long predating the complications surrounding the possession of the Arkenstone, and so probably not meant in condemnation of Bilbo's traveling companions. Instead, Turner identities this desire as *Sehnsucht*, and offers a passage from Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* that evokes both this phrase and the description of Gollum searching out mountains' roots in *The Lord of the Rings*.

The subject of "Talk to the Dragon: Tolkien as Translator" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 27-39) by Ármann Jakobsson is the way that Smaug's speech shows the dragon's human qualities and makes him a double for Bilbo, which implies the dragonish nature that lurks within and suggests Fáfnir, a transformed person. Jakobsson forgets at least Kenneth Grahame's "The Reluctant Dragon" when he suggests that *The Hobbit's* early readers would have been surprised by Smaug's speaking. In explaining how Tolkien developed Smaug, Jakobsson notes Chrysophylax only in passing and never mentions Glorund (later Glaurung), who as much as Smaug is modeled on Fáfnir.

"Changing Perspectives: Secret Doors and Narrative Thresholds in *The Hobbit*" (*Hither Shore* 5: 30-45) is another provocative, sophisticated, lucid and unfinished study by Judith Klinger, in this case of how Bilbo's experiences on Smaug's back door function as a turning point in the story's point of view, intruding Bilbo into Smaug's legendary world in a reversal of Bilbo's dragon-fears at Bag-End. Klinger doesn't read

Thror's map closely enough and also mistakes Tolkien's comments on his *Hobbit* dust jacket design as applying to the text.

In "'Sing We Now Softly, and Dreams Let Us Weave Him!': Dreams and Dream Visions in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*" (*Hither Shore* 5: 67-81), Doreen Triebel takes up the medieval dream theories that Amy Amendt-Raduege applied to *The Lord of the Rings* (in "Dream Visions in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" in *Tolkien Studies* 3) and contemplates the dreams of Bilbo, Bombur, and even Smaug. Triebel sensibly observes that Bilbo's uneasy dream on the Eagle's Eyrie (which she guesses to be a search for his "true self" [74]), cannot be attributed to the ring he had lately acquired, because it had no such importance when the passage was written.

With "The Treasure of My House: The Arkenstone as Symbol of Kingship and Seat of Royal Luck in *The Hobbit*" (*Hither Shore* 5: 121-33), Martin G.E. Sternberg shows himself to be a Thorinist, determined that Gandalf is wrong to endorse Bilbo's gift of the Arkenstone to Bard. Having argued that, per medieval conventions, it would be bad luck for Thorin to buy back a family heirloom, Sternberg sees Thorin's death as the only way for the dwarf to save face after it is stolen. Sternberg's argument is undermined by his claims that the jewel's heirloom status is partly shown by its having brought "luck" and "good fortune to its owner" (122, 128), without reference to Smaug's sack of Erebor, and his statement that the stone's wrongful possessors are cursed (128), even though nothing untoward happens to Bilbo and Bard. Sternberg also believes that Indian royal diamonds inspired Tolkien.

"'Some Courage and Some Wisdom, Blended in Measure': On Moral Imagination in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*" by Blanca Grzegorczyk (*Hither Shore* 5: 93-105) is a study of situations in Tolkien's book that serve as ethical guides for readers. Aristotle's arguments on virtue are applied to Tolkien's presentation of courage, temperance, justice, and prudence. Grzegorczyk doesn't think anyone in *The Hobbit* is "insufficiently sensitive to pleasure" (100), but that is basically how Thorin describes himself to Bilbo before he dies.

"Seeing Fire and Sword, or Refining Hobbits" by Anna E. Slack (*Hither Shore* 5: 174-85) struggles over the proper terminology to describe Bilbo's heroism while noting how he slowly grows accustomed to legendary circumstances, as when he identifies his sword by its lineage when confronting Gollum. Slack feels that Thrain's "exploits in the Necromancer's dungeons" sound "grand" (and she calls him "Thror" [179]), but Tolkien has Gandalf describe the imprisoned dwarf as "witless and wandering" (*H*, I, 58).

Guglielmo Spirito discusses "Wolves, Ravens, and Eagles: A Mythic Presence in *The Hobbit*" (*Hither Shore* 5: 47-66), particularly the

resonance those animals add to Tolkien's writing, mainly in response to earlier work by John D. Rateliff. Eagles spark a long digression on the legend of Ganymede.

"Bombadil in Poetry" by Sjoerd van der Weide (*Lembas-extra* 2009: 48-55) briefly examines sixteen of the seventeen poems in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, with analysis that falls short of that in earlier surveys of the 1962 collection by the likes of Paul H. Kocher, Stephen M. Deyo, and Tom Shippey.

"J.R.R. Tolkien (1892–1973)" by Eugenio M. Olivares Merino (*Rewriting the Middle Ages in the Twentieth Century: Vol. II: National Traditions*, edited by Jaume Aurell and Julie Pavon [Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009]: 327-70) investigates Tolkien's ideas about eighth-century England as gleaned from "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics," explains earlier scholarship that prepared *Beowulf* studies for Tolkien's work, and sees Tolkien creating the Rohirrim to exemplify the best of Anglo-Saxon traditions.

"When Harry Met Faërie: Rowling's Hogwarts, Tolkien's Fairy Stories, and the Question of Readership" by Amy H. Sturgis (*Hog's Head Conversations: Essays on Harry Potter*, edited by Travis Prinzi [Allentown, PA: Zossima Press, 2009]: 81-101) is a revision of Sturgis's 2004 article "Harry Potter Is a Hobbit: Rowling, Tolkien, and the Question of Readership" (in *CSL* 35 no. 3), with less than ten percent changed to include references to the final volume in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Citing "On Fairy-stories," Sturgis tries to defend Rowling's books from charges that they are too intense for children and too childish for adults.

Alex Lewis does not identify "The Ogre in the Dungeon" (*Mallorn* 47: 15-18), but presumably his title refers to Andrew Lang: Lewis's main point is that Tolkien is less enthusiastic about Lang in the versions of "On Fairy-stories" published in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* and *Tree and Leaf* than he had been in his Andrew Lang lecture. In this change of heart, Lewis suspects the influence of the Inklings. He also cites two works that don't exist.

Tolkien's Literary Theory and Practice [MTD]

Building on ideas initially developed in her book *Splintered Light*, Verlyn Flieger contemplates "The Music and the Task: Fate and Free Will in Middle-earth" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 151-81). This is a close examination, including careful attention to the etymology of the verbs "must" and "will," of the ramifications of the apparent statement in the "Ainulindalë" that Men possess free will but Elves do not. Flieger analyzes several situations in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* where self-

determination and circumstances interact. This includes the meeting of Beren and Lúthien, but not the "choice(s) of Lúthien" to renounce her immortality (*Lost Road* 304; *RK*, VI, vi, 252). Also missing is Galadriel's statement when rejecting the Ring, "I pass the test" (*FR*, II, vii, 381), which makes little sense if Eru took the test in her place, and no sense if Galadriel interprets the Elvish philosophical commentary in Tolkien's "Fate and Free Will" notes (discussed earlier in this survey) in the same way that Flieger does.

Franco Manni also considers questions of Elvish free will in "Real and Imaginary History in *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Mallorn* 47: 28-37). Noting how the three-age chronology of Middle-earth shows little of the technological or social changes found in genuine history, Manni proposes that Tolkien meant for it to be "a metaphor for the life of the individual," in which the longeval elves mature morally (36). Manni's insightful article is underdeveloped and misses the point of *The Hobbit* by describing Bilbo as "essentially unchanged" (36) at the book's end.

In "Clinamen, Tessera, and the Anxiety of Influence: Swerving from and Completing George MacDonald" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 127-50), Josh Long finds that *Smith of Wootton Major* shows Tolkien responding to MacDonald's "The Golden Key" as what Harold Bloom would call a "strong poet," misconstruing his predecessor's work so as to deny influence and emphasize his own originality. The situation is more complex than Long indicates: the tall, awe-inspiring Queen of Faery may be Tolkien's correction of MacDonald's tiny, amusing fairies, but she is also a successor to Galadriel.

Matthew R. Bardowell explores "J.R.R. Tolkien's Creative Ethic and Its Finnish Analogues" (*Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 20 no. 1: 91-108), deliberately ignoring similarities in plot or character to focus on philosophies Tolkien's work shares with the *Kalevala*. The song contest between Väinämöinen and Joukahainen extols harmony, ancientness, and remembrance, values that Tolkien honors in the "Ainulindalë," in Tom Bombadil and Treebeard, in his concept of subcreation, and in his ideas about influence.

In "The Eucharistic Poetics of *The Hobbit*" (*Hither Shore* 5: 9-29), Fanfan Chen opaquely applies the philosopher Jean-Luc Marion's concept of religious "saturated phenomena" (objects or events that overwhelm the senses and intellect) to Tolkien's use of symbols and language, particularly earth and labyrinth imagery. Somehow she finds that his trolls and goblins "speak for Nature" (20).

Observing "Certain Regressive Tendencies in Rowling and Tolkien: Fantasy and Realism" (*Marvellous Fantasy*, edited by Jørgen Riber Christensen [Aalborg, Denmark: Aalborg University Press, 2009]: 45-59), Jørgen Riber Christensen claims that the arguably backward-looking

criticism of industrialism and modernity in *The Lord of the Rings*, with roots in Thomas Carlyle's *Signs of the Times* (1829) and earlier, nonetheless serves the aesthetics of realism because Frodo "faces situations that are the consequences of modernity" (56).

The chapter on Tolkien (61-103; notes at 195-98) in William Gray's *Fantasy, Myth and the Measure of Truth: Tales of Pullman, Lewis, Tolkien, MacDonald and Hoffmann* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) discusses many of Tolkien's works including *The Hobbit*, whose narrative technique is compared unfavorably to that in George MacDonald's works; *The Notion Club Papers*, which Gray finds "arguably more promising" than C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* (79); and *Smith of Wootton Major* (like Josh Long, Gray discusses Tolkien's later dislike of MacDonald). Gray is also interested in the ways by which Tolkien suggests depth in *The Lord of the Rings* and in the *legendarium's* uncertain connection to real landscape and history. The central place in Tolkien's stories of imagination and of love, broadly defined to include love of the natural world, helps to explain his appeal to environmentalists.

David Henige regularly refers to Tolkien in "Authorship Renounced: The 'Found' Source in the Historical Record" (*Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 41 no. 1: 31-55), a study of books whose authors pass themselves off as discoverers, editors, or translators. Over time it may become impossible to tell fact from caprice or fraud, as happened with the Trojan histories once attributed to Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrygius and the lost or non-existent British book which Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed as a source for *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Henige suggests *The Lord of the Rings* might someday be taken as genuine. Worse things could happen.

Source and Comparative Studies [mtd]

The central claim of Alex Lewis and Elizabeth Currie in *The Epic Realm of Tolkien, Part One: Beren and Lúthien* (Moreton-in-Marsh, U.K.: ADC Publications, 2009) is that Tolkien intended *The Book of Lost Tales* to be understood as Geoffrey's mysterious source-book on King Arthur (even though Eriol's or Ælfwine's compendium would have been an Anglo-Saxon work). They believe that as Tolkien's mythology developed its own character, he split the Arthurian material off into his poem, "The Fall of Arthur," still unpublished, although he continued to incorporate motifs from the Matter of Britain into later "Silmarillion" iterations. Here Lewis and Currie trace seeming Arthurian connections only in the story of Beren and Lúthien, as it developed in "The Tale of Tinúviel," *The Lay of Leithian*, and the "Quenta Silmarillion" traditions. Studies of Tolkien's other stories are promised. Lewis

and Currie justify this investigation in part by citing the "Scull/Hammond Reader's Guide, s.v. The Fall of Arthur" in support of the assertion that Tolkien's Arthurian poem is 9,000 lines long, more than twice as large as "The Lay of Leithian," otherwise Tolkien's longest poem, and therefore more important to him than the "Silmarillion" (3, 122). On the contrary, Christina Scull and Wayne Hammond, in their entry on "Arthur and the Matter of Britain" in the *Reader's Guide* volume of *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*, report that the Arthur poem has 954 lines (56). The Welsh tale of *Culhwch and Olwen* and Wolfram von Eschenbach's German poem *Parzival* are Lewis and Currie's most frequently cited texts among more than two dozen Arthurian works. Having emphasized Tolkien's fondness for crossword puzzles (100), Lewis and Currie take Tolkien to have adapted his supposed sources in exceedingly complicated ways, with apparent discrepancies explained away as Tolkien either deliberately subverting his model or switching between different Arthurian inspirations. For instance, having determined to their satisfaction that Beren's name links him to the one-handed knight Bedwyr (Bedivere) in *Culhwch and Olwen*, the authors argue that Beren's maiming by the wolf Karkaras derives not from the Fenris-wolf biting Tyr's hand in Norse legend, as Tom Shippey has suggested, but from Arthur's method (in a late romance) of dazzling wildcats with his shield, which technique they feel Beren is misapplying when he thrusts the *silmaril* toward the wolf (78-80). At other times, Lewis and Currie find Beren's characteristics to derive from Culhwch, Percival, the Fisher King, or the Irish hero Cú Chulainn. That Lewis and Currie offer so many analogues make their conclusions seem less not more likely: Arthuriana is so vast and varied that similarities can be found to almost any other text. Most of Lewis and Currie's more convincing suggestions have previously been discussed by others including Verlyn Flieger and Dimitra Fimi. Two non-Arthurian sources are also considered: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" for the story of Ælfwine (and "Leaf by Niggle")—curiously, Tolkien is quoted but Coleridge only paraphrased—and the modern dance pioneer Loie Fuller (1862–1928) for Lúthien's terpsichorean accomplishments.

Inspired in part by Lewis and Currie's 2005 book, *The Forsaken Realm of Tolkien*, Guglielmo Spirito seeks "The Legends of the *Trojan War* in J.R.R. Tolkien" (*Hither Shore* 6: 182-200). Spirito finds Faramir somewhat like Hector and thinks Tolkien took Idril's epithet "silver-footed" from Thetis (195). If so, what connection did Tolkien intend between the mother of the besieging Achilles and the daughter of the besieged Turgon?

Maggie Burns explains that "The Desire of a Tale-teller" (*Mallorn* 48: 19-25) to write of "history, true or feigned" (*FR*, Foreword, 6-7)

might have been quickened by two boys' adventure books that Tolkien donated to King Edward's School Library in 1911: Herbert Hayens's *Scouting for Buller*, set in the Boer War (Burns also describes some other Boer War narratives Tolkien might have known), and Alexander Macdonald's *The Lost Explorers*, about an Australian mining expedition. Both works have some elements prefiguring Tolkien's stories (particularly *The Hobbit*). Tolkien had earlier given the library a pair of works by G.K. Chesterton.

Dale Nelson claims that "Tolkien's Further Indebtedness to Haggard" (*Mallorn* 47: 38-40) extends to the influence of *Montezuma's Daughter* and *Heart of the World*. The first work's hero escapes in a barrel, and the story climaxes on a volcano's rim where the villain fights an invisible foe. The second work includes a wandering royal heir, a green stone, a dream prophecy, a broken heirloom, a gleaming white but dilapidated capital city, and assassins at an inn.

Ian Nichols offers "A Comparison of the Ideology of Robert E. Howard's Conan Tales and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" (*The Dark Man: The Journal of Robert E. Howard Studies* 4 no. 1: 35-78) but stumbles too often with Tolkien. Tolkien's views on race are faulted because his virtuous Elves "are usually portrayed as blond and fair" and his evil Nazgûl "are black" (48). Here Nichols sees the influence of Tolkien's early years in southern Africa but doesn't cite Tolkien's comments on the subject of apartheid (*Letters* 73, *MC* 238). Tolkien's attitude toward women supposedly is shown in Galadriel's failure to "venture out to fight the evil of Sauron" (41), but in fact Galadriel "threw down" and "laid bare" the battlements and dungeons of Sauron's fortress Dol Guldur (*RK*, Appendix B, 375). Nichols concludes that Tolkien values stable civilization while Howard prefers dynamic individualism; both are Romantic, but in different ways.

Flora Liénard pits "Charles Williams' City Against J.R.R. Tolkien's Green World" (*Charles Williams and His Contemporaries*, edited by Suzanne Bray and Richard Sturch [Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars, 2009]: 69-83) and forgets Gondolin and Minas Tirith in her argument that cities suggest only corruption for Tolkien while they mean sacred history, ritual, and order for Williams. She also feels that Frodo and Sam's relationship demonstrates Williams's concept of substituted love.

As George Watson's title suggests, "The High Road to Narnia" (*The American Scholar* 78 no. 1: 89-95) is only tangentially about Tolkien, whose opinions Watson sometimes lumps together with those of C.S. Lewis. Watson suggests but does not pursue a comparison of Tolkien and Lewis to other English writers born overseas like George Bernard Shaw and Joseph Conrad. Was it from Lewis, whom Watson knew, that

he heard of Tolkien supposedly exclaiming, "They love me in Houston, Texas" (89), a quotation, otherwise unattested, for which Watson gives no source?

In "The Realm of Faërie, and the Shadow of Homer in Narnia and Middle-earth" (*Mallorn* 47: 25-28), Louis Markos finds *The Lord of the Rings* is like the *Iliad* in its suggestions of a world and history outside the story and in its emphasis on genealogy. By contrast, C.S. Lewis's Narnia stories, less realistic and with the supernatural more immediately present, are more akin to the *Odyssey*.

Stefan Ekman sees "Echoes of *Pearl* in Arda's Landscape" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 59-70), particularly in the descriptions and dream-visions of Murmuran (later called Lórien) in Aman and the forest of Lothlórien in Middle-earth. Like Judith Klinger in "Hidden Paths of Time: March 13th and the Riddle of Shelob's Lair" (in the 2006 collection, *Tolkien and Modernity*), Ekman proposes that an apparent error in the chronology of *The Lord of the Rings*, in this case the date of the Fellowship's departure from Lothlórien, actually shows Tolkien deliberately stretching time. Ekman also discusses Tolkien's poem "The Nameless Land."

"'*There and Back Again*': J.R.R. Tolkien and the Literature of the Medieval Quest" by Phil Purser (*Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching* 16 no. 2: 31-42) attempts to show that *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* exemplify quest themes of physical and metaphorical journeying, the importance of the supernatural, and the transformation of the hero, and thus are useful tools for teaching medieval studies. Aragorn is compared to William the Conqueror and Beowulf, while Legolas and Gimli are likened to Beorhtnoth's retainers. Purser is prone to geographic mistakes, and repeatedly confuses the Lonely Mountain with the Misty Mountains.

Annie Kinniburgh examines "The Noldor and the Tuatha Dé Danaan: J.R.R. Tolkien's Irish Influences" (*Mythlore* 28 no. 1/2: 27-44), noting Tolkien's reference to that mythical Irish people in *The Lost Road*. She relates their time in Ireland to that of the Noldor in Beleriand, finds their king Nuada to be like Tolkien's Maedhros in relinquishing his rule after losing his hand, suggests that Balor of the Evil Eye influenced Sauron, and identifies shared motifs like oath-breaking, mortals succeeding immortals, and an overseas paradise. Oddly, Kinniburgh dates the Christianizing of Ireland to 600 years after St. Patrick (31).

"Imram: Tolkien and Saint Brendan" by Marion Kippers (*Lembas-extra* 2009: 32-47) summarizes the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* and related texts about the sea-voyaging saint in relation to Tolkien's poems "The Nameless Land" and "Imram" and his unfinished novel *The Lost Road*. Comments on Tolkien's "Fastitocalon" may seem out of place, since, as Kippers knows, Tolkien took the name from an Old

English text (*Letters* 343), but she sees Tolkien's Brendan as a kind of successor to Ælfwine and Eriol.

Kristine Larsen, in *Mallorn* 48 (29-32), asks of "The Stone of Erech and the Black Stone of the Ka'aba: Meteorite or 'Meteor-Wrong'?" Both Tolkien's great rock in Gondor and the relic in Mecca have conflicting origin stories, being said either to have fallen from the sky or to have been relocated from a lost earthly paradise.

Zak Cramer notes that Tolkien could have found the idea of "Dragon Meat for Dinner" (*Mallorn* 47: 50), described as traditional in *Farmer Giles of Ham*, in the Talmudic *Bava Batra*, where it is said that the righteous will eat the flesh of the distaff Leviathan in the World to Come.

Paul H. Vigor presents a plan and apologia for geographical source study in "Questing for 'Tygers': A Historical Archaeological Landscape Investigation of J.R.R. Tolkien's Real Middle-earth" (*Mallorn* 48: 33-37) but only hints at the results of his early research. Like Lewis and Currie, Vigor sees Tolkien's work as a great puzzle, one which he believes will be solved by investigating walking trips that Tolkien might have taken in the English countryside. Tolkien's *Two Towers*, Vigor suggests, derive from an unidentified Catholic church converted to Anglican use by Henry VIII, who therefore inspired the Witch-king (36).

Lynn Whitaker analyzes "Frodo as the Scapegoat Child of Middle-earth" (*Mallorn* 48: 25-29) with a comparison to Ursula K. Le Guin's story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (1973). She wonders if Frodo's increasingly infantilized status and terrible suffering are meant to counter any hint of self-aggrandizement in his volunteering for the Ring quest.

Religious and Devotional [DSB]

In "'A Far Green Country': Tolkien, Paradise, and the End of All Things in Medieval Literature" *(Mythlore* 27 no. 3/4: 83-102), A. Keith Kelly and Michael Livingston consider the role of the titular land, of which Frodo first dreams and then to which he travels at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, in Tolkien's cosmology. Its popular image in readers' minds (of whom the authors take Peter Jackson as an exemplar) is as an immortal Heaven, but that is the mistake Ar-Pharazôn made when he tried to invade it. Instead, it is an Earthly Paradise, in Dante's terms, or an "asterisk-Eden," in Tolkien's (96), a kind of Purgatory where the aim is more healing and recovery than the purgation of sin. Frodo will die there, but by laying down his life with his own consent, a process Kelly and Livingston distinguish from suicide by comparing it with the heavenly taking up of Enoch and Elijah in the Bible. (They could as well have mentioned the voluntary deaths of Aragorn and the earlier

kings of Númenor.) The authors also discuss the Earthly Paradise in medieval works: besides Dante's *Purgatorio*, it appears in *Pearl* and *Sir Orfeo*, two English poems to which Tolkien devoted much attention; and it also appears in "Leaf by Niggle," where Niggle's Parish is a delightful land but a second stage of purgation and not the final destination of men. That destination is the true Paradise of whose nature both Christian theology and Tolkien's mythology tend to be silent. Kelly and Livingston also contrast the Earthly Paradise with the *Refrigerium* as presented in C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*.

In "Personal and Communal Hope in Flannery O'Connor and J.R.R. Tolkien," by Ralph C. Wood (*Cynicism and Hope: Reclaiming Discipleship in a Postdemocratic Society*, edited by Meg E. Cox [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009]: 87-99), Tolkien is the author who demonstrates communal hope. The mutual friendship and selfless sacrifice for others shown by the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* demonstrate Christian values and will somehow save the world from the collapse of democracy.

For Michael C. Morris, in "Middle Earth, Narnia, Hogwarts and Animals: A Review of the Treatment of Nonhuman Animals and Other Sentient Beings in Christian-Based Fantasy Fiction" (*Society and Animals* 17 no. 4: 343-56), Tolkien is a foil for the disesteemed J.K. Rowling. Tolkien's favored characters treat animals well (though the only example Morris gives of a well-treated animal is Bill the pony); the Elves, the Ents, Tom Bombadil, and Beorn are vegetarians and even sometimes vegans (though Hobbits and Men are not); and plant rather than animal products are exploited for human use. Rowling, in Morris's telling, gives pretty much the exact opposite, and Lewis's Narnia is placed in between them. Tolkien's hierarchy of being, though it may be objectionable to secularists, is in keeping with the concept of responsible stewardship held by Christian animal liberationists.

Jason Lief, in "Challenging the Objectivist Paradigm: Teaching Biblical Theology with J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Guillermo del Toro" (*Teaching Theology and Religion* 12 no. 4: 321-32), employs "On Fairy-stories," along with Joseph Campbell, to present the thesis that myth is important and not antithetical to history, in the service of his proposal to "re-mythologize" the Bible for students. He also compares the "Ainulindalë" with Aslan singing Narnia into existence in Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*.

"Middle-earth Language Training, or, Middle-earth as a Body of Language" by Frits Burger (*Lembas-extra* 2009: 21-29) is a devotional text treating language as an icon for worship. It presents the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* as an allegory for freeing one's mind from an academic model of language as a dead subject of study and moving into

some vaguely-defined living emotional feeling form of understanding. This is a strange argument to make in the name of Tolkien, who more than other scholars demonstrated that rigorous scholarly analysis and warm literary appreciation need not be antithetical. Burger muddies his thesis by further allegorizing the novel's plot as a human body, starting with the Shire as a head (like a head, everything in the Shire is round), and becoming increasingly ludicrous as he descends to the nether regions.

Language, Philology, and Tolkien's Sub-Creation [DSB]

In *The Power of Tolkien's Prose: Middle-earth's Magical Style* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), Steve Walker is not out to provide a technical analysis of the qualities or even the virtues of the language of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* (the only Tolkien books he covers), though he does allude to several critics, including Brian Rosebury, Michael D.C. Drout, and Ursula K. Le Guin, who have. Instead, this volume is a kind of paean to the enchantment of reading these books. Walker's principal argument is that the hidden depths in Tolkien's naïve "unobtrusive" prose, his realism of presentation, and his use of stale metaphors as if they were concrete and living, delight readers who have surrendered to his compelling narrative, but merely alienate those who have not. By thus deferring to variable personal reaction, Walker sidesteps the question of whether the prose displays actual literary quality. He relies on the testimony of personal enthusiasm and of personal revulsion alike to demonstrate this thesis, and quotes reactions of many readers professional and amateur, sometimes repeating himself (e.g. 14, 111). His own tone is one of relentless enthusiasm: gushery over "Tolkien's wizardry with words" (47) is typical. A statement in the first line of the first chapter that Middle-earth is "incredibly credible" (7) brings the quality of Walker's own prose, and perhaps his awareness of what words he is using, into question. Walker notes the criticism that "Tolkien asserts rather than demonstrates" (9), and follows this precept himself: statements like "in the writings of Middle-earth, simple repetition seems paradoxically to establish distinction" (80) raise without actually addressing the question, how does it do this? Walker's arguments do not attempt to rebut the cynical, and he avoids discussion of the moral or aesthetic implications of stylistic issues. Discussions of literary allusions and syllabic stress are lightly handled, assuming a prior knowledge of the text referents, in contrast to the detailed studies by Drout and Le Guin. Treatments of other stylistic topics more original to Walker, such as "emblems" (physical manifestations of narrative situations) (134) or unversed poetry (140-42) could

have been longer and more detailed. Walker conflates the romantic with the sexual, and treats Tolkien's intended puns and etymological references interchangeably with those existing only in the mind of the reader.

The Hobbitonian Anthology: of Articles about J.R.R. Tolkien and his Legendarium by Mark T. Hooker ([U.S.]: Llyfrawr, 2009), a print-on-demand book that appears to have been revised several times since first publication, is of the same kind as Hooker's previous book of 2006 from the same publisher, *A Tolkienian Mathomium*. It is a collection of brief articles, some of them previously published (mostly in the fanzine *Beyond Bree*), mostly on Tolkienian onomastics, both in the original and in translation. More than the previous book, this one is focused primarily on *The Hobbit*. The section on names, mostly hobbit personal and place names, is filled with close and tenuous primary-world and literary references, mostly ones which could have been known by Tolkien, though whether they actually were or not, and if so whether they bear any significance to his choice of the name, is left an open question. Hooker's report of a well-known Oxford bakery of Tolkien's earlier years called Boffin's is a typically ambiguous discovery: there is no way to tell whether the hobbit surname came from here or not. A section of miscellany treats other words in the same manner, including an article on translators' treatment of formal and informal second person address, without discussing whether *thee* or *thou* occur in the original of *The Hobbit* (in fact, they do not). A section on translations of *The Hobbit* and "Leaf by Niggle," mostly Eastern European, is largely an exercise in seeing what connotations the target languages' names conjure up in readers' minds, or at least in Hooker's mind.

The kind of detailed consideration of prose suggested by Walker is demonstrated by Robin Anne Reid in "Mythology and History: A Stylistic Analysis of *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Style* 43 no. 4: 517-38). Reid takes three evocative passages from the book and analyzes them at the level of individual clauses, toting up what are called in functional grammar their themes and processes, which basically means their significant nouns and verbs. The lack of any control samples makes it difficult to determine from this article what Reid's findings prove about Tolkien's prose style. But it is clear that his writing is complex and subtle, that he characteristically links together clauses with grammatical parallelism, and that he inverts word order from customary phrasing to open up narrative perspective and to evoke spiritual understanding.

"Intertextual Patterns in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" by Thomas Kullmann (*Nordic Journal of English Studies* 8 no. 2: 37-56) operates on a more general level. Kullmann's thesis is that the stylistic registers of the two novels are highly distinct from each other.

The Hobbit, Kullmann says, is full of references to pre-texts, by which is meant that passages frequently remind the reader—or at least they remind Kullmann—of various other works. The ones he itemizes form a variety, but they're mostly Victorian children's books. By contrast, *The Lord of the Rings* does not do that. Instead of referencing specific works, it mirrors a variety of literary styles, especially in dialogue. These range from the colloquial regionalist (Sam) to the rhetorical epic (Elrond and Aragorn). The realism of presentation of the narrative description serves to invite readers to identify their real experiences with a non-realistic story. Kullmann concludes by urging fans of *The Lord of the Rings* not to undervalue *The Hobbit* for its more ironic, parodic mode.

John D. Rateliff in "'A Kind of Elvish Craft': Tolkien as Literary Craftsman" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 1-21) describes Tolkien's creativity in terms of the smallest level of prose, individual words. His thesis is that "God is in the details" and that, while part of what makes Tolkien's fiction compelling is the loose description that leaves much up to the reader's imagination, the choice of telling detail is also part of his creative genius. Rateliff has a mixed opinion on whether to follow Ralph Waldo Emerson in holding that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," as he maintains that it ultimately doesn't matter that Tolkien failed to keep the Moon phase (in the shooting of Smaug in *The Hobbit*) consistent with the calendar, yet he also admires Tolkien's strenuous efforts to attempt to do it. The sight of Tolkien thus mucking up his own vivid initial description in a failed effort at consistency does not add force to Rateliff's criticism of the editors of the 50th anniversary edition of *The Lord of the Rings* for textual changes made, as Rateliff notes but not with sufficient force, by both the original initiative and the specific authority of Christopher Tolkien. Others involved were only trying to codify Christopher Tolkien's research in *The History of The Lord of the Rings*, and their error, if any, was in accepting his judgment. Whatever the validity of Rateliff's critique of this particular point, his conclusion that we should never alter Tolkien's words or presume to second-guess his intent does not hold up against the complexity of the textual history and the frequent ambiguity of determining what Tolkien's intent was in the first place. Despite this problem, Rateliff's article is a sensitive and clearly-argued consideration of the artistic quality of Tolkien's prose.

Tom Shippey declares that his survey of "Tolkien's Development as a Writer of Alliterative Poetry in Modern English" (*Lembas-extra* 2009: 64-73), though actually rather detailed, is but a preliminary foray into the neglected topic of the technique—the rhythm and meter—of Tolkien's works in this form. Shippey observes that grammatical changes in word structure over the centuries have made adhering to the complex

rules of Old English alliterative stress and meter more difficult in Modern English, and that, over his career, Tolkien "got markedly better at it" (67). *The Lay of the Children of Húrin* is strained, *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son* is more successful to the point that the individual styles of the two speakers are distinctive, and the laments and battle-cries of the Rohirrim in *The Lord of the Rings* are subtle and appropriate in diction as well as metrically apt. Shippey is not prepared to say whether the project to revive alliterative verse in Modern English is capable of success or even if it is ultimately worthwhile, but he notes that Tolkien certainly thought it so.

Jill Fitzgerald in "A 'Clerkes Compleinte': Tolkien and the Division of Lit. and Lang." (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 41-57) examines Tolkien's ambivalent attitude to this division in English studies. Although firmly a practitioner of the linguistic and philological side of the field, he believed or hoped that it could be reconciled with literary study. This did not prevent him from acting as an advocate for philology, claiming "Chaucer as a Philologist" in his essay of that title on dialectical variation in *The Reeve's Tale*, which Fitzgerald summarizes, and expressing his frustrations with English department infighting and university bureaucracy in various writings, including his own poem "The Clerkes Compleinte," here reprinted but not extensively discussed.

"J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Wanderer*: From Edition to Application" by Stuart D. Lee (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 189-211) itemizes Tolkien's unpublished writings on this Old English poem. These basically consist of several versions of 1920s lecture notes and translations of the poem, scripts of various versions of a 1930s-40s radio talk, and a response, dated 1964-65, to Burton Raffel's translation of this and other Old English poems. During the 1930s Tolkien worked on an unpublished school edition of *The Wanderer*. Using the *ubi sunt* lines at the end (notably also quoted by Tolkien in his 1959 valedictory lecture), Lee demonstrates that a kind of variorum edition by Tolkien could be assembled, but he cautions that this would not be a scholarly text but an assemblage of Tolkien's working notes. Tolkien's scholarly concerns with *The Wanderer* included the literary qualities of the narrative persona. (He considered the title, invented by a 19th century scholar, to be misleading.) Lee concludes by noting echoes of *The Wanderer* in elegiac imagery in Tolkien's own writing, tying this into Tolkien's response to Raffel. Tolkien took considerable offense at Raffel's description of him (Tolkien) as a "re-creator" of Anglo-Saxon culture, denying (as he customarily did) any firm connection between the Anglo-Saxons and the Rohirrim. To Raffel's view of translation as free re-creation, Tolkien's vehement reply that this practice is "at best a foolish misuse of a talent for personal poetic expression; at worst the unwarranted imprudence

of a parasite" (quoted at 204 as part of a long, partially previously unpublished, paragraph) offers, though Lee does not specify this, some hints of Tolkien's view of "re-creative" dramatizations of his own work.

Ross Smith in "J.R.R. Tolkien and the Art of Translating English into English" (*English Today* 25 no. 3: 3-11, 64) considers Tolkien's technique in translating *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* from earlier forms of English into Modern English (hence the title of the article). As Tolkien's *Beowulf* has not been published, except for a few fragments, Smith's primary source on it is Tolkien's article "On Translating *Beowulf*," which lays out his criteria. Tolkien advocates verse translations that balance adherence to the original meter with phonetic and stylistic evocativeness. He advocates a certain degree of archaism in translating *Beowulf* to reflect the fact that it was already a historical story at the time of its composition, and he practices "a Malory-esque register" in *Sir Gawain* to convey the chivalric style (8). Smith compares and contrasts Tolkien's translation practice with the more "modern" approaches of Seamus Heaney in *Beowulf* and Simon Armitage in *Sir Gawain*. Lastly, Smith discusses Tolkien's pose as a translator of *The Lord of the Rings*, a conceit borrowed from medieval romances. The expression of this in Appendix F is unnecessary for the story, and was probably adopted to satisfy Tolkien's own sense of historical aptness. Smith notes that the pose is entirely artificial; that is, Tolkien wrote the Modern English first and invented the "source" text afterwards. It reaches its limit in the lack of etymology for the "original" Westron; Smith does not note the similarity of this to its presumptive ancestor within the sub-creation, Adûnaic.

After a lucid introduction to the external history of Quenya and an explanation of the degree to which it exists as a real language, Christopher Gilson in "Essence of Elvish: The Basic Vocabulary of Quenya" (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 213-39) plunges into a description of the lexical corpus from the perspective of its external history, of Tolkien creating it. Using lists of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, together with English glosses, Gilson ties together the early and later stages of Tolkien's development of Quenya, showing definitions being elaborated and words shifting meaning over time, as nuances are clarified and other words move into the same lexical space. He points out that Quenya words often lack clear one-to-one matching with their English definitions, as is equally true of word comparisons between primary world languages, and he raises the question of to what degree vocabulary and syntactical patterns in one stage of Quenya may be carried over to another where not specifically contradicted by Tolkien. Gilson's own position is clear: despite changes in its evolution, Quenya is the same language throughout Tolkien's career.

The proceedings of the Second International Conference on J.R.R. Tolkien's Invented Languages, held at Antwerp in 2007, forms issue 2 of *Arda Philology*, edited by Anders Stenström (Beregond) and published by the Arda Society of Sweden. It includes five papers viewing Tolkien's invented languages from a variety of perspectives. "Reconstruction and 'Retro-construction' in Tolkien's Eldarin Languages" by Benct Philip Jonsson (1-15) forms a pendant to Gilson's article on Quenya, by observing that while Quenya, which Gilson and Jonsson agree was central in importance to Tolkien, remained relatively unchanged over time, the proto-Eldarin language which, within the subcreation, is ancestral to Quenya was totally reconstructed between two stages of work on it in the 1910s and 1930s, particularly in its phonology. The proto-Eldarin was subsidiary to Quenya in Tolkien's mind, constructed backwards from it in accordance with philological principles. Jonsson attributes the changes to Tolkien's reconstruction of the Elvish language family tree and his increasing mastery of comparative philology. Stenström's "Phonotactic Preferences in the Root Repertories of *Qenya Lexicon* and *The Etymologies*" (98-113) takes an aesthetic approach to the study of the proto-Eldarin language. Stenström argues that, as the other Elvish tongues do, it has its own style in sounds and in construction of words from phonemes. He conducts a combined survey of the known vocabulary of both forms of the language to present statistical charts of the prevailing patterns. "Practical Neo-Quenya: Report on the Johannine Bible Translation Project" (16-55) is a detailed account by Helge K. Fauskanger of a project to translate the Book of Revelation and the Epistles of John into Quenya, consisting of scrambling around the published Quenya vocabulary lists in search of appropriate words and for solutions to grammatical problems. Some gaps must be filled by neologisms; Fauskanger holds that, as Quenya has no exterior existence outside of Tolkien's head, anybody else's additions to it are as legitimate as Tolkien's (16-17). "The Feanorian Mode of *The Etymologies* and Its Relation to Other Systems for Writing Quenya" by Måns Björkman (80-97) is another technical article, this one on the Tengwar alphabet. Björkman compares the letters and mode presented in "Addenda and Corrigenda to *The Etymologies*," published in 2003-4, with Tolkien's other tables of Tengwar usage, noting differences in terminology, letters presented, and the representation of vowels. A fifth paper, by Karolina Agata Kazimierczak, is considered under Reception Studies, below.

"Tolkien of the Many Names" is John Garth's guest editorial for *Mallorn* 48 (4-7). Garth discusses the profusion of comic allusive names, often in Latin, that Tolkien gave to himself and friends in writings of his King Edward's School years, and briefly considers similar

habits of pseudonymy of Tolkien's characters and even Tolkien fans. Garth notes that one of Tolkien's early codenames was Lutro, Esperanto for "otter," speculates that Tolkien had Otr (Otter) of the Norse sagas in mind, speculates further that the phonemic similarity of Otter to Ohthere in Old English literature would have appealed to Tolkien, and finally draws a connection to Ottor, an earlier name for Eriol in *The Book of Lost Tales*, concluding that Eriol is therefore in part an autobiographical figure, a form of creative inspiration not entirely unknown to Tolkien.

Janet Brennan Croft discusses "Naming the Evil One: Onomastic Strategies in Tolkien and Rowling" (*Mythlore* 28 no. 1/2: 149-63). She notes a reluctance by other characters in *The Lord of the Rings* to call Sauron by that name, apparently out of a semi-tangible fear that he might overhear them if they did. This reluctance is displayed even by some of his own servants. Croft is systematic enough to catalog the varying preferences of different characters in this respect (as she likewise does for Rowling's Voldemort, whose name is also shunned by some). Whether *Sauron* actually is "his right name," as Aragorn says, or merely an Elvish epithet—as is *Morgoth*, who, once Fëanor gives him that name, is never called anything else by an Elf—is not addressed. Croft does recognize that *The Eye* for Sauron is a metonym and not a physical description (154). Lastly among Tolkien's megalomaniac villains, Saruman is too minor an Evil One to receive either an epithet or name avoidance, and his self-applied titles don't take.

"The Curious Case of Denethor and the *Palantír*" by Jessica Yates (*Mallorn* 47: 18, 21-25), the only major non-linguistic sub-creational study of the year, addresses the question of Sauron's control over what Denethor saw in his *palantír* and its role in feeding Denethor's despair. Yates argues that Sauron did not at first know that Frodo had been captured, or he would have moved to secure the prisoner more quickly. This, in turn, means that, if Denethor saw Frodo's capture in his *palantír*—a (probably mistaken) supposition first proposed by Tom Shippey in *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* as an explanation for Denethor's complete despair—therefore Denethor's use of the *palantír* would not have been entirely under Sauron's control. But Gandalf ran an enormous risk if he let Denethor know that Frodo was the Ring-bearer, because Sauron then could have learned it via Denethor's *palantír* while monitoring Denethor's use of it. Yates proposes that a better solution would have been for Gandalf to lock Denethor's *palantír* up, and claims he shows "negligence" in failing to do so (23). She also notes that the script to the Peter Jackson movie tries to avoid this dilemma. Yates's use of phrases like "logging in" to describe using a *palantír* suggest that the entire discussion may be too mechanistic.

There are two papers about Dwarves and music this year. "The Song of Durin" by Ben Koolen (*Lembas-extra* 2009: 74-85) describes the historical contexts of the song of that title in *The Lord of the Rings* and, more briefly, of the Dwarven songs in *The Hobbit*. Little is said of the songs' literary character and even less of their verse-forms. More robust in its consideration of detail, "The Dwarven Philharmonic Orchestra" by Heidi Steimel (*Hither Shore* 5: 135-41) is a light speculation on the instruments said to be played by the Dwarves in chapter 1 of *The Hobbit*. Steimel notes that related Dwarves play the same or related instruments. She considers the instruments' possible origin in Middle-earth, how easily they could have been carried around, and what might have become of them in the course of the story. She also speculates on how the different instruments might have fit together musically.

Reception Studies [DSB]

"*The* Name of the Tree*: Mythopoeia* and *The Garden of Proserpina*" by Renée Vink (*Lembas-extra* 2009: 6-20) is a straightforward source-comparison study, noting commonalities between two works and speculating whether the later-written is a response to the earlier. The difference from the usual run of Tolkien source studies is that the work being compared to Tolkien's poem *Mythopoeia* postdates it, though it claims to predate it. *The Garden of Proserpina* appears in A.S. Byatt's novel *Possession* (1990), where it is attributed to a fictional character who is a Victorian-era poet. Both works extol the sub-creative human imagination, and, strikingly, both address this abstract concept in verse. Specific points and imagery (notably that of a tree) are also common to both authors. Vink traces the common references to Platonic ideas from Plato forward through Vico and Barfield, and discusses Byatt's complex love-hate relationship with Tolkien as expressed, both explicitly and implicitly, in many of her works. She concludes that Byatt's knowledge of Tolkien is sufficiently extensive, and the matching of imagery sufficiently close, that the *homage* in *The Garden of Proserpina* is deliberate.

"Unfolding Tolkien's Linguistic Symphony: Relations Between Music and Language in the Narratives of J.R.R. Tolkien, and in Compositions Inspired by Them" by Karolina Agata Kazimierczak (*Arda Philology* 2: 56-79) compares the artistic creativity expressed in Tolkien's invented languages to that of music, trying various ways to account for or to cancel out the difference that languages have linguistic semantic content and (non-vocal) music does not. Kazimierczak then describes three Tolkien-inspired composers, Bertrand Guillerm, Adam Klein, and David J. Finnamore, and their various projects for creating

romantic, operatic, and pseudo-authentic musical works inspired by Tolkien's stories.

"The Not-Quite-Moving Pictures: The Comic Book Adaptation of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*" (*Hither Shore* 5: 186-96) is David Wenzel and Charles Dixon's *The Hobbit* (1989-90). Dirk Vanderbeke, author of this article about it, compares the work with other comic book adaptations of literary novels. He argues that Wenzel and Dixon rely too heavily on long verbatim quotes from the book which are redundant to the pictures they provide, instead of integrating words and pictures to complement each other imaginatively. The imagery in the art draws more from animated movies and other comic books than from the visual aspects of Tolkien's own sources. This casually demotic treatment of the visual clashes with the respectful literary treatment of the text.

In "Thrusts in the Dark: Slashers' Queer Practices" (*Extrapolation* 50 no. 3: 463-83), Robin Anne Reid is primarily concerned with countering preconceived stereotypes of categories of fan fiction and of its writers and readers. The Tolkien relevance of her article consists of the citation and description of two *Lord of the Rings*-based fan fiction stories which Reid considers literarily valuable on their own merits, and not deserving of being pigeonholed as of interest only to the "abnormal and perverse." The stories depict bondage-domination sexual relationships between Merry and Frodo, and Boromir and Faramir; both stories also explicitly depart from, rather than claiming to supplement or complement, the events of Tolkien's novel, becoming the equivalent within Tolkien's universe of "alternate history" stories.

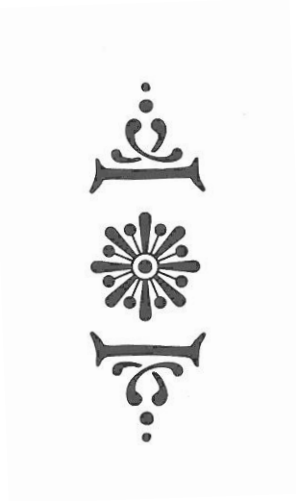
Film Studies [DSB]

Despite its subtitle, *The Lord of the Films: The Unofficial Guide to Tolkien's Middle-earth on the Big Screen* by J.W. Braun (Toronto: ECW Press, 2009) is not about Tolkien. It's a collection of entertaining trivia points about the Jackson movies. A few items, some of dubious accuracy, do relate to Tolkien writing the book or to backstory excluded from the script; several more on adaptation issues convey a belief that the movies improved on Tolkien. The title of a section labeled "The Burden Is Heavy: Tolkien wrote for one audience; the scriptwriters wrote for four" (67-69) summarizes this perspective. The four audiences may be summed as two, those who had read the book before (who are, in this account, to be mollified with "little moments" and "inside jokes") and those who hadn't (for whom the story must be made clear). But is not Tolkien's book also read both by those who have read it before and those who have not?

Jane Chance writes "'In the Company of Orcs': Peter Jackson's

Queer Tolkien" (*Queer Movie Medievalisms,* edited by Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Tison Pugh [Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009]: 79-96). The title is a chapter title on the DVD of Jackson's *Return of the King,* and "queer" here, as for Robin Anne Reid above, means odd or unusual rather than specifically homosexual, though in Chance the homosexual implication is strongly taken as read. Chance's subject is Jackson's presentation of the masculinity of hobbits and orcs; Tolkien only comes in to provide a desexualized heteronormative context, undercut by a hidden sexuality which Chance cites Catharine Stimpson, Brenda Partridge, and Esther Saxey to support. Chance implicitly criticizes Jackson for infantilizing the hobbits by having them appear "barely post-adolescent" instead of "middle-aged" as in Tolkien (83), although Tolkien's hobbits obviously age more slowly than humans: Pippin at 29 (not even "middle-aged" by human standards) has not yet come of age at 33, for instance.

"Councils and Kings: Aragorn's Journey Towards Kingship in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*" by Judy Ann Ford and Robin Anne Reid (*Tolkien Studies* 6: 71-90) is three papers in one. The first is an analysis of Tolkien's Aragorn as expressing a Germanic sacral model of kingship. Aragorn becomes king of Gondor not solely because of his ancestry, but also because his leadership passes the test to show him worthy to embody the sacred and semi-divine role of leader of the people. His ancestry is merely what gives him the opportunity to show his quality. The second part compares and contrasts Tolkien's Aragorn, whose confidence in his responsibility is tempered only by his need to demonstrate his capacity, with Jackson's reluctant aspirant, who fears that he is unworthy, and who must address an anti-monarchial tendency in Gondor that does not exist in the book. This section of the paper is particularly valuable. As Tolkien had no need nor occasion to explain how his character differs from Jackson's, many casual commentators have inadvertently read the Jackson character's reluctance into the Tolkien character's challenge. Ford and Reid provide an inoculation against that error. The final two pages of the article leave Aragorn to cite an elaborate theoretical paradigm making the obvious point that movies don't always adapt source books accurately, and that they may be judged in other capacities. This argument is unnecessary to justify Ford and Reid's own reasonable decision to discuss differences between the two without criticizing Jackson. So what is it doing there? Any implication that success on some other level may excuse a movie—one which heavily promotes itself as an adaptation, and is enthusiastically taken as such by its fans—from negative evaluation in that capacity should be deprecated.



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Douglas C. Kane is an attorney specializing in employment discrimination and harassment cases and other civil rights matters. He is also a Middle-earth enthusiast who has loved the works of J.R.R. Tolkien for

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