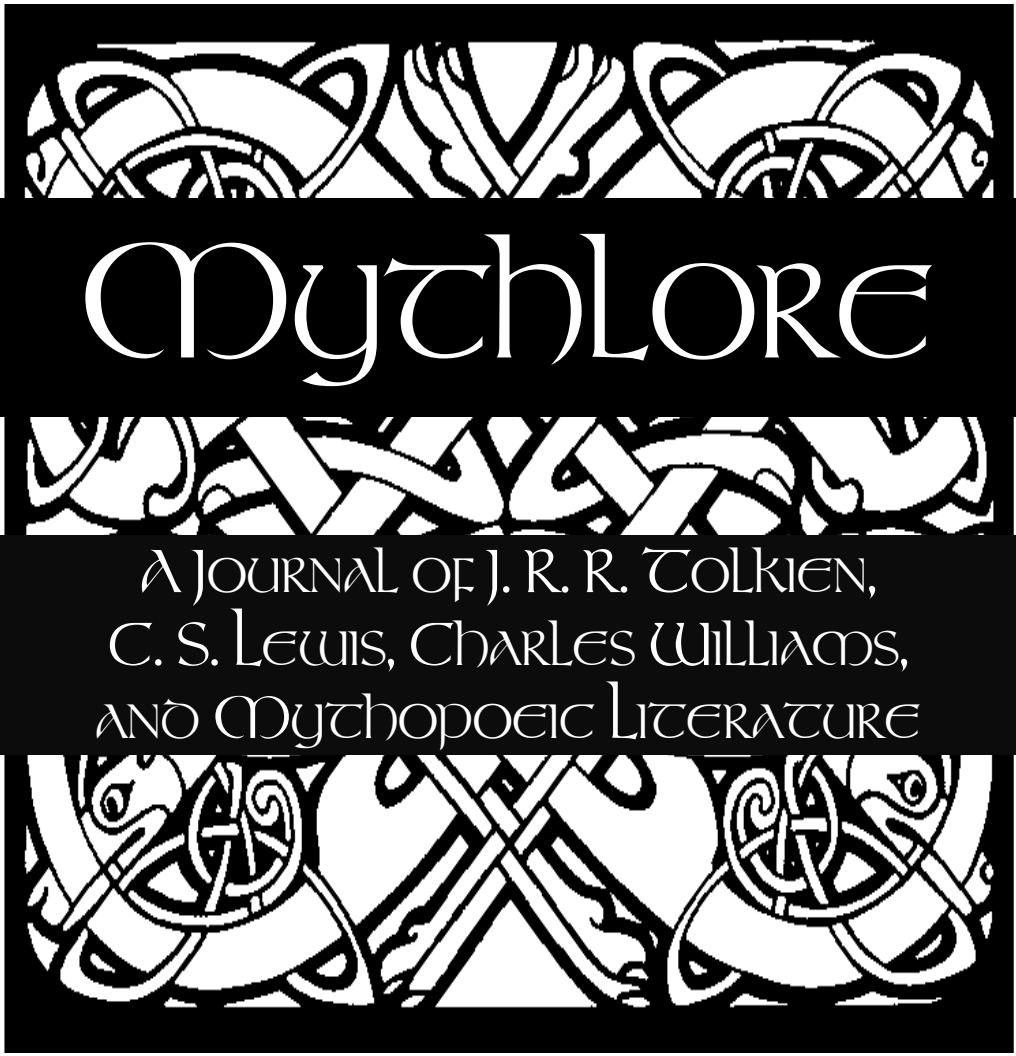

Mythlore

A Journal of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Issue 137 Volume 39, Number 1
Fall/Winter 2020

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Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature (ISSN 0146-9339) is published by The Mythopoeic Society (P.O. Box 6707, Altadena, CA 91001-6707), a non-profit international literary and educational organization for the study, discussion, and enjoyment of fantasy and mythic literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. For additional information about The Mythopoeic Society, visit the website: http://www.mythsoc.org.

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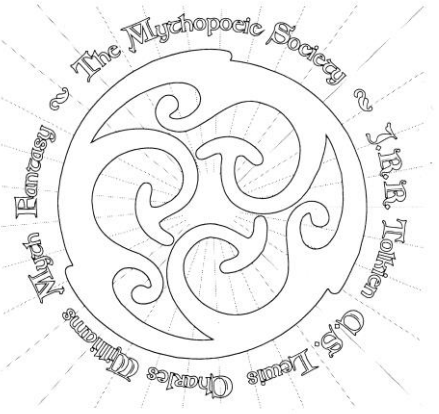


Our second COVID-era issue is slightly behind schedule not just because of issues related to the pandemic, but because I have changed "my house, my chair, and my college" (as Tolkien put it in the Foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*) in the midst of this pandemic—never an easy transition, but all the more challenging at this time. My apologies.

We start with several Lewis-related papers. In "A Cosmic Shift in *The Screwtape Letters*," Brenton D.G. Dickieson examines in even more detail the implications of the draft of the introduction to *The Screwtape Letters* (which he first discussed in *Notes and Queries* in 2013) and a previously unpublished Lewis letter to a reader. This draft convincingly repositions *The Screwtape Letters* as part of the Ransom sequence rather than a stand-alone infernal epistolary novel, a major shift in how the Space Trilogy can be understood.

Tiffany E. Schubert's paper discusses the theme of consolation in Lewis's *The Silver Chair* and the medival poem *Pearl*, touching on Dante and Boethius along the away and bringing out hidden depths in this children's novel.

Andy Gordon looks at several other novels in the Chronicles of Narnia, particularly *The Horse and His Boy* and *The Last Battle*, in his examination of themes of sexual maturity, sensuality, and humiliation, with Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* as a touchstone and comparison.

Joseph Rex Young returns to his exploration of George R.R. Martin's Song of Ice and Fire series, this time looking explicitly at Martin's dwarf characters (Tyrion Lannister is not the only one) with a Bakhtinian focus on bodily grotesquerie, carnival inversion, and truth-telling.

Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* is next considered in its several incarnations—as novel, movie, and game—in Douglas A. Barnim's paper on the use of myth in adaptation and interactivity.

In my introduction to the last issue, I noted how rare it was to find anything new to say about the question of Tom Bombadil. Here we have yet one more paper on the topic: Dani Inkpen delves into Tom's position as an objective observer of his own world, backing up this interpretation with a history of the philosophy of science and the scientific method, and more precisely, the definition of scientific objectivity that would have been familiar to Tolkien.

Three more papers on Tolkien follow. Kathryn Colvin's "'Her Enchanted Hair'" is a fascinating study of the hair-mad Victorians, especially the Pre-Raphaelites, and the depiction of women's hair in poetry and art of the period (for good and evil). It's clear that Tolkien's work draws on these influences.

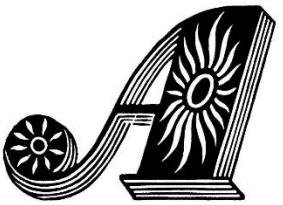
Łukasz Neubauer's paper on the friendship of Polish scholar Przemsław Mrococzkowski and J.R.R. Tolkien, and Mrococzkowski's reviews of and scholarship on Tolkien's work, fills a gap in our understanding of Tolkien's continental influence.

Our final paper examines Tolkien's complex relationship with medieval concepts of knighthood, both as a scholar and as demonstrated in the pages of his fiction. Ben Reinhard picks apart the relationship Tolkien finds between knighthood and *ofermod* in works including *The Lord of the Rings* and *Farmer Giles of Ham.* As usual, the articles are followed by an extensive section of reviews of new and recent noteworthy books.

The upcoming special issue on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin, guest edited by Melanie Rawls, has been moved to Spring 2021 and the deadline extended. The Mythopoeic Press volume on cities in Middle-earth, edited by Cami Agan, is also still in need of submissions; please see the calls for papers at the end of this issue. Please also note that we have two openings on the Council of Stewards: an immediate need for a Recording Secretary and an upcoming transition for the Awards Administrator. You will also find ads for these posts in this issue.

If you would like to keep up with news relating to *Mythlore*, please follow us on Facebook, where we post advance notice of items accepted for upcoming issues, lists of items available for review, and so forth. In addition to the members of the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, the Mythopoeic Society Council of Stewards, and our ever-dependable referees, I'd also like to express my gratitude to Phillip Fitzsimmons, Reference and Digitization Librarian at Southwestern Oklahoma State University Libraries and our Administrator for *Mythlore* and Society Archives, who has been directing the team adding archival content to http://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/, and to his assistant Ben Dressler. My thanks also to David L. Emerson for eagle-eyed proofreading.

—Janet Brennan Croft



Cosmic Shift in *The Screwtape Letters*

Brenton D.G. Dickieson

Though it was the book that launched Lewis into public fame, and although he returned eighteen years later with a "Toast," by all accounts, Lewis had no desire to capitalize on *The Screwtape Letters*. Unlike the experimental and expansive speculative universes of The Space Trilogy and Narnia, *The Screwtape Letters* has been read as a one-off world invention, narrowed to the character of Screwtape and the particular textures of Screwtape's pedantic, smoking room corner of hell. And although we have a stageplay and a host of *Screwtape* copycats, Lewis himself deprecated adaptation. Instead, he encouraged people to simply use the "general diabolical framework" of *Screwtape* and fill it with their own imaginations (*Collected Letters* [*CL*] II 925). By all accounts, it looks like Screwtape's speculative universe was a single experiment of WWII-era (anti)spiritual theology, returned to only once in "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" to offer a critique of education and culture for American readers.

However, archival discoveries now reveal that Lewis made playful imaginative links that expand the scope of *Screwtape*'s speculative universe and connect it to the world of the Ransom Trilogy, The Field of Arbol. By using unpublished and newly published manuscript evidence to supplement close readings of published texts, this paper will reconsider the extent of the Ransom fictional universe. Lewis's imaginative experimentation with a broader speculative framework for the Field of Arbol has significance in several areas, including invented language, angelology, the psychology of temptation, and the possible breadth of his myth-making project. As a way of testing the implications of this Screwtape-Ransom universe—but by no means exhausting the reach of such a probe—I offer a rereading of the *Perelandra* prologue as a sequel to *The Screwtape Letters*. This investigation is a cautious one; its value is borne out by the success of its close reading. However, this small experiment points to significant results, with a great potential for more research. I conclude with the possibility that there are advantages to considering Lewis's WWII-era speculative fiction as a "Ransom Cycle"—a diverse, tentative, and experimental project of theological exploration and cultural criticism with cohesive themes and a coherent central vision.

THE FIELD OF ARBOL

Beyond mythic poetry and an allegorical conversion narrative, Lewis's first foray into popular fiction, *Out of the Silent Planet* (*OSP*), was published in 1938 just before the outbreak of WWII. It was one of the more fortuitous failed bets of history, the famous wager between J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis to each write a science fiction tale (Garth). Though Tolkien's time travel piece remained incomplete, the wager propelled Lewis into writing a series of scientifiction romances featuring Dr. Ransom, a Cambridge philologist who rises from a fearful, solitary pedestrian to the Arthurian head of an interstellar counter-conspiracy. At the beginning of *OSP*, two high-class fiends, Weston and Devine, kidnap Ransom and closet him away to Malacandra (Mars). After escaping his captors and learning the Old Solar language among some indigenous Malacandrians, Ransom discovers that because of its Edenic Fall, of all the planets in the Field of Arbol, only Thulcandra (Earth) is isolated—a planet that Monika Hilder says is "out of sync with the universe" (33). As David Downing notes, though Thulcandra, "the Silent Planet," is cut off from the other planets, it "remains a battleground." However, "there are rumors in Deep Heaven of wondrous things performed by Maleldil to reclaim his lost world" (*Planets in Peril* [*Planets*] 40).

In the second book of the so-called Space Trilogy, *Perelandra* (1943), Ransom volunteers to be spirited away to Perelandra (Venus) to play the role of interlocutor in a neo-Miltonian SciFi struggle.[1] The action of *That Hideous Strength* (*THS*), the final book, is highlighted by its near-future perspective at the close of WWII. Focused on Earth (Thulcandra), Ransom is no longer a mere philologist but is a Christ figure, Pendragon, Arthur Redivivus, and Fisher King in league with an awakened Merlin in a motley crew of unlikely warriors (Dickieson, "Mixed Metaphors" 97-109). At the end of *THS*, Ransom is transposed to Avalon without death, returning to breathe the life-giving air of Perelandra. In drawing upon the rich medieval cosmology that had long captured his imagination, Lewis's WWII-era SF re-casts our solar system as the Field of Arbol, a providentially-infused "space" that contrasts with the cold and barren outer space of contemporary scientific mythology (see *Planets* 60-82; Lobdell 49-52; Mattern; Petrucci; Schwartz 16-18; Ward 47-53, 80-87, 106-08, 123-26, 143-49, 169-75, 195-98). Downing is correct that "Lewis devoted a great deal of his energy and expertise as a scholar to the task of rehabilitating the medieval

[1] The connection with Milton and *Perelandra* is widely recognized, and Lewis was lecturing on *Paradise Lost* as he was writing *Perelandra*; see Hooper, *Companion* 221-25, 459-62. Jared Lobdell is unique in resisting a Miltonic reading of *Perelandra*, though he admits that "the Unman reflects Lewis's reflections on Milton's Satan" (95). Lobdell (94-95) recognizes the Arthurian subtheme in *Perelandra*, and notes Lewis's comment in *A Preface to* Paradise Lost (6-7) that Milton had considered a romantic Arthurian epic for his treatment.

worldview" (*Planets* 63), and Adam Mattern has demonstrated that by going "Medieval on Science Fiction" (2), Lewis recovers the beauty of the medieval model while infusing contemporary scientific frameworks with new meaning within the fiction of his created worlds.

At best, the Ransom books are a very loose trilogy. Downing notes that early in *OSP*, "Lewis serves notice that he does not intend to follow the usual genre conventions" (*Planets* 64), and warns us to consider the texts carefully when considering genre (141). Ostensibly, the books of the Space Trilogy differ in genre from classic science fiction (*OSP*) to literary space fantasy or space opera (*Perelandra*), to dystopic scientific apocalypse (*THS*).[2] There is also a possible fourth Ransom book, a time travel narrative—or, perhaps more accurately, a transdimensional fantasy—that Lewis abandoned. If authentic, "The Dark Tower" may have been written after *OSP* and before *Perelandra* (Lewis, *The Dark Tower* 8; 151-56).[3] Jared Lobdell is correct that Dr. Ransom is a "unifying element" of the series (25), but Ransom is not the only element that ties the books together. In an argument that is relevant to the core discussion in this paper, Gregory Wolfe suggests that the scattered references to language in Lewis's writings are brought together in the Ransom trilogy, "where language itself becomes the predominant metaphor linking all three novels" (58)—an argument that Tami Van Opstal takes further using Owen Barfield's *Poetic Diction*. Downing links *Perelandra* and *THS* with *Screwtape* and *The Great Divorce* as Lewis's "infernal period" where in "four consecutive books Lewis introduces hellish characters and hellish settings (imaginatively recast for modern readers) in order to explore the psychology of faith and doubt, of temptation and spiritual trial" (*Planets* 83). Given that the Oyarsa of Earth, the Bent Eldil, is another hellish figure, *OSP* no doubt also fits within this "infernal period."

Besides these links and an imaginative reconsideration of medieval cosmology in contemporary science fiction and theological experimentation, the Ransom books also feature "Lewis"—not merely as the author but as a character-narrator and the colleague in whom Dr. Ransom first confides about his adventure in Malacandra. The voice of the narrator, a fictional representation of Lewis himself, is a device that Lobdell notes occurs in medieval and Victorian literature (89-90). The character-narrator device is most robust at the end of *OSP* and the beginning of *Perelandra*. At the close of the adventure, our version of *OSP* reveals the fact that Lewis is actually the secretary of Ransom's pilgrimage, tasked with fictionalizing the trip to Malacandra as a scientifiction tale that will

[2] While cautioning against being deceived by their surface simplicity, Downing describes "*Out of the Silent Planet* as a cosmic voyage, *Perelandra* as an Edenic fantasy, and *That Hideous Strength* as a satire on modern academia" (*Planets* 5-6).

[3] In "Reconsidering the Lindskoog Affair," I argue that the MS. is authentic.

be used to prepare a tiny resistance force against an impending inter-global conspiracy. This genre complication is intertextually linked with H.G. Wells's *First Men in the Moon*, which uses a similar epistolary conceit. There is no doubt that Dr. Weston and Mr. Devine are villainized versions of Wells's failed playwright and businessman, Mr. Bedford. and his scientist with interplanetary intentions, Mr. Cavor (Haigh 153-4; Schwartz 23-26; see Downing, *Planets* 124-25). As *First Men in the Moon* ends with epistles (logs) and the conceit of a concealed true story in the fantasy, we discover that *OSP* is Ransom's masked memoir, developed further in a closing letter to Lewis. In this sense, the fictional Lewis acts as a Bedford, recording fantastical history as fictionalized fantasy.

As *OSP* closes with Lewis as chronicler, *Perelandra* begins with Lewis's own experience walking from the train station to Ransom's house to help him prepare for a departure to Perelandra. The first two chapters of *Perelandra* form the frame narrative of Ransom's Venusian adventure. Lewis as character-narrator helps set Ransom's affairs in order, receives him after a year on Perelandra, and then records the tale. Though mostly in the background of *THS*, Lewis as character-narrator does not disappear entirely at the close of the Ransom books. The only overt intrusion of "Lewis" the narrator is chapter one, section three, where the narrator takes a stroll through Bragdon Wood and falls asleep near Merlin's tomb (20-22), which is the "heart" of the ancient Arthurian wood as it is "the heart of ancient Logres" (Hannay 7). Though distinctive within the novel, the Lewis section serves to provide an Arthurian atmosphere to the tale, to set the story in conversation with an older image of Britain, and to create a subtle parallel with George MacDonald's Anodos in *Phantastes*. In the remainder of *THS*, the character-narrator records only a few editorial comments, and Lewis never encounters other characters in *THS* as he does in *OSP* and *Perelandra*. The character of Lewis emerges more substantially in the aborted *Dark Tower* manuscript, but the potentials of his role are left in authorial limbo. Of the three and a half Ransom books we have, Lewis as the powerful character-narrator is used selectively but consistently.

The use of the literary "I" is not unusual to Lewis's writing. Walter Hooper has noted that "almost all his books are written in the first person" (*God in the Dock* 10), displaying a unique autographic and reflexive interest in his nonfiction[4] and a psychological intimacy in his fiction that invites spiritual maturity or even "the gods' surgery" (Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* 254; see Cassidy 112). Scholars have noted how Lewis writes himself into his fiction (e.g., Downing, *Most Reluctant Convert*, 19-20, 63-80; Brown 18-19; Sayer 257), and

[4] On autoethnography in theology and literature and developing emphases on reflectivity, see Walton; Walton, Graham, and Ward. For a deep study about the implicated nature of character voice in Lewis, see Yuasa.

fantasy author Neil Gaiman has reminisced that it was *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* that first made him realize there was an author in and behind books—and that perhaps he could be one too (Gaiman). However, the Ransom books—the Cosmic Trilogy and the *Dark Tower* fragment—are distinct from Lewis's other popular fiction as Lewis is a character within the action of the speculative world. Beyond allegory and memory, there are two other examples where Lewis plays such a role, both of which are written during WWII and during the writing and publication of the Ransom books: *The Great Divorce*, where Lewis is the Dantean protagonist, and *The Screwtape Letters*, where Lewis is an Oxford don who finds some demonic epistles and publishes them for the world. Granted this "Lewis" character-narrator link between the Ransom books and *The Screwtape Letters* as well as a shared publication context, it is time to turn to archival discoveries that invite further links between *Screwtape* and Lewis's other WWII-era fiction of the late 30s and early 40s.

The Screwtape Universe and the Manuscript History

Screwtape: *the Manuscript Story*

Unlike the scraps we have of most of Lewis's published fiction (see Hooper, *Past Watchful Dragons*), the original manuscript of *Screwtape* exists in complete form at the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library. A detailed report of this MS. was made by James T. Como in 1980 and published in *The Bulletin of the New York C.S. Lewis Society*. From the perspective of a copy editor, Sandy Feit confirmed Como's work, offering minor clarifications. Except for a few notable restarts—where Lewis changed his mind about a paragraph, turned the page over, and began again—the letters of the first edition and in their print run in *The Guardian* (2 May 1941 through 28 Nov. 1941) are much the same as they were in the handwritten first draft.

Unlike most of the manuscripts that were in C.S. Lewis's possession at the end of his life, the *Screwtape* MS landed at the Berg. As a relatively obscure Oxford don with a growing Christian profile, he had no concern for literary posterity; he was only concerned that the German bombing might destroy his work. He sent the MS. with a personal note to his literary friend and spiritual mentor, Sr. Penelope. Here are excerpts from his brief and personal note written on 9 Oct. 1941.

> Dear Sister Penelope
> […] immediately after that "the power which erring men call chance" put into my hands Mascall's two books in the Signpost series which continued the process. […]

> I enclose the MS. of Screwtape. If it is not a trouble I shd. like you to keep it safe until the book is printed (in case the one the publisher has got blitzed)—after that it can be made into spills or used to stuff dolls or anything. […]
> Yours sincerely
> Clive Lewis (*CL* II.493)

This oft-quoted letter[5] has those classic features of the Lewisian quality: self-deprecation, a quick-moving collection of ideas, intriguing little thoughts on spirituality, and a running list of good books.

For those of us who revel in serendipity and common sense, Sr. Penelope did *not* use the MS to stuff dolls or light fires. When Lewis shared the *Screwtape* MS with his penfriend in 1941, he was an Oxford don with a budding public career. Fifteen years later, Lewis was the famous author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.[6] In 1956, Sr. Penelope asked Lewis if he would like the MS back. Lewis joked in an 18 Jul. 1956 letter that she should try to "persuade any 'sucker' (as the Americans say) to buy the MS of *Screwtape*," so that she might use the money for charity (Hooper, *Companion* 720). The "sucker" turned out to be the highly respected Berg Collection in the New York Public Library.

A typescript of *The Screwtape Letters* is also still in existence, acquired by the Wade Center at Wheaton College with some revisions (CSL MS-107). Besides its historical value, what is essential about this file is the inclusion of two other items: an unpublished C.S. Lewis letter and a handwritten Preface to *The Screwtape Letters* that is substantially different from the first edition Preface. We will look at each of these in turn.

In and of itself, it is not surprising to find a new letter; there are dozens of known unpublished letters and thousands of letters likely lost in history. It is *this* particular letter that is intriguing. Written on a torn scrap of thick paper, the letter is addressed to Lewis's former pupil, Mary Neylan (née Mary Shelley). The literary relationship between Lewis and Neylan grew over the years, and Neylan converted to Christianity through Lewis's continued spiritual advice. Here, published for the first time, is a letter C.S. Lewis wrote to Mary Neylan:

[5] See Green and Hooper 199; Sayer 273-74; Hooper, *Companion* 70; Vaus 176; see also a number of internet references and blogs, including Hamilton.

[6] Biographers cover Lewis's life well, but see Samuel Joeckel's conceptualization of Lewis as a public intellectual in *The C.S. Lewis Phenomenon*.

> Oct 20th, 1941
> Dear Mrs. Neylan,
> I'm just sending the proofs* of the enclosed back to the publisher and wondered if you wd. care to amuse yourself with the MS. You might keep it till the book appears, in case of accidents: after that it can be made into spills. I've just read two books in the Signpost series by Mascall—*Man. His Origins and Destiny* and *The God-Man* (Dacre Press 1/6) both of which I thought excellent. I hope Dan and Sarah and yourself are all well. I got your address from Fr. Adams this morning.
> Yours sincerely
> C.S. Lewis[7]

The similarities with the 9 Oct. 1941 letter to Sr. Penelope are striking. Both letters include a reference to Eric L. Mascall's books and ask his correspondent to safeguard a *Screwtape* manuscript until the publisher prints it. After that, of course, "it can be made into spills." Like Sr. Penelope, Mary Neylan chose not to destroy the manuscript. Some decades later, she placed the letter and the accompanying typescript in the Wade collection.[8] In October 1941, Lewis chose the same approach on two separate paths to keep his forthcoming book safe from the capricious possibilities of war.

In the same file as the letter is a handwritten preface. One can see how a preface emerged as a necessity for the book. In *The Guardian* serial print run, the letters begin simply with the startling statement, "My Dear Wormwood—I note what you say about guiding your patient's reading and taking care that he sees a good deal of his materialist friend. But are you not being a trifle *naïf*?" (*Guardian* 211). Evidently, some were confused by this peculiar use of *in medias res* (*Screwtape Letters and Toast* 5). Thus, when Geoffrey Bles offered to publish *The Screwtape Letters* in book form following its serial publication, Lewis produced a preface to prepare the reader. This preface, in Lewis's tight handwriting of the period, is also included in the same file at the Wade Center.

The Screwtape Universe

The preface printed in *The Screwtape Letters* is familiar to readers. Instead of a note clarifying what is a new genre—what I have dubbed Demonic

[7] Manuscript excerpts: "The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis, n.d., n.p. CSL/MS-107, The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. In transcribing this letter, I have mimicked Walter Hooper's style in the Oct 9, 1941 parallel letter to Sr. Penelope. The only reference to the letter I have found is Starr, *Light* 26. Written in pencil next to "proofs" is an asterisk (*) that points to a note on the top left corner that says in a different hand, "Screwtape Letters."

[8] There is no acquisition record, but a range of 1975-1985 is probable, see email from Laura Schmidt, 21 Sep. 2012.

Epistolary Fiction, an employment of what David Mark Purdy calls "double inversion" (75-84) or what Hsiu-Chin Chou calls "double irony" in *Screwtape* (93-94)[9]—Lewis's approach plays on the fictional world of the *Letters* by making himself not the *author* of this demonic correspondence, but its *discoverer and publisher*. In the imaginative landscape of this preface, the letters are not set up as a fictional device to offer spiritual direction but are an artifact of historical interest. As Lewis is the secretary of the Ransom chronicles, so he is the secretary of the Screwtape affair. The character-narrator Lewis begins by saying that he will not divulge how the letters fell into his hands (9)—language reminiscent of the Sr. Penelope letter. As he continues in the preface, Lewis gives the reader some advice about what to do with demons and a warning that the perspective of Screwtape and Wormwood may be warped. The final paragraph concludes with a concern of historicity—the question of aligning terrestrial and demonic timelines—and warning the reader about putting too much stock in WWII events as a literary context.

The preface, then, becomes a fictional frame that expands the speculative universe of *The Screwtape Letters*. There are not many details of Screwtape's world in the book, most likely because we are meant to bring our Dantean-tinged imaginations of hell and images of Milton's demonic hordes to *Screwtape*. However, the details resemble 20th—century cubicles more than 14th—century crypts and medieval frescoes. Screwtape's hell is bureaucratic, officious, and invested in a complex lowerarchy with expendable junior devils tasked with tempting humans in an historically referential Earth. The kingdom of "Our Father Below" is characterized by noise, "the grand dynamism, the audible expression of all that is exultant, ruthless, and virile" (*Screwtape* 114). The Lowerarchy is about deception and darkness—twin concepts that may be better described as "anti-light"—a darkness that is finally pierced with the exaltation of the Patient in Letter XXXI.

The preface that readers have always known adds the question of time, "the diabolical method of dating," implying that demonic chronology may follow different rules. Lewis mentions the "sort of script which is used in this book" (9), but it is unclear what that might mean on a literal level. Moreover, Lewis is once again a character in his own fictional world as he is in the Ransom books. He is not the author of *The Screwtape Letters*, but a public benefactor bringing the letters to light. This connection with the Ransom chronicles is intriguing. As it turns out, the handwritten preface in the Neylan file at the Wade adds a new layer to our understanding of Screwtape's speculative universe as well as to our knowledge of the Field of Arbol.

[9] *Screwtape* is commonly categorised as satire, Filmer 2, 62, 112, 133; Huttar 91. See Potgieter 1-8, who suggests parody as a possible genre as well.

THE HANDWRITTEN PREFACE

I was able to publish the handwritten preface in full in *Notes and Queries* (296-98), to which I will refer when quoting from the handwritten preface and to the first edition when quoting from the published book form. The entirety of the handwritten preface comprises five paragraphs; it shares with the published preface three of its four paragraphs. These three shared paragraphs are alike in all but some minute details. However, the handwritten preface offers a significant change in paragraph one and inserts an entire paragraph before the concluding paragraph of the first edition version. This inserted paragraph is not insignificant. The preface we have in the first edition is 281 words, while the handwritten preface has a total of 485 words. At 201 words, the inserted penultimate paragraph is nearly as long as the entire first edition preface.

The first edition preface begins like this: "I have no intention of explaining how the correspondence which I now offer to the public fell into my hands" (9). Similar in tone, but significantly different in content, the handwritten preface begins like this: "Nothing will induce me to reveal how my friend Dr. Ransom got hold of the script which is translated in the following pages" (297). There are some shifts in working language: "script" and "pages" becomes "correspondence" in the first edition; "script" is a tangible, physical object not a metaphor for language; and "nothing will induce me to reveal" softens to "I have no intention of explaining." The phrase, "got hold of" in the handwritten MS is likewise more aggressive than the passive phrase, "fell into my hands." Beyond these stylistic changes, however, the startling difference is that it is Dr. Ransom and not C.S. Lewis who has found the letters. When the first edition was published, no one asked how an Oxford don could have a series of demonic letters fall into his hands. As we see, Lewis's handwritten preface makes space traveler Dr. Ransom the discoverer, while literary historian Lewis is merely writing an editorial preface.

Beyond a new understanding of who discovered the Letters, we now have information that Screwtape's correspondence has been "translated." The fourth paragraph of the published preface always included a crucial detail about Screwtape's fictional universe: "in general the diabolical method of dating seems to bear no relation to terrestrial time" (10). The single change in that paragraph is that it is now Dr. Ransom who refuses to (or cannot) reproduce it instead of C.S. Lewis (i.e., the C.S. Lewis that exists in the primary world). With the handwritten preface, we now have the idea of translation. As the demons are not simply speaking English, so a specifically demonic language is introduced into our understanding of Screwtape's fictional universe. Moreover, this demonic language has been translated not by C.S. Lewis, the literary historian and critic, but by his friend, Dr. Ransom, the interstellar philologist.

But why would Dr. Ransom know a demonic language? He is a philologist, clever with languages, and disappointed when he discovers he will not need to learn a new language on his trip to Perelandra (*Perelandra* 25). As bright as he is with languages, able to learn the Malacandrian tongue quickly in his voyage in *OSP*, he learned the language in a community of native speakers. As it is unlikely that Ransom had lived in the underlands long enough to learn a demonic dialect—a comment that highlights how intriguingly local Dante's own infernal travels were—it is also difficult to believe that one could discern the details of 31 letters without some demonic version of the Rosetta Stone. Moreover, the published preface may perhaps refer to a writing system: "the sort of script which is used in this book can be very easily obtained by anyone who has once learned the knack" (*Screwtape Letters* 9)—a phrase that has a new layer of meaning with knowledge of the handwritten preface. Presumably, longtime readers of the published preface have assumed that "sort of script" is referring to the flavor of demonic epistolary fiction—an interpretation that would actually betray Lewis's fictive framing in the preface. Understanding "script" as language, and specifically a written system, makes the best sense. Still, the language needed to be learned. Without prior knowledge of the language, the unearthed Letters would be unreadable.

The new paragraph in the handwritten preface, inserted between paragraphs two and three of the published preface, gives us some of the solution to this problem. I will quote this remarkable inserted paragraph from the *Notes and Querie*s publication of the handwritten preface:

> But it is, however, too late to make any mystery of the process whereby Dr. Ransom learned the language. The original of these letters is written in what may be called Old Solar—the primitive speech of all rational creatures inhabiting the solar system. How Ransom came to learn it I have already related in a book called *Out of the Silent Planet*; but when I wrote that book he and I were both mistaken in supposing it to be the local speech of a single world—that world which its inhabitants call Malacandra. We now know better, but there is no time within this preface to discuss the problems of extra-terrestrial philology involved. But it should be added that the translation is necessarily very free. The capital letters used for pronouns when they refer to that Being whom Screwtape describes as the Enemy are, for example, a most ingenious device of Ransom's for representing a quite different (and involuntary) phenomenon in the original. On the other hand many words mentioned where Screwtape is discussing what he calls "the Philological Arm" were already English, for naturally devils whose terrain is England are well skilled in the language of their proposed victims. (297)

Needless to say, this new paragraph provides an entirely new imaginative dimension to the Screwtape universe. It is a necessary detail in light of the introduction of Dr. Ransom as the translator in the first paragraph. In particular, it shows us that Screwtape's language is Old Solar, known in its own tongue as Hlab-Eribol-ef-Cordi, and shared by all non-human "rational" beings. Humans have long since forgotten the language or lost it in the Fall. However, Old Solar is spoken both by the terrestrial species of other worlds—Hnau, or rational, sapient, sentient beings including but not limited to humanoids—as well as the celestial beings, trans- or multi-dimensional angel-like creatures called Eldila (singular "Eldil") in the Trilogy.

Contextually speaking, this published preface is dated as 5 Jul. 1941. On 9 Nov. 1941—one month after Lewis sent the full handwritten MS to Sr. Penelope—he wrote to her again, stating that "I've got Ransom to Venus and through his first conversation with the 'Eve' of that world: a difficult chapter" (*CL* II.496).[10] The first edition of *The Screwtape Letters* was released on 9 Feb. 1942; within three months, the first draft of *Perelandra* was complete (*CL* II.520). Lewis's work on *Perelandra*, the second installment in the so-called Ransom Trilogy, began after he wrote the preface to *The Screwtape Letters* and concurrent with the editing and publication of the letters. As such, we see a direct parallel between the handwritten preface's additional paragraph quoted above and a passage in *Perelandra* where Lewis (the fictional character-narrator within both the Cosmic Trilogy and *Screwtape*) is speaking with Dr. Ransom. Lewis is asking Ransom why he should expect to understand the language of Venus. Ransom assures him that he learned the Perelandran language on Malacandra because they are both "Old Solar." Ransom continues:

> [T]here was originally a common speech for all rational creatures inhabiting the planets of our system […]. That original speech was lost on Thulcandra, our own world, when our whole tragedy took place [i.e., the Fall]. No human language now known in the world is descended from it. (*Perelandra* 25)

Verlyn Flieger is correct that a "gap in the coherence of Lewis's invention arises here" (53). In *OSP*, Ransom is told that the Hnau of Malacandra all had different languages, but adopted the Hrossian dialect as a lingua franca. Since returning to Earth, he continued to practice the language with the Eldila, and he speaks it fluently within the other two books of the Trilogy. Ransom discovers that he did not get the entire story on Malacandra and that a much older language must have been preserved in the Hrossan community. Flieger

[10] In a 23 Dec. 1941 letter to Arthur Greeves, Lewis mentions both *The Screwtape Letters* and the concept of *Perelandra* worked out in principle to the end; see *CL* II 504-05.

continues: "The language of the hrossa is not just primitive. It is primal. It is the language Adam spoke to God, the original language of participation, of poetry, and of myth. On Thulcandra, the silent planet, the break is complete" (54). If, as this handwritten preface suggests, the *Screwtape* fictional world is part of the Ransom fictional universe, it is intriguing that the demons would speak some form of the primal Old Solar language, even if it evolved or decayed over time and was laced with transliterated human words necessary to the demonic-human interface.

We do not know what the writing system of Old Solar is. In *Perelandra*, Ransom writes an epitaph in Old Solar using Roman letters. The passage perhaps hints at the possibility that a writing system exists, but we cannot be sure (188-9). The possibility is more explicit in *Out of the Silent Planet*, where Dr. Ransom sees "a collection of rolls, seemingly of skin, covered with characters" (101). Explaining why there were few books in Malacandra, one of the planet's intellectuals explains that it is "better to remember" than to write books (101). Dr. Ransom is concerned that important things might be forgotten, but the Oyarsa (the highest Eldil) of that world will remind Malacandrians if they forget. In this sense, there is a repository of necessary knowledge whose continuity is determined not by paper and pen, but a dialogue that goes beyond writing to oral traditions, folk art, family life, and interstellar communication. In particular, Dr. Ransom had lived with the Hrossa, a kind of Hnau that valued folk poetry. The intellectual Sorn explains that "The hrossa used to have many books of poetry. […] But now they have fewer. They say that the writing of books destroys poetry" (*OSP* 101). Clearly, there is written language on Malacandra, but it is not a progressive good value. So although there is a writing system of Old Solar, the spoken word is more dynamic than the written word. In this sense, Ransom had gained oral literacy without written literacy according to the values of the local linguistic ecosystem and the anthropological accident of encountering a culture at a certain point of its history.

The local dialect of Old Solar makes for a complexity in the fictive linguistic structure of the Field of Arbol. Sorn philosophers and historians explain to Ransom that each of the three main Hnau species on Malacandra has its own languages, but the *lingua franca* was the Hrossa tongue, for the Hrossa "are our great speakers and singers. They have more words and better" (*OSP* 114). While in the handwritten preface and *Perelandra* there is a single rational language, there is the sense that the Old Solar language on Malacandra is discovered or developed rather than revealed, which would seem to fit Lewis's pattern of creation in the Ransom Trilogy. In *Perelandra*, the Lewis character asks Ransom about this:

> I admit I don't understand about [the languages of other Malacandrian communities]. One thing I do know, and I believe I could prove it on purely philological grounds. They are incomparably less ancient than Hressa-Hlab, specially Surnibur, the speech of the Sorns. I believe it could be shown that Surnibur is, by Malacandrian standards, quite a modern development. I doubt if its birth can be put farther back than a date which would fall within our Cambrian Period. (25)

Whether the author had a grander plan of language development on Malacandra or this was written in response to a perceived "gap" in the fictional universe, I do not know. In any case, in the original preface of *The Screwtape Letters* and in *Perelandra*, the author has connected the local language of Malacandra conceptually with a core or primal or essential language.

However, we are still left with a critical question: How did Ransom learn to read the "script" of Screwtape's correspondence? Nowhere is Ransom explicitly taught the written form of the language. Though he may have opportunities to learn it as he communicates consistently with Eldils throughout *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*, as the bodies of Eldila are not compatible with the bodies of embodied *hnau*, it is unclear what technology could mediate their shared literacy. The question of the literary script remains unanswered. It could be that "this sort of script," as Lewis calls it in the handwritten preface, is relatively easy to transliterate. It could even be that the demonic letters were written in a terrestrial script that Ransom either knew or could learn,[11] meaning that the alphabet or syllabary of Mars and Earth are not as primal as the speech itself. Indeed, in Lewis's conceptual world, by the time Dr. Ransom "got hold of" the Screwtape correspondence, he was equipped with knowledge of the written language or able to interpret it with some work and was nearly fluent in the spoken language.

When Screwtape Haunts in Eden: Testing the Possibilities of the Screwtape-Ransom Speculative Universe

What does the handwritten preface add to our knowledge of Lewis's created worlds? Given the overt links that Lewis made between Screwtape's speculative universe and the Field of Arbol, reading the books in order of production—*OSP*, *Screwtape*, *Perelandra*, *THS*—bears significant fruit and represents an organic contextual rereading of the texts within the development of Lewis's *oeuvre*. In particular, a close reading of parts of the second book in the Cosmic Trilogy demonstrates that *Perelandra* presupposes *The Screwtape Letters*, and the Ransom books are best read with Screwtape's (under)world as part of

[11] In Connolly ch. 11, the Great Malevolence and his demonic horde speak English well enough, but write computer code in ancient Aramaic.

the cosmic framework of The Field of Arbol. My larger project stemming from this discovery is a rereading of the Ransom Trilogy and *The Screwtape Letters* with the assumption that they are part of the same speculative universe. For now, by way of close reading I will simply offer two examples of how *Perelandra* presupposes *Screwtape*.

The Perelandra Prologue and Screwtapian Haunting

The first example comes from the opening chapters of *Perelandra*, where Lewis the character-narrator has left the train station at Worchester to walk to Ransom's home. Almost immediately, Lewis feels a creeping worry. In self-reflection, he soon discovers that he is truly afraid of the interstellar Eldila that have drawn Ransom into habitual communication. This fear is twofold—an uneasy feeling about the numinous nature of the ethereal beings, and the fear of being drawn into a conspiracy. What begins as a troubled mental conversation develops into complete disorientation. Darkness and mist are descending upon the street. His mind becomes fixated upon the unseen, non-organic Eldila as he trudges unwillingly forward to Ransom's cottage. His thoughts are bombarded with doubts and dark ideas, and an impulse whispers to him, "Go back, go back," with astonishing force (*Perelandra* 12). Indeed, three times he is on the verge of turning back, even when he is upon Ransom's doorstep.

Though not naturally given to such fears, Lewis becomes afraid of the shapes in the darkness—still thinking about the extraterrestrials Ransom had described in *Out of the Silent Planet*—and he begins to suspect he is having a breakdown. "Absolute terror" nearly overwhelms him (14). As he reaches Ransom's dark home, Lewis describes his mental state: "I staggered on into the cold and the darkness, already half convinced that I must be entering what is called Madness" (14). He falls into intellectual doubt and reflection about the state of madness itself, and, finally, into sheer fear of the dark. At the height of Lewis's terror, he breaks off into the voice of the raconteur:

> I have naturally no wish to enlarge on this phase of my story. The state of mind I was in was one which I look back on with humiliation. I would have passed it over if I did not think that some account of it was necessary for a full understanding of what follows—and, perhaps, of some other things as well. At all events, I *can't* really describe how I reached the front door of the cottage. Somehow or other, despite the loathing and dismay that pulled me back and a sort of invisible wall of resistance that met me in the face, fighting for each step, and almost shrieking as a harmless spray of the hedge touched my face, I managed to get through the gate and up the little path. And there I was, drumming on the door and wringing the handle and shouting to him to let me in as if my life depended on it. (15)

There is initially no reply, and the note Ransom leaves for Lewis does not soothe his embattled wits. Again he fights the desire to retreat. It is, ironically, the idea of having to return by the same way that stays Lewis's hand, as well as some dim sense of not wanting to disappoint his friend. He enters the house, in the dark, still terrified and confused—terror and confusion only heightened by the alien speech of an invisible, non-fleshly being in the room.

Ransom arrives home to a petrified Lewis cowering in a corner. It is not long before Ransom puts him at ease, and the exchange that follows is useful to note:

> "You got through the barrage without any damage?" [Ransom asked].
>
> "The barrage?—I don't understand."
>
> "I was thinking you would have met some difficulties in getting here."
>
> "Oh, that!" said I. "You mean it wasn't just my nerves? There really was something in the way?"
>
> "Yes: They didn't want you to get here. I was afraid something of the sort might happen but there was no time to do anything about it. I was pretty sure you'd get through somehow."
>
> "By they you mean the others—our own eldila?"
>
> "Of course. They've got wind of what's on hand . . . "
>
> I interrupted him. "To tell you the truth, Ransom," I said, "I'm getting more worried every day about the whole business. It came into my head as I was on my way here—"
>
> "Oh, they'll put all sorts of things into your head if you let them," said Ransom lightly. "The best plan is to take no notice and keep straight on. Don't try to answer them. They like drawing you into an interminable argument." (21)

The Dark Lord/Bent Eldil/Black Archon/Oyarsa of Tellus/Thulcandra/Earth is introduced in *Out of the Silent Planet*. He alone of all the Eldila rejected the authority of Maleldil, the creator and Lord of The Field of Arbol (see *OSP* ch. 18). Earth's Oyarsa is clearly the Christian image of the Devil or Satan, the "suttlest Beast of all the Field" in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (9:86).

The distinction between the primary world we live in and the secondary world of Lewis's texts, though fantastic, is relatively thin. Downing notes how Lewis's connectedness between the real and imagined worlds we share with the author is in contrast to Tolkien's careful distinction in "On Fairy-stories":

> Throughout the Ransom trilogy (as well as the Narnia chronicles), Lewis's strategy is to make readers sense that his fantasy world is more real than they might have supposed—and that their "real world" is more filled with the fantastic than they might have supposed. (*Planets* 47)

Lewis as character-narrator bridges the primary and secondary world as a Janus figure who faces both worlds—a fact that Downing notes and that the handwritten preface makes even more explicit. This feature deepens the potential connection between the reader and the secondary world of the text. The fictional universes are speculative, fantastic, and in some cases impossible, blending outdated cosmology, classical and biblical myth, and futuristic and unproven technologies. However, as Lewis lives both in our world and the world of the text, so the reader can identify with everyman Ransom in *OSP* or the patients in *Screwtape* or Mark and Jane in *THS*. The handwritten preface deepens this link between primary and secondary world by overtly equating the Oyarsa of Earth with "Our Father Below" in *The Screwtape Letters*. They are not just the same figures in the Christian element of the fiction or the mythic elements in the secondary world; within the stories themselves, they are the same character that occupies the same speculative universe, the Field of Arbol, which spans the heavens above, the Earth, and all that is below the Earth (Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:3).

Granted this unifying feature of Lewis's invented world, as the Eldila of Thulcandra are likewise the demonic hordes of Earth, we recognize that Ransom's friend Lewis experiences severe demonic temptation in chapter one of Perelandra. This link warrants a more in-depth look at the psychology of temptation that the Lewis character-narrator experiences in the *Perelandra* prologue, noting the differences a Screwtapian rereading make.

Though the text cloaks specifically religious language—"I knew what Ransom supposed Maleldil to be" (*Perelandra* 15)—there is no doubt that the "demoniac violence" (16) of the "barrage" (21) Lewis experiences during walk to Ransom's cottage is a series of demonic temptations. Even if sensitive readers are open to linking the speculative universes of Screwtape and Ransom, they might be struck by how unScrewtape-like the temptation is on the surface of the narrative. In particular, it is not terribly subtle, not the "soft underfoot" *modus operandi* of the senior tempter.[12] Moreover, as William O'Flaherty has argued, it is "keeping things out" that is "The Devil's Best Tool" and "Screwtape's Preferred Method" (*C.S. Lewis Goes to Hell* 270-72; "Battlefield of the Mind"). O'Flaherty mentions dozens of moments where Screwtape's preferred approach

[12] See Letter XII, "the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts," *Screwtape Letters* 65.

is to "keep out of his [i.e., the Patient's] mind the question" of the Satanic argument (*Screwtape* 18), simultaneously keeping his mind off demonic tactics and honest self-reflection. In particular, this keeping-things-out method does not seem to be the approach in the Unman's temptation of the Lady of Perelandra and seems somewhat contrary to the mental attack Lewis experiences on the walk to Ransom's cottage.

While a critical assessment of the Unman's approach through Screwtape's eyes is worthwhile (see Lobdell 49-52; Glover 176), I would argue that it is a categorically different kind of event than the barrage Lewis experiences in Worchester. Moreover, part of the critical energy of *The Screwtape Letters* is that the senior demon's approach is distinctive to other approaches. As it is a Terran temptation scene, and as the temptation is ultimately unsuccessful, it need not be Screwtape's singular school of thought that determines the attack Lewis experiences in *Perelandra*. However, a closer look at the nature of Screwtape's "keeping things out" and a look at the atmosphere of the temptation scene show closer links than one might initially suppose.

First, it is notable that although Screwtape claims to work by keeping things out of the Patient's mind, he is actually working on a higher-order approach. Letter III shows that Screwtape's approach is more complex as he advises Wormwood in the delicate task of misdirection: "Keep his mind on the inner life. […] Keep his mind off the most elementary duties by directing it to the most advanced and spiritual ones" (*Screwtape* 20). The point is not merely keeping the Patient from attending to the right things (i.e., evil things), but a plan of concealment, befuddlement, and a Satanic sleight of hand.

The very first demonic epistle lays out Screwtape's approach well. Screwtape once had a sound atheist in his care that, while reading in the library, had a train of thought that had a potential for dangerous (i.e., spiritually healthy) consequences. Screwtape steadily moves the Patient's mind away from philosophical logic to the base question of sustenance: "Much better come back after lunch and go into it with a fresh mind" (13). Screwtape may have considered reasonable argument with his patient, who seemed eager to avoid being drawing into his own mental train of consequential thought. "The trouble about argument," Screwtape opines, "is that it moves the whole struggle onto the Enemy's own ground" (12; see Williams 52). In hoping that "*argument* was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's clutches" (11), Wormwood risks the Patient discovering the essential truth of God's being in reality. Instead, "practical propaganda" has the result of re-centering the spiritual map away from whether an idea is "true or false" and provides new signposts, such as whether it is credible, useful, durable, progressive, rooted, or admirable. As the goal is to discombobulate the Patient rather than to prove what is, after all,

unprovable, Screwtape has a safer approach: "Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church" (11).

The higher order of attack, then, is not merely keeping things out or putting them in, but using either of these approaches with the ultimate purpose of moral or spiritual transvaluation. Thus, in this first letter, Screwtape advises Wormwood to interrupt "the fatal habit of attending to universal issues," and to "fix his attention" on "the stream of immediate sense experiences" (12). While O'Flaherty's analysis certainly shows that Screwtape thinks it is easier to remove ideas than to plant them, "keeping things out" is simply one tool in the demonic (anti)spiritual toolbelt. It is metaphysical misdirection, a wag the dog approach to cosmic conversation, moving the Patient from metrics of reason, argument, and truth to contextual and subjective values of demonic utility. Thus perplexity is far more potent than philosophical proof, which may involve inserting ideas in the Patient's head, keeping other ideas out, or simply befogging the Patient altogether.

With this clarification of Screwtapian transvaluation—changing the rules of the game from truth to utility—the *Perelandra* prologue shows an approach that exemplifies Screwtape's. Turning briefly to the text, Lewis faces a cacophony of mental noise on his walk from the train station. There are dozens of different "temptations" that he faces, including the twinned fear of the "good" and of being drawn in, a temptation to flee, and a temptation to distrust Ransom. In each case, it is a reasonable argument that stabilizes Lewis, redirects his attention to his task, and urges him forward. For example, Lewis becomes fixated upon the Eldila: "The farther I went the more impossible I found it to think about anything except these eldila" (*Perelandra* 12). In facing the utter fear of the Eldila as something supernatural and alien, Lewis is able to think through the false binary of natural and supernatural. Thus, he can then confront his misleading "comfort in the […] false security and accepted confusion of thought" that the binary invites (11).

The temptation to flee is real for Lewis in this walk. When Lewis realizes he has forgotten his bag, he resists the "immediate impulse" to go back to the station—a feeling at the moment that made it seem "perfectly obvious that I must retrace my steps" (*Perelandra* 11). Fortunately, "reason or conscience awoke and set me once more plodding forwards" (11). A second time, Lewis had the impulse to retreat: "'Go back, go back,' it whispered to me, "send him a wire, tell him you were ill, say you'll come some other time—anything.' The strength of the feeling astonished me" (12). Astonishment is a noted Screwtapian goal, but Lewis's counterattack takes the form of rational thought: "I stood still for a few moments telling myself not to be a fool" (12). Wondering that it might be a kind of nervous breakdown, in a scene precisely parallel to Screwtape's atheist not wanting to deal with urgent matters of truth on an empty stomach,

Lewis found a new excuse to avoid meeting Ransom: "Obviously, I wasn't fit for any such jumpy 'business' as his telegram almost certainly referred to" (13). The text does not say what propelled Lewis forward—perhaps merely his sense of duty to Ransom—but he continues walking while suspecting that it was "sheer madness to go on" (13). Even on the doorstep of Ransom's cabin, Lewis wants to turn and flee: "the impulse to retreat, which had already assailed me several times, leaped upon me with a sort of demoniac violence. Here was my retreat left open, positively inviting me. Now was my chance" (16). Once again, the reasonable side of Lewis's thought process wins over his panic. Going back held all the dangers that he had somehow won through. Moreover, in what might be a hint of angelic defense forces at play or simply Lewis's rational side, "something better came into my mind—some rag of sanity and some reluctance to let Ransom down" (16). Taking a mental breath, relying on rational thought rather than mental noise, Lewis tries the door and finds he is safe inside.

The text includes an important verbal clue. Lewis enters Ransom's cottage, and the door slams behind him (16). This door-slam returns to the root of one of Lewis's fears on his walk from the station, the fear of getting "drawn in"—"the sense that a door has just slammed and left him on the inside" (10). This fear, linked with his fear of meeting an Eldil, Lewis faces moments after he is inside Ransom's cottage. Beyond all doubt, an Eldil speaks to Lewis, and he finds himself unable to respond. Rather than alleviating the fear, Lewis finds that his fear rests on a deeper level: "I felt sure that the creature was what we call 'good,' but I wasn't sure whether I liked 'goodness' so much as I had supposed" (19). Lewis is disturbed at his encounter of goodness and hopelessness to escape it, but it is ultimately that helplessness that "saved me and steadied me" (19). The logic is evident in the text, "For now I was quite obviously drawn in. The struggle was over. The next decision did not lie with me" (19-20).

It is Ransom who ultimately helps Lewis, but throughout the narrative, Lewis doubts Ransom numerous times. First, Lewis doubts whether Ransom can know what these wholly other creatures, the Eldila, could want, and which side they are truly on. Then a "nasty idea" (12) occurred to Lewis—an example of putting ideas in—that Ransom might have fallen for a cosmic con and opened Earth to alien invaders. This line of thought develops into a kind of trilemma like the one that Lewis the BBC commentator uses in *Mere Christianity* (52; see Bassham 171-225) or that the Professor uses of Lucy's story in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (46-50), where lunatics or cads are pitted against what can seem like truth-telling improbabilities. Was Ransom on the side of evil and drawing Lewis in, or was he a dupe who is ignorant of the real issues, or was he telling the truth? "How did I know he was even a dupe?" Lewis asks himself. "He might be something worse . . . and again I came to a standstill" (*Perelandra* 13).

While duty to Ransom is clearly part of Lewis's ability to go on, it is ultimately rational thought that steadies Lewis. Lewis himself "had come much too far to dismiss them [i.e., the Eldila] as unreal" (15), and he had a core knowledge of Ransom's character:

> The reader, not knowing Ransom, will not understand how contrary to all reason this idea was. The rational part of my mind, even at that moment, knew perfectly well that even if the whole universe were crazy and hostile, Ransom was sane and wholesome and honest. And this part of my mind in the end sent me forward—but with a reluctance and a difficulty I can hardly put into words. What enabled me to go on was the knowledge (deep down inside me) that I was getting nearer at every stride to the one friend: but I *felt* that I was getting nearer to the one enemy—the traitor, the sorcerer, the man in league with "them" . . . walking into the trap with my eyes open, like a fool. (13)

Reason and knowledge do not eradicate the temptation and doubt. Lewis's arguments, however, put the issue back on "the Enemy's own ground," as Screwtape puts it, and Lewis ultimately makes it through the barrage, which at times "was such hard work that I felt as if I were walking against a headwind" (12).

The one thing that Lewis is not able to reason out is his temptation to feel like he is going mad. He not only feels the madness but worries about it, creating a downward spiral of worry about worry that readers can no doubt testify to in their own psychological experience of self-doubt. Lewis nearly loses himself in a cluster of self-bafflement, where "each moment my opinion about sanity changed" (14-15). This battle with madness and the fear of madness, and the various physical sensations that Lewis feels during the attack, demonstrates the close link between the psychological and physiological aspects of the attack. Humans are animals with souls, Screwtape argues, amphibians dwelling in both spirit and flesh (*Screwtape* 44), so "whatever their bodies do affects their souls" (25). Thus, we see a link between Lewis's sensations and his temptations. The atmosphere of Lewis's walk from the train goes from evening gloom to murky fog to early darkness and near-blind dark. And as he walks, his mental state moves from malaise to fear, then to absolute terror and ultimately blinding panic. The darkness and the fear are linked, reciprocal, and leading to a fear of the fear itself that mimics the downward spiral of madness. The temptation is layered with a self-reflective hysteria, as Lewis worries about being duped, considers a dozen manifestations of possible danger, and is terrified by his own insanity.

This tactic, I argue, is precisely the kind of temptation Screwtape would have encouraged when battle lines are drawn. In fact, this chapter in *Perelandra*

seems to be the inversion of Wormwood's unsuccessful temptation in Letter XIII of *Screwtape*. Both patients—Lewis in *Perelandra* and the unnamed "Patient" in *Screwtape*—go for a walk, but they experience temptation differently. Lewis's intellectual terror—which we are to imagine comes exceptionally close to being successful in turning him back—comes from the context of his temptation: it is night, there is mist and darkness, and the shadows form a reciprocal horror that augments and supports the intellectual attack. Lewis experiences not just the sheer physiological terror of darkness, mist, loneliness, and supernatural presence, but these things make him consider the possibility of his own madness. Wormwood, however, allows the Patient to go on a pleasant walk, on a nice day, past nostalgic and beautiful scenery, giving the disastrous context for the Patient to read a book that gives him real pleasure for its own sake. It is at this point that the Patient begins to strengthen in noticeable ways in the narrative; Letter XIII is a turning point in the relatively loose plot of *The Screwtape Letters*. Wormwood lost the battle not merely because of the nature of his internal temptation, but in the context of the attack. As such, the Patient was protected from Wormwood's advances.

While the parallels are not precise as the respective battles in the long-term war have different consequences, I argue that attacks in the first chapters of *Perelandra* are Screwtapian in form as it sets in place the ideal demonic context that is lacking in Wormwood's approach and because it applies Screwtape's approach of misdirection skillfully. Although the demonic attack on the Lewis character-narrator in *Perelandra* is comprised of various kinds of arguments, it is reason and rational thought—including reasonable trust in a friend—that steadies Lewis and keeps him from giving in to the temptation. The temptation follows Screwtape's approach of using misdirection to re-center the Patient's focus by having him concentrate on his own fear, a sense of the unknown, and doubts about his sanity. Where the temptation ultimately fails is in creating doubt about Ransom, which roots Lewis's intellectual response and allows him to press through to the cottage. Even in attending to the soul-body link, as Screwtape encourages Wormwood to do, Lewis's argument of the truth of Ransom's character keeps him trudging forward. The *Perelandra* prologue presupposes *The Screwtape Letters*, showing that the two books can be profitably read together in terms of the psychology of temptation.

Speaking in Unknown Tongues: Weston's Miraculous Reception of Old Solar

More briefly, a second example of how *Perelandra* presupposes *Screwtape* is the explanation for the antagonist Weston's acquisition of the Old Solar language in Perelandra, which is obscurely described in the text. Weston was one of the great villains of *Out of the Silent Planet*. He had learned some Old

Solar on that planet, but he never went beyond a tourist guide's level of Malacandrian tongues. When the Malacandrian Oyarsa places Weston on trial for the first murders of a planned genocide, he needed Ransom to translate for him on his defense. When they returned to Thulcandra, Ransom strengthened his significant grasp of Old Solar gained from the native Malacandrians through conversation with Eldila, preparing him for the next move in the cosmic resistance. When he went to Perelandra, Ransom spoke comfortably with the Lady of that world in Old Solar. Though her words were often simple and even childlike, and Ransom must improvise at points when there are translational difficulties, her philosophic use of the language is particularly vivid. As Tami Van Opstal argues, communication on Perelandra is so connected to the ancient unity of language Barfield argues for, that speech is sometimes even unnecessary. Moreover, "the Green Lady's own use of language is concrete and metaphorical. […] Her world is meaningful and unified; she even translates Ransom's abstract terms back into concrete and living terms" (107).

The ways in which Weston/The Unman is an interpretation of Milton's "suttlest Beast" Satanic figure are no doubt worth pursuing in detail. Though there are apparent differences, there is certainly a parallel between the barrage Lewis experiences and the multiple approaches of Weston to tempt the Lady. Moreover, Ransom's inner battle with his "voluble self" (*Perelandra* 140-47)—where he is sick of the entire demoniacal conversation—is not unlike the mental spirals of Lewis in the prologue. For Ransom, however, Weston's project is far from subtle. Within minutes of arriving on Venus, Weston holds Ransom up at gunpoint. Impatient with the crudity of it all, Ransom chides Weston to go ahead and "begin and end as soon as possible whatever butcheries and robberies" he intended to perpetrate (88). Ransom is then shocked when he realizes that Weston can converse in "the Old Solar language with perfect fluency" (86). In a lengthy tutorial, Weston informs Ransom that God and the Devil are really both aspects of the same Pure Spirit or Life Force—a proposition that sounds remarkably like the "Materialist Magician" of Letter VII in *Screwtape* (39-40). To support his thesis, Weston offers his Old Solar proficiency as proof of his calling from the Force. How did he learn the language?

> "Guidance, you know, guidance," croaked Weston. He was squatting at the roots of his tree with his knees drawn up, and his face, now the colour of putty, wore a fixed and even slightly twisted grin. "Guidance. Guidance," he went on. "Things coming into my head. I'm being prepared all the time. Being made a fit receptacle for it." (94)

There is no doubt in the context that Weston has really been guided by the Eldila of Earth, and was sent to Venus and equipped linguistically by the Oyarsa of Earth, ultimately possessed by the Devil (Lobdell 90-91). What is perhaps

implicit in the text is made explicit by the handwritten preface to *Screwtape*: the Eldila of Earth, devils, also speak Old Solar. Others have written about the Unman Weston as demonic figure (e.g., see Downing, *Planets* 83; Lobdell 90; Schwartz 73-82); what the handwritten preface does is synchronize the possibilities and reassert the link between primary and secondary world. The Oyarsa of Earth can teach Old Solar because it is the native language of his kind, and we know more about Earth's Oyarsa from pictures of "Our Father Below" in *The Screwtape Letters*.

What else would one expect in the speculative universe of Arbol? Languages develop over time, and as Earth's language systems are so different from Old Solar, one might wonder about the demonic linguistic development. The handwritten preface suggests that demons/Fallen Eldila must learn the local language they use in temptation (e.g., English, Kiswahili, Manx, or Japanese), which is also confirmed in the fact that the Oyarsa of Malacandra did not know the many languages of Earth. Linguistically speaking, Eldila are not omni- or supra-sentient (*THS* 202); they must learn languages as Hnau learn them, or at least be exposed to the language before using it.

C.S. Lewis fans and researches have delineated, as far as is possible in published materials, the linguistic system of Old Solar.[13] The handwritten preface adds two dimensions to the linguistic system heretofore unknown. First, the translation from demonic Old Solar to English is "necessarily very free"—a fact that explains the difference in linguistic style between *The Screwtape Letters* and the Old Solar speeches in the Ransom books. Second, there is a linguistic trick within Old Solar that gives deference to The Enemy (God, or Maleldil) in every reference. Dr. Ransom's translation of the Letters uses capital letters for "representing a quite different (and involuntary) phenomenon in the original" ("Unpublished Preface" 297). We can deduce that Lewis's fictional language, Old Solar, is so close to "one of Barfield's 'ancient unities,'" as Ransom calls it in *That Hideous Strength* (261), that God is praised in the very utterance of slighting references or pronouns where God is the referent. Speaking the name of Maleldil, or even giving indirect reference to that Being, then, must have been distasteful to all the Eldila under the Oyarsa of Earth, hence the use of the term, "the Enemy." This distaste might cause Earth's Eldila to develop their own

[13] E.g., see Hamm; "Old Solar." See also the 11 Aug. 1945 letter to an American linguist, Victor M. Hamm, whom Lewis credits with being "the best Old Solar scholar among my readers so far" (CL II.666). Van Opstel extends the value of this linguistic work in her argument that Old Solar ancient unified language (106-07). *Perelandra* shows the linguistic evolutionary movement that Owen Barfield talked about in *Poetic Diction* and *History in English Words* in three characters: the Green Lady (ancient unity, original participation), Ransom (recovered unity, final participation), and Weston (established disintegration, abstract nonsense).

patterns of speech over time, but even as they spit out through gritted teeth reference to the Creator of the universe, the essential structure of Old Solar displays deference. Despite these irregularities of translation, according to the handwritten preface, Dr. Ransom is able to create a capable translation of Screwtape's correspondence into English, and Weston is able to learn—or simply to receive—Old Solar from the Oyarsa of Earth.

At one place in the Ransom Trilogy—before the entire speculative framework has been worked out—the question arises of whether angels and demons on Earth are also Eldila. The Malacandrian Oyarsa notes that Earth's Eldila are different in some way, but Ransom was not able to determine in what way (*OSP* 158). We can only conjecture about what this difference may be, but reading *Screwtape* with the Cosmic Trilogy suggests that any difference between Terran demons and extraterrestrial Eldila is the result of the Fall—the great tragedy that sequesters Thulcandra to a secluded corner of the solar system. Given Weston's supernatural reception of Old Solar—not to mention an enhanced strength, though not omnipotence—it is clear that the Bent One of Earth is the Oyarsa of Earth. The Oyarsa of Malacandra explains how the Oyarsa of Thulcandra was a great Eldil who "became bent." The Oyarsa of Earth waged war upon the Earth and in the heavens, endangering not only Thulcandra—a world under his protection—but spilling out violence upon ancient Malacandrians as well. The "Bent Years" dominated until the other Eldila of the Field of Arbol won a great war, driving the Bent Oyarsa back to Earth, where he was then bound (*OSP* 153). The Prince of the Air (Eph 2:2), Lucifer, the Bent One of Earth is, in the speculative universe of Lewis's WWII-era fiction, the Eldila known as Oyarsa of Tellus; the handwritten preface suggests he is also Our Father Below of Screwtape's fictional world.

Other Possibilities

The force of my argument, then, is that we no longer have a Ransom *trilogy*; instead, *The Screwtape Letters* is the second book in a rough tetralogy. Moreover, in a recent paper I have published with Lewis handwriting expert Charlie W. Starr, we argue that Lewis attempted to answer *The Screwtape Letters* with a parallel angelic correspondence. "The Archangel Fragment" is a literary experiment, a 239-word fragment that shows the essential problem with writing in a heavenly diction. In a single 231-word sentence, Lewis flies from the negligible to the eternal, from the details of butterfly's wing to divine heights, from human animality to angelic imagination, from a tiny spark to the entire cosmos, from fetal life to glorified, deified humanity. The experiment in divine prose is lost in its own ever-exalting language, but adds critical details to the speculative framework of the Screwtape-Ransom universe—including a reminder that although the Bent Oyarsa rules our world, we are not left without

aid and succor. Finally, if we include *The Dark Tower*—an incomplete story about a parallel space or time, a hellish echo of Cambridge where people are enslaved by a demonic Stinging Man—we really have a Ransom Cycle that forms the bulk of his WWII-era fictional literature.

This analysis is only a beginning toward a reconstruction of the speculative universe of the Field of Arbol. However, there are numerous benefits if we conceive of *The Screwtape Letters* as a Ransom book and Screwtape's fictional world as part of the Field of Arbol. I have already indicated that aspects of *Perelandra* make sense with *Screwtape* in the background. Specifically, *Perelandra* is an extension of the "psychology of temptation" Lewis imagined when he first conceptualized *Screwtape*. Indeed, despite the mythic leap from Tellus to Venus, the temptation of Lewis and the Lady of Perelandra are case studies no less revealing in subtlety and piercing relevance to Terran readers than Wormwood's patient. Moreover, *The Screwtape Letters* bridges the far more complex Eldilology of *Perelandra* with the relatively undeveloped vision of the Eldila in *Out of the Silent Planet*. Linking *The Screwtape Letters* to the Ransom books allow us to reconsider the cosmic framework of that series, and augments our understanding of the oft-read but under-studied *Screwtape*. The publication and analysis of the handwritten preface adds to the linguistic analysis of Old Solar—the first new evidence to emerge on the topic in some time.

Finally, this paper, the result of considering significant manuscript evidence in a rereading of canonical texts, is suggestive of new directions in understanding Lewis's WWII-era myth-making project. Downing argues that in the Ransom books, "Lewis makes plain his intent to break down the barriers between myth and history" (*Planets* 141)—an argument that Starr extends in his study on C.S. Lewis and myth, *The Faun's Bookshelf*. The Ransom Cycle, considered as a conceptual whole, proposes a mythic, cosmic, universal language from which all tongues are born, extending the argumentative possibilities of Wolfe and Van Opstal. The Ransom Cycle is situated within a secondary world that spans all of the mythopoeic dimensions of the human and the divine, the aethereal and the earth-bound, darkness and light, and the heavens, the earth, and the worlds beneath the earth. And the Ransom Cycle tells the story of creation and transformation, the Fall of our world and a fall averted,[14] the Incarnation and the Cross as the reconstituted center of time, and an interstellar war where the battle lines are not merely the great theaters of war on Earth, but the threat of European colonial genocide of indigenous peoples, the fate of a newborn world in the temptation of her Lady, the mundane temptations at our kitchen table or on a short walk, and the intimate yearnings

[14] "Milton wrote the epics of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Mr. C.S. Lewis has essayed the epic of Paradise Retained" (Hamm 271).

of the human heart. The extent of Lewis's myth-making in the Ransom Cycle remains to be explored in full. Using newly published manuscript discoveries, however, allows us to deepen our reading of canonical texts, thus expanding our vision of the playful and imaginative possibilities that Lewis invites us into in his WWII-era speculative world-building project.

Acknowledgments

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"I wolde be there / Byonde the water": Consolation in *Pearl* and *The Silver Chair*

Tiffany E. Schubert

In his famous *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon admires Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy* as an intellectually impressive work composed in the midst of an intellectually dark age. However, he ultimately judges its philosophy as useless for consolation: "Such topics of consolation, so obvious, so vague, or so abstruse, are ineffectual to subdue the feelings of human nature" (216). Obvious, vague, and abstruse thought does nothing for our emotions. Reason—at least abstruse reason—cannot conquer passion. Gibbon does concede, "Yet the sense of misfortune may be diverted by the labour of thought; and the sage who could artfully combine in the same work the various riches of philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, must already have possessed the intrepid calmness which he affected to seek" (216). Philosophy, according to Gibbon, is not consoling, but the intellectual labor it demands can distract from misery. Perhaps most modern readers of *The Consolation* would side with Gibbon—after all, what effect do philosophical truisms have after the death of a child?—but C.S. Lewis, the self-proclaimed "dinosaur," contends that Boethius was effectual:

> Gibbon has expressed in cadences of habitual beauty his contempt for the impotence of such 'philosophy' to subdue the feelings of the human heart. But no one ever said that it would have subdued Gibbon's. It sounds as if it had done something for Boethius. It is historically certain that for more than a thousand years many minds, not contemptible, found it nourishing. (*The Discarded Image* 90)

According to Lewis, Gibbon is stylistically potent, but historically wrong. As hard as it is for modern readers to believe, Boethius's work appears to have consoled for generations.[1]

[1] Lewis himself listed the *Consolation* as one of the ten most influential books in his own life.

Lewis's own relationship to consolation is by no means straightforward. Indeed, in his deeply personal *A Grief Observed*, written after the death of his wife Joy Davidman, he sounds rather Gibbon-like: "Talk to me about the truth of religion and I'll listen gladly. Talk to me about the duty of religion and I'll listen submissively. But don't come talking to me about the consolations of religion or I shall suspect that you don't understand" (28). In the midst of his grief, he does not find religion to be at all consoling. As he points out, the loved one might be in a better place, but the one left behind has suffered irremediable loss; the mother who has lost a child "[n]ever, in any place or time, will […] have her son on her knees, or bathe him, or tell him a story, or plan for his future, or see her grandchild" (30). He even speculates that God is "[t]he Cosmic Sadist," who enjoys our pain (35). There is a rawness to his emotions, especially in the early pages of *A Grief Observed*, that the rational arguments of theology seemingly cannot assuage. But Lewis later becomes disgusted with his own emotions: "Feelings, and feelings, and feelings. Let me try thinking instead" (41). He turns away from unchecked emotion and begins his path to consolation by turning to thought. He admits that "[a]ll that stuff about the Cosmic Sadist was not so much the expression of thought as of hatred" (45-6). His path to consolation is not complete, or at least the book is not complete, until he experiences a visitation from Joy which "was incredibly unemotional. Just the impression of her *mind* momentarily facing my own" (85). Lewis remains tentative about the source of this vision, but he confesses, "Wherever it came from, it has made a sort of spring cleaning in my mind" (86). The emphasis here is on mind rather than emotion; indeed, he muses, "The dead could be like that; sheer intellects" (86). Lewis has some kind of intellectual rather than emotional visitation that scrubs and polishes his mind. This vision is certainly not Boethius's long conversation with Lady Philosophy, but it has a transformative effect. And Lewis's description of this unemotional visitation suggests that consolation is not merely an emotional affair. At the end of *A Grief Observed*, Lewis alludes to another consoling lady, Dante's beloved Beatrice: "How wicked it would be, if we could, to call the dead back! She [Joy] said not to me but to the chaplain, 'I am at peace with God.' She smiled, but not at me. *Poi si tornò all' eterna fontana*" (89). Just as Beatrice turned from Dante to the eternal fountain, Joy turned from Lewis to that same fountain. In the end, religion has brought consolation, not the consolation that everything will be as it was before, but the consolation that the beloved has turned from a lesser love to a higher one.

Consolation plays a role not only in Lewis's scholarship and personal life, but also in his fiction, particularly in *The Silver Chair*. Most obviously, the Narnian chronicles, with their knights, kings, ladies, dragons, witches, giants, and quests, belong to the genre of medieval romance. In *The Silver Chair*, Jill and

Eustace embark on a quest to find a missing prince who is being held prisoner by a witch, whose lair is under a city inhabited by giants. The romantic structure of the story is undeniable. However, this romance is also a consolation. While Boethius's *Consolation* is certainly the archetype of the consolation genre, I would like to spend more time with the fourteenth-century, anonymous *Pearl*, another consoling dream vision, whose landscape and characters are analogous to *The Silver Chair*.

The connection between Lewis and the *Pearl*-poet has received less critical attention than his relationship to other medieval poets.[2] T.S. Miller notes that most critics have focused more on Lewis's relationship with Dante than with the *Pearl*-poet. Miller himself explores the *Pearl*-poet's influence on Lewis, though he focuses on *Till We Have Faces* rather than *The Silver Chair*.

Few critics, even those attentive to literary allusions, have noticed the analogy between *Pearl* and *The Silver Chair*. In a chapter entitled "'The Healing of Harms': Allusions in *The Silver Chair*," Marvin Hinten notes allusions from Scripture, Homer, Chaucer, Arthurian literature, *Gulliver's Travels*, Coleridge, and Lewis's own life. Amanda M. Niedbala points to echoes of the *Odyssey* throughout the story. Charles A. Huttar sees the influence of Apollodorus and Horace on the silver chair itself, and Spenser, "not as a possible source for anything in Lewis's book but as providing convenient expression of the truism that we live in a world of change" (140). Only Stephen Yandell has noticed echoes of *Pearl*:

> Eustace and Jill's arrival in Aslan's country echoes the dreamers' entrance into a paradisiacal garden of numerous medieval dream visions. The "smooth turf, smoother and brighter than Jill had ever seen before, and blue sky and . . . things so bright that they might have been jewels or huge butterflies" calls to mind Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, the garden of *The Romance of the Rose*, and the jeweler searching for his daughter in *Pearl.* (135)[3]

[2] Lewis's relationship to the *Pearl*-poet was scholarly as well as imaginative. In *Experiment in Criticism*, he provides examples of realism of presentation—"the art of bringing something close to us, making it palpable and vivid, by sharply observed or sharply imagined detail"—from both *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Patience*: "the pinnacles in Gawain that looked as if they were 'pared out of paper'; Jonah going into the whale's mouth 'like a mote at a minster door'" (58).

[3] I do not wish to dispute that the landscapes of *Book of the Duchess* and *The Romance of the Rose* influenced Aslan's country. Dante's Earthly Paradise with the stern Matilda and the memory-removing Lethe is probably also an influence. Nevertheless, *Pearl* is more straightforwardly part of the consolation tradition than the other works; comparing it to *The Silver Chair* helps us see how Lewis participates in that tradition.

I would like to expand on Yandell's brief observation and see how both *Pearl* and *The Silver Chair* belong to the consolation tradition. Indeed, it is the shared tradition rather than influence that is the more central claim of this article. *The Silver Chair* is analogous to *Pearl*, and exploring the analogy reveals the role of consolation in Lewis's chronicle and provides an opportunity to reflect on the consolatory power of fiction itself. Both *The Silver Chair* and *Pearl* take place in beautiful landscapes that are retreats from everyday experience, in the dream-world of Paradise and the fantasy world of Narnia. In both works, the consolers—the maiden and Aslan—speak with unsettling sternness and have an extraordinary access to the divine that adds authority to their consolation. In both works, the reader also finds consolation, the kind of consolation that only stories can bring.

Pearl and *The Silver Chair*

At the beginning of *The Silver Chair*, "It was a dull autumn day, and Jill Pole was crying behind the gym" (I.549). This tearful opening places the chronicle in the tradition of consolation; Boethius's *Consolation* begins with the declaration that "[s]ad verses flood my cheeks with tears unfeigned" (1.m1.4). At the beginning of *Pearl*, it is August, the season in which corn is harvested, and the *Pearl*-dreamer laments that "[f]or care ful colde that to me caght. / A deuely dele in my hert denned ["I stretched my hand in stark despair; / My heart lamented, deaf and blind"] (1.5.50-51).[4] Jill has been bullied by the children at the Experiment House, and the *Pearl*-dreamer has lost his beloved pearl. Later, in Aslan's country, Jill grieves for Eustace: "she remembered again the scream that Scrubb had given when he fell, and burst into tears" (II.556). No other Narnian chronicle has such a tearful beginning. Both Jill and the *Pearl*-dreamer, both in the season of harvest, need consolation.

They find that consolation in landscapes that share important attributes and transcend ordinary experience. Both Paradise and Aslan's country feature a forest, cliffs, and the color blue. In *Pearl*, the cliffs of Paradise are crystal and gleam with light, and the dreamer sees the maiden at the foot of a cliff. In *The Silver Chair*, the cliffs in Aslan's country are also remarkable; they are so high that the clouds below "might, at first glance, be mistaken for sheep" (I.554). In addition to the blue sky, some of the birds in Aslan's country are blue; the tree trunks in Paradise are "as blwe as ble of Ynde" ["with boles as blue / As indigo silks"] (2.2.76). The mention of "things so bright that they might have been jewels" echoes the language of jewels that runs throughout *Pearl*: the *Pearl*-dreamer walks on pearls, the pebbles in the river are sapphires, emeralds, and

[4] I am using the Middle English text of "Pearl" that appears in *The Complete Works of the Pearl Poet*, translated by Casey Finch. The translations are Marie Borroff's.

other gems, and the maiden herself is covered with pearls. Both landscapes are bejewelled.

The river is perhaps the most important feature in both Paradise and Aslan's country.[5] It draws both characters deeper into the new world. Jill, "dreadfully thirsty" (II.556), follows the river's sound: "The wood was so still that it was not difficult to decide where the sound was coming from. It grew clearer every moment and, sooner than she expected, she came to an open glade and saw the stream, bright as glass, running across the turf a stone's throw away from her" (I.556-7). The *Pearl*-dreamer is also drawn to the river: "I wan to a water by shore that scherez / Lorde, dere watz hit adubbement!" ["I came to the shore of a waterway: / Dear God, what brave embellishment"] (2.4.107-8). At first, the dreamer is full of joy and wonder at what he sees: "The fyrre I folwed those floty vales / The more strenghthe of joye myn herte straynes" ["The more I explored that plashy place / The greater strength did gladness gain"] (3.1.126-7). He longs to cross over to the other side of the river: "Forþy I þo3t þat paradyse / Watz þer ouer gayn þo bonkez brade" [It could not be but Paradise / Lay beyond those noble banks, thought I"] (3.2.137-8). The river itself is cause for joy and wonderment, but it also draws the dreamer beyond himself, to paradise.

For all the dreamer's wonder and joy, and all his longing to cross the river, he fears its dangers: "But woþez mo iwysse þer ware / þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde" ["But dangers direr than before / Appeared, the more I wandered there"] (3.3.151-2). His fear only increases when the maiden appears. The dreamer tells us that the longer he looks at the maiden who stands on the other side of the river,

> More then me lyste my drede aros;
> I stod ful stylle and dorste not calle.
> Wyth yyen open and mouth ful clos
> I stod as hende as hawk in halle.
>
> [More dread diminished my delight;
> I stood stock-still and dared not call.
> With eyes wide open and mouth shut tight
> I hoved there tame as hawk in hall]
> (4.1.181-4)

[5] Rivers are, of course, important throughout the entire *Commedia*. Perhaps Lewis is thinking more of Dante's river than of the *Pearl*-poet's rivers. Nevertheless, I think that there are striking correspondences between the landscape of *The Silver Chair* and *Pearl* that are worth exploring.

The dreamer stands as still as a well-trained hawk, gazing at the maiden, and the more he gazes on her, the more his dread increases; his dread not of her, but at what will happen if he is unable to "stalle" the maiden (188). He fears both the dangers of the river and the danger of once again losing that which he has already lost.

Jill, too, experiences fear at the riverbank, though of a different kind than the *Pearl*-dreamer. The lion with the "heavy, golden voice" refuses to go away while she drinks and makes no promise "not to—do anything" (II.557). He also calmly informs her of the "girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms" that he has swallowed (II.557), information that is not particularly reassuring to a distraught and terribly thirsty child. The narrator tells us that she "stood as still as if she had been turned into stone, with her mouth wide open. And she had a very good reason; just on this side of the stream lay the Lion" (II.557). Both Jill and the speaker respond to their river-side consolers with unmoving astonishment. Jill's mouth is wide open, and the dreamer's is closed, but both are unable to speak; both narrators resort to similes at this emotionally-heightened moment. Both Jill and the dreamer have seen their consolers before this moment: Jill saw the lion after she pushed Eustace off the cliff, and the dreamer has seen the maiden before, on Earth. Nevertheless, both respond with fear, whether fear of loss or fear of destruction, in the midst of a beautiful landscape. Consolation does not come from consolers who are entirely safe or easily approachable.

For Jill, the river is a test of courage. It is the only stream from which to drink, and she is desperately thirsty. But she must face the lion to satisfy her thirst. Jill drinks—though "[i]t was the worst thing she had ever had to do" (II.558). For the *Pearl*-dreamer, the river is a barrier between himself and the maiden, a barrier that he, in obedience to God's will, should not attempt to violate. The maiden chides him for his foolish language when he declares that he would be joyful if he could cross the river separating them (5.5), and the dream ends when he attempts to cross the river (20.1-2). The river separates the earthly from the heavenly—a barrier that ought not be violated. The dreamer's attempt to cross it, unlike Jill's drinking, is not divinely sanctioned. Nevertheless, for both characters the river is a test of their surrender to the divine.

And for both Jill and the *Pearl*-dreamer, the consolers they meet at the river speak with remarkable authority and with surprising sternness. The *Pearl*-maiden is one of the blessed, indeed a queen of heaven, a title to which the dreamer objects. Jill does not fully understand who Aslan is, but "[i]t never occurred to Jill to disbelieve the Lion—no one who had seen his stern face could do that" (II.558). He reveals himself to be the one who has called her into this world, sternly correcting her theological confusion: "'You would not have called

to me unless I had been calling to you,'" Aslan tells Jill (II.558). This stern lion is the Somebody behind their whole adventure. Like Aslan, the *Pearl*-maiden sternly corrects the dreamer; "Sir, 3e haf your tale mysetente" ["Sir, your tale is told for nought"] is the first thing she says to the dreamer, a strangely distant opening given the former intimacy between them (5.2.257).

Stern consolers are, of course, part of medieval literature: Lady Philosophy sternly rebukes the Muses:

> Her eyes lit on the Muses of poetry, who were standing by my couch, furnishing words to articulate my grief. For a moment she showed irritation; she frowned, and fire flashed from her eyes. "Who," she asked, "has allowed these harlots of the stage to approach this sick man? Not only do they afford no remedies to relieve his pains, but their succulent poisons intensify them." (1.p1.7-9)

Beatrice chides Dante for his tears over Virgil. Indeed, modern readers are often bewildered by the severity of Beatrice's first words to Dante; she seems so unaccountably harsh. Where is her empathy? After all, isn't the dreamer's anguish understandable and justified? Isn't Dante's grief over the loss of Virgil appropriate? Should a distraught child be told she must drink while the threat of being swallowed hangs over her? To answer that question, we must understand what consolation means and how that consolation transforms the consoled.

Consolation, at least in the medieval tradition, is not merely a temporary emotional respite but a transformation of vision that allows one who has experienced loss to see that loss in its proper philosophical and theological context. Generally, the person grieving has some metaphysical confusion, understandable though it may be, about what has happened.[6] Certainly, there is emotional relief in consolation literature (and, as I will discuss later, simply as *literature* it appeals to the emotions and imagination as well as the reason).[7] The

[6] This medieval tradition has ancient roots. According to Antonio Donato, "In antiquity 'consolation' was the activity, often pursued by writing a text, of trying to alleviate or heal the grief experienced by a person who faces conditions such as old age, exile, death of loved ones, poverty, sickness, and so forth. The goal of such an activity was not to offer sympathy to the grieving person but rather to show him/her that the activity of grieving is not the appropriate response to the situation" (398).

[7] Donato argues that even Lady Philosophy seeks emotional consolation for the dreamer: "In 2.3 Lady Philosophy recalls the many privileges and honours that *Boethius* acquired throughout his life; in 2.4 she focuses on the positive things that he can still enjoy. That is, the well-being of his father-in-law Symmachus, the love of his wife, and the political distinctions that his sons still enjoy. Once more, Lady Philosophy does not seem to be

landscape of Paradise brings some emotional consolation for the dreamer: "The dubbement dere of doun and dalez, / Of wod and water and wlonk playnez, / Bylde in me blys, abated my balez, / Fordidden my stresse, dystryed my paynez" ["Embellished with such wondrous grace / Were wood and water and shining plain, / My pleasures multiplied apace, / Conquered my cares, dispelled my pain"] (3.1.121-124). The splendor of wood and water and plains abates his sorrow, but this paradisal landscape does not permanently console the dreamer's grief. His vision must be transformed through the stern reproof of the maiden. That sternness serves a pedagogical purpose. The dreamer must accept truth and learn to love the maiden for what she now is, not for what she once was. The dreamer thinks he has lost a pearl, but the maiden tells him, "For þat þou lestez watz bot a rose / þat flowred and fayled as kynde hyt gef" ["You lost a rose that grew in the ground: / A flower that fails and is not renewed"] (5.3.269-70). Her mortal body lacked the permanency of a pearl; it was a beautiful, but fleeting rose that by "kynde," by its very nature, was born to perish. But, through death, his rose has truly become "a perle of prys" ["the worth of a pearl"] (5.3.272). The rose reborn becomes the pearl of great price. This correction of vision continues throughout the dream. The dreamer struggles to accept that his pearl is a queen of heaven; he must learn from the parable of the laborers "[o]f more and lasse in Godez ryche / […] lys no joparde" ["Of more and less,' [...] / In the kingdom of God, no risk obtains"] (11.1.601-2) and that all are kings and queens in heaven. His earthly vision is slowly and sternly corrected by a heavenly one.

Consolation, in the Christian, medieval tradition, also requires submission to God's will, which the dreamer does not do until after he wakes up and is back in the ordinary world where Christ presents himself not as the bridegroom of perfected souls, but "in the forme of bred and wyn" ["in the form of bread and wine"] (20.5.1209). In the final moments of his vision, he fails to obey the maiden's instruction and rushes madly into the river. His desire for paradise is understandable, but he still seems too fixated on the maiden; it is "luf-longyng" ["I longed with love"] (19.5.1152) for her that motivates his attempt to cross the river. His love for her is disordered. He should cross the river out of love for the Lamb, not love for the maiden, and he should only cross after death, not now. The dreamer himself categorizes his attempted river-wading as an act of disobedience: "Hit watz not at my Pryncez paye" ["My prince therewith was not content"] (20.1.1164). He muses, "To þat Pryncez paye hade I ay bente, / […] To mo of His mysterys I hade ben dryuen" ["Had I but sought to content my Lord / […] I had seen and heard more mysteries yet"]

driven by the intention of showing Boethius any philosophical truth but, rather, intends to help him tame his emotions" (418, emphasis in original).

(20.4.1189, 1194). Disobedience denied him insight into God's mystery, but since that moment of disobedience, "to God I hit byta3te" ["And to God committed her full and free"]" (1207). His consolation, the transformation of his vision, is complete when he prays, "He gef uus to be His homly hyne / And precious perles unto His pay" ["O may we serve him well, and shine / As precious pearls to his content"] (20.5.1211-12). The dreamer classifies himself as a household servant and a precious pearl. He and his dear pearl are, in the end, the precious pearls of Christ. The dreamer's submission is thus seen in part through the transformation of the imagery that dominates the poem; he no longer possessively claims the pearl—"Art thou my perle" ["Are you my pearl"] (5.1.242)—but is himself a pearl possessed by the Prince.

Like the dreamer, Jill also learns to see rightly. In the opening chapter at Experiment House, she knows nothing of Aslan or his country; her vision is limited by a narrow, modern dullness, and, as Niedbala argues, a pagan understanding of religion: "Jill and Eustace [...] can only comprehend religion in a pagan manner; they think they were the ones who decided to enter Narnia, attempting to do so by chanting Aslan's name (much like the invocations to the gods present in ancient Greek literature)" (76). But as Aslan tells Jill, "You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you" (II.558).[8] Jill thought she was initiating, but she was really responding. She only knows Aslan as "the somebody"; she must come to know him not as a vague power but as the golden lion that he is. Indeed, in the final chapter, Aslan appears to Jill and Eustace "so bright and real and strong that everything else began at once to look pale and shadowy compared with him" (XVI.660). Jill now sees Aslan as the reality that is so real that it transcends all other realities.

But, since Jill's story is a romance, not a dream-vision, she must learn obedience through a heroic quest. In this, her story resembles another of the *Pearl*-poet's works, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. During their quests both Jill and Gawain travel North and endure difficult terrain during their journey, including cliffs and ravines. Both encounter wretched wintery weather; Gawain faces freezing rain—"When þe colde cler water fro þe cloudez schadde / And fres er hit falle my3t to þe fale erþe" ["the cold clear rains rushed from the clouds / And froze before they could fall to the frosty earth"] (2.727-8)—and Jill experiences "a cruel north wind" and a heavy blizzard on her way to Harfang (VII.591). Both quests involve confrontations with magically potent antagonists who wear green. Both questers confront giants—the "[h]alf-etayn" ["Half a giant"] (1.140) that is the Green Knight and the giants of Harfang. Both Jill and Sir Gawain fail at key moments to perfectly show perfect obedience—he to the

[8] I am indebted to Niedbala for drawing my attention to the importance of this quotation in the reorientation of Jill's vision from pagan to Christian.

rules of the Green Knight's game, she to Aslan's signs. Despite their failures, both are offered grace and forgiveness though Gawain's emotional state at the end of his poem is rather ambiguous; whereas Jill finds peace and joy, it is unclear if Gawain is he able to forgive himself, as the court does, or if he remains full of self-loathing for accepting the girdle.

Through her heroic quest, Jill, the knight of romance, discovers the consolation of obeying Aslan's will. Like the *Pearl*-dreamer, she finds immediate emotional consolation from Aslan, who assures her, "the Boy is safe. I have blown him to Narnia" (II.558) after she confesses that she was showing off. "But," as Aslan tells her, "your task will be the harder because of what you have done" (II.558). The grief that she experiences in Aslan's country comes about because she has not acted rightly; she has been a show-off Thus, her own actions make the task all the harder, but the task itself is part of her consolation, part of the process by which she learns to align her will with Aslan's. While the dreamer, bound by his earthly understanding, struggles to understand the topsy-turvy ways of the kingdom of heaven, Jill (and Eustace), struggle to follow the heavenly signs as they appear in a confusing and distracting world. Indeed, they really only exercise true obedience at the end, when they free Rilian from the titular silver chair; he is the first person in all their travels to ask for something in Aslan's name. Even so, they hesitate: "Yet could Aslan have really meant them to unbind anyone—even a lunatic—who asked it in his name? […] But then, supposing this was the real Sign? . . . They had muffed three already; they daren't muff the fourth" (XI.626). They missed the third sign because they were consumed with their desire for a warm bed and satisfying meal. This time they choose obedience in the face of potential *death*. Puddleglum argues, "'Aslan didn't tell Pole what would happen. He only told her what to do. That fellow will be the death of us once he's up, I shouldn't wonder. But that doesn't let us off following the Sign.'" Courageously, Jill agrees: "'All right!' said Jill suddenly. 'Let's get it over. Goodbye, everyone . . . !'" (XI.626). Obedience demands that they show resolute courage in the face of bewildering uncertainty. Their previous failures to obey have prepared them for this moment of ultimate obedience, just as the dreamer's failure to obey his prince prepares him to submit to that prince.

Jill's grief in Aslan's country arises from her own vice, and she must pay the consequences; for the false courage she displays at the edge of the cliff, she must learn real courage deep underground in the witch's lair. The sadness with which the story first begins, however, is not her fault; she is an innocent victim. Thus, the consolation for her initial tears is the title of the final chapter, "The Healing of Harms"; in *The Silver Chair*, consolation is a kind of healing of harms, whether those harms be self-inflicted or not. Here, Lewis goes beyond the medieval tradition; Boethius is not restored to Theodoric's court, nor is the

Pearl-dreamer reunited with his pearl. The children do not simply resign themselves to the brokenness and insufficiency of this world, putting their hope in the one to come. They actually bring some restoration to this world.

The "harms" in the title refers most immediately to Caspian, who is resurrected in Aslan's country. Jill and Eustace see Caspian's body "on the golden gravel of the bed of the stream," in another echo of *Pearl*'s bejewelled landscape in (XVI.660). Just as the dreamer is able to see the maiden he lost in Paradise, Jill and Eustace are allowed to see Caspian resurrected in Aslan's Country. This consolation is not a turning-back-of-the-clock and a making-things-just-as-they-were (Lewis does the first kind in *The Magician's Nephew* with the miraculous recovery of Digory's mother). Caspian does not return to Narnia; he will never live with his son or see his grandchildren grow up. But the harm of death has been healed as Jill and Eustace learn that death is not irredeemable oblivion.

"[H]arms" also applies to the harms inflicted on Jill and Eustace by the Head and the bullies of Experiment House. These are the harms that caused Jill to cry behind the gym. In this case, things do not go back to the way they were, but to the way they ought to be. Aslan, Caspian, Jill, and Eustace appear to the nasty children and terrify them; the Head calls the police, but "[w]hen the police arrived and found no lion, no broken wall, and no convicts, and the Head behaving like a lunatic, there was an inquiry into the whole thing. And in the inquiry all sorts of things about Experiment House came out, and about ten people got expelled" (XVI.663). Jill and Eustace obtain personal and institutional healing; their tormenters are expelled, and with the removal of the Head, the school becomes a much nicer place. Justice has been served.

Imaginative Realms and The Consolation of Literature

While both works end with a return to this world, the healing work of consolation is only possible because of an escape into another realm. Consolation cannot happen entirely in the everyday. Even Lewis himself experiences consolation through Joy's extraordinary visitation. Dante encounters Beatrice in the lush garden at the top of Mt. Purgatory. Louise Cowan catalogues the landscapes of comedy, where characters escape the normal, customary world and find restoration and rejuvenation:

> For Aristophanes' solitary little hopeful figures, the heavens, or the underworld, or the bedroom are places of strength to be used against the corruption and decay of the city. For Shakespeare, Belmont, the Forest of Arden, the woods outside Athens, and Milford Haven are places of sanctuary and healing. (14)

For the *Pearl*-poet, the dream world is the place where the dreamer can receive a healing vision. For Lewis, Narnia is a place where modern children, wounded by their education and their own vices, can grow in wisdom and courage. Cowan writes, "these other 'places' […] offer an experience of renewal, allowing the time and space necessary to keep the protagonist and other members of the community from despair or some irrevocable justice" (14).The dreamer and Jill ultimately returned to their own worlds, but they are forever changed by their time in another world. The weeping Jill of the first book now confidently plies her crops against the cruel girls who tormented her. The grieving dreamer, who has seen the pearl as exclusively his, is now able to pray that he himself will become one of God's pearls.

Imaginative realms are a kind of consolation for the reader as well as the characters, a consolation that is both a satisfaction of our desires and a reordering of our vision, a consolation that gives us what we want and refines or transforms what we want. Aslan's country, Narnia, and the *Pearl*-dreamer's paradise bring consolation to the reader for the loss of Eden, for a time and a place, whether real or only desired, of beauty, and perfection, and intimacy with nature and with the divine. Just as the landscape diminishes the dreamer's grief, the whole world of the story comforts the reader. Just as Jill and Eustace leave behind the "dull autumn" (a phrase which Lewis mentions three times in the first chapter) and find themselves in "a blaze of sunshine" (I.553), readers also step out of darkness and into light. In "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien speaks of the consolation that fairy stories bring to ancient desires—the desire to fly like a bird, to swim like a fish, to talk to animals, to escape death, and most of all the desire for a happy ending. Here, Tolkien seems to mean an emotional consolation, a vicarious satisfaction of our deepest desires. We can extend his thoughts beyond fairy-stories to include fantasy like Narnia and the visionary world of *Pearl*. The happy ending of *The Silver Chair*, the restoration of the true king and the healing of educational harms, brings the consolation of both joy and justice as the virtuous are rewarded and the vicious punished. The resurrection of Caspian in Aslan's country consoles what Tolkien describes as "the oldest and deepest desire, the Great Escape: the Escape from Death" (74). In *Pearl*, the appearance of the maiden consoles the desire we have to hear from loved ones we have lost. The vision of the New Jerusalem and the procession of the Lamb present the reader with a foretaste of what is, at least from a Christian perspective, the ultimate happy ending. And the dreamer's final submission to God brings a kind of spiritual satisfaction that is emotionally consoling. Thus, reading such stories can be emotionally therapeutic for the reader.

However, that emotional therapy works best when we allow our vision to be reoriented by the story, even if only for a time, just as the character's vision is reoriented. We have to be open to ancient and medieval consolation. We have

to accept that human beings are roses who only become pearls after death and that Aslan is a golden reality. Indeed, this kind of reorientation of the reader's philosophical and theological vision is what both the *Pearl*-poet and Lewis are striving for. Both authors are aiming for more than emotional consolation, whether of immediate grief or ancient desires. Both authors are aiming for what Tolkien, in "On Fairy-stories," calls "recovery": "Recovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining—regaining of a clear view" (67).[9] Both Lewis and the *Pearl*-poet seek to renew their readers' vision, to restore a healthy vision, a vision in which the temporal is seen in light of the eternal, in which the rose is seen for the pearl that it truly is. That recovered vision is essential to consolation.

While such consolation appeals to the mind, it also, through its very medium, touches the heart. Antonio Donato defends Boethius against those who would discredit his work as consolation literature because of his blending of prose and poetry: "Lady Philosophy's use of poetry seems to be in line with the practice, common to many ancient consolations, of combining purely theoretical discussions—designed to appeal to the mind of the addressee of the consolation—with a series of rhetorical and psychological devices crafted to work with the addressees' emotions" (421). Poetry does not detract from, but enhances the process of consolation. Donato observes that "Lady Philosophy makes ample use of myths, images, and exempla to convey in a different way the philosophical theories she outlines in a purely theoretical fashion" (420). Lady Philosophy, despite her banishment of the Muses, combines image and argument. Dream vision and romance, including *Pearl* and *The Silver Chair*, allow the authors to embody philosophical and theological truths in ways that awaken the emotions. This argument is a response to Gibbon's objection; consolation is certainly about the reorientation of theological and philosophical vision, but that reorientation, for *The Consolation of Philosophy*, and for other great works in the consolation tradition, is not simply abstract and intellectual; it is a poetic endeavor that engages the whole person. Gibbon seems to imagine that philosophy consoles simply by conquering what he calls "the feelings of human nature" (216). But consolation, mediated through poetry, is not emotional

[9] Tolkien is careful here to qualify what he means by the recovery of a clear view: "I do not say 'seeing things as they are' and involve myself with the philosophers, though I might venture to say 'seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them'—as things apart from ourselves" (67). Perhaps this seeing "things apart from ourselves" partially accounts for the off-putting sternness of consolers. Sternness may be necessary to detach the viewer from epistemological possessiveness, from our pervasive tendency to see others as our own pearls rather than Christ's pearls.

repression. The beautiful image awakens desire. Aslan, as an image of Christ, has attracted readers for generations.[10]

Indeed, vivid characters like Aslan contribute to the unique power of stories. Stories work not through propositions or syllogism, but through characters. The consolation tradition draws much of its powers from the stern but engaging characters that the protagonist encounters. Lady Philosophy, Beatrice, the *Pearl*-maiden, and Aslan are memorable, engaging, and intimate. They combine a personal relationship with the philosophical and theological lessons that they teach. Even though Lewis becomes disgusted with his own emotional excess and turns to thought in *A Grief Observed*, he does not find consolation merely through logical reflection; he has a vision of Joy that brings him peace. Her presence consoles.

Of course, not all stories are consoling in a healthy way. As Lady Philosophy says of the Muses, "Not only do they afford no remedies to relieve his pains, but their succulent poisons intensify them" (1.p1.8). For Boethius, poetry has become a way of wallowing in grief; it has no healing power and even makes his suffering worse. Stories that console loss by fulfilling it are dangerous. But, as Lewis contends in "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," the real danger lies not in fantasy but in realistic stories in which very real fantasies are fulfilled, "stories about millionaires, irresistible beauties, posh hotels, palm beaches and bedroom scenes—things that really might happen, that ought to happen, that would have happened if the reader had had a fair chance" (38). Such stories leave the reader, in Lewis's words, "undivinely discontented" (38). But fantasy, like the dream-world of Paradise and Aslan's country, is not wish-fulfillment. According to Lewis, it fortifies the reader for life by

> arous[ing] a longing for he knows not what. It stirs and troubles him (to his life-long enrichment) with the dim sense of something beyond his reach and, far from dulling or emptying the actual world, gives it a new dimension of depth. He does not despise real woods because he has read of enchanted woods: the reading makes all real woods a little enchanted. (38)

Fantasy awakens a divine longing for a happiness that goes beyond temporal happiness and enriches the reader's joy in the beauty of this world. As Lady Philosophy tells Boethius at the end of their conversation, "So avoid vices,

[10] This is not to say that poetic images are simply useful vehicles for expressing philosophical and theological consolation. As Lewis advises in "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," "Let the pictures tell you their own moral" (41) and again, "The only moral that is of any value is that which arises inevitably from the whole cast of the author's mind" (42). The consolation of any story arises from the story itself.

cultivate virtues, raise your minds to righteous hopes, pour out your humble prayers to heaven" (5.p6.47-48). His supernatural experience strengthens him for the ordinary life of virtue and prayer.

We all, in this life at least, must return from the enchanted woods to the real woods. The reader closes the book, the dreamer wakes up, and the children return to this world. In *Pearl* and *The Silver Chair*, the characters experience the consolation of right theological perspective and moral growth, through poetic images that stir the heart and the imagination, and help one live well in this world. By returning the children to our world, Lewis is more *Pearl*-poet than Dante, for Dante, within the action of his poem, never wakes up to his exiled life in Ravenna; his will and desire remain in blissful union with the Trinity.[11] But, as Miller writes about *Pearl* and *Till We Have Faces*,

> Life goes on, the fragment of the vision ends, and another hand closes off the narrative with a final flourish of the literal-historical; as in *Pearl*, life continues, the Dreamer awakens—as he must—and the reader closes the book, as we must. There is no "pure allegory," only the historical level of human life, the transcendent sphere of the divine, and the intersection between them that is the subject of both *Pearl* and *Till We Have Faces.* (66)

The literal, historical world is still there, with all its frailty and confusion, but the dreamer and the children and perhaps the reader as well are all better able to live in it because they have escaped from it for a time and have been consoled.

There is the suggestion of a permanent return to Paradise and to Aslan's country—but only through death. When the *Pearl*-dreamer declares that he will live in this country with the maiden, she tells him no one comes to this country without dying: "Thurgh drwry deth bos uch man dreve / Er over thys dam hym Dryghtyn deme" ("Each man must suffer a death foretold / Ere God to this crossing give consent") (6.2.323-324). At the end of *The Silver Chair*, Jill and Eustace hope that they have come to Aslan's country to stay. "'No, my dears,' he said [far more gently than the *Pearl*-maiden does]. 'When you meet me here again, you will have come to stay. But not now. You must go back to your own world for a while'" (XVI.662). For Lewis and for the *Pearl*-poet, there are no shortcuts to final and complete consolation in which right vision and right action, not just temporary emotional reprieve, are the goal. All men must swallow the bitter pill of death to find permanent healing in eternal consolation.

[11] Both the reader and Dante know that he will wake up and return to exiled life. But he does not narrate that return. Compare the end of *Paradiso* to the end of *Pearl*, *The Romance of the Rose*, and *The Book of the Dutchess*, which all end with the dreamer waking up.

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"No Sex, Please, We're Narnians": Turkish Delight, *Twelfth Night*, and the Problem of Susan

Andy Gordon

It would seem churlish not to begin with Turkish Delight. This particular sweet is of course the instrument of Edmund's temptation in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (LWW)*; for an entire generation of British consumers, it is also synonymous with "Eastern promise," as one of the most successful advertising slogans of all time suggested ("100 Greatest TV Ads").[1] And what is advertising but the sacred art of our times?[2] The White Witch sets out to seduce the boy with the promise of fulfilment through unlimited consumption of this particular exotic confectionery. Turkish Delight promises all the pleasures of a part of the world that had long been a byword for the alluring and the seductive; perhaps it is unsurprising that the prospect of endless supplies of the substance (Edmund is promised "whole rooms full of Turkish Delight," and told that he will be able to "eat Turkish Delight all day long" [*LWW* 4.39]) should persuade him to betray his brothers and sisters to her. Perhaps the temptation may seem even greater when wartime rationing is considered; confectionery rationing in Britain would not end until 1953, three years after the publication of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The Pevensie children are "sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids" (*LWW* 1.9)—this is how they come to discover Narnia in the first place.

In a detailed analysis of the particular advertising campaign and the slogan referred to above, Merryl Wyn Davies traces its development over three decades. She describes it as "no innocent confection," but rather "an exotic indulgence [which] stimulates an allure that has titillated European curiosity down the centuries"; it evokes "wafts of haunting music that conjure images of

[1] For those who don't remember or have never seen the advertisement, it can be found at https://retrotvads.com/frys-turkish-delight/.

[2] The idea that capitalism is a religion was suggested by Marx in *Capital* (1894)—"capital becomes the 'religion of everyday life'" (817), taken up by Walter Benjamin (1921), and developed via Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital by a number of thinkers. McCarraher approaches the idea from a Christian perspective; he states that capitalism has its own "iconography" of advertising (241), and discusses "the sacred office of advertising" (235).

desert dunes, sheikhs and obligatory diaphanously clad maidens," and Wyn Davies states that "the advertising department most certainly imbibed the entire history of Orientalist phantasmagoria and indelibly imprinted all its jumbled ambiguities into the consciousness of new generations."

In particular, she notes the association of the sweet with sex: "[t]he Orientalist lexicon begins with the seminal idea of sexual licence and libidinous behaviour as an essential characteristic of Muslim religion and society." Wyn Davies echoes Edward Said here: "the association between the Orient and sex is remarkably persistent" (Said 309). So Turkish Delight offers the promise of the East and this is a sexual promise.

However, as well as its connotations of Eastern sexuality, Turkish Delight has another cultural association—as two manufacturers of the product inform us, it is "traditionally offered […] at Christmas in the West,"[3] and "was initially intended as a luxurious treat during Christmas time"[4]— and in Narnia under the White Witch it is "always winter and never Christmas" (*LLW* 2.23, 6.57). In fact, Cara Strickland writes, in asking for Turkish Delight, "Edmund isn't just asking the witch for candy, he's essentially asking her for Christmas, too." This association with Christmas marks a first connection between *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, a connection this discussion will pursue. *Twelfth Night* has frequently been interpreted in connection with Christmas festivities, in particular with the idea of misrule. Misrule may in turn connect the play and the Christian festival with its pagan precursors, such as the Roman Saturnalia. It represents the world turned upside down. And it is readily apparent that the kind of misrule the play evokes is represented by its sexual dimension—to the extent that at least one commentator has compared the energies and impulses released in the course of the play to those of an orgy (Logan 232).

Narnia may be somewhere that Edmund can get Turkish Delight; indeed it is a location to which Christmas, if not misrule, will come in due course, but it is certainly not a place for orgiastic energies. Jennifer Miller suggests that although Lewis wants to present his imagined world as purged and cleansed of sexuality, this endeavour leaves opportunities for sex to emerge (113). Although she concludes that "sexual desire has no place in Narnia" (114), she demonstrates that, in spite of Lewis's earnest efforts to eradicate it, sex persists in at least two ways—firstly, in the space Lewis leaves for others to (re)inscribe sex where he has attempted to exclude it—both Neil Gaiman and

[3] Bayco Confectionery, Surrey, BC V3Z 0P6, Canada: "One of our most popular items is the children's gift box *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*—a 17.6 oz. box of assorted Turkish Delight packaged with the renowned book and blockbuster movie from the *Chronicles of Narnia* series, *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*."

[4] Truede Ltd, Coventry, UK.

Philip Pullman are cited as examples of writers who, in different ways, have done this; and secondly, in the echoes of other stories in which sex and sexuality do have a place (at least implicitly)—Miller's chosen example is Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen" (first published 1884). Andersen's Queen seduces Kai with kisses rather than Turkish Delight, leaving him craving more, which she refuses on the grounds that she "might kiss [him] to death" (Andersen 239-40; J. Miller 121). I am not sure that the substitution of confectionery for kisses makes much difference; Laura Miller thinks "the scene in which [the White Witch] ensnares [Edmund] swims with sensuality" (*The Magician's Book* 132).

Lewis did not have to look far for a counter to Narnia. He worked extensively on Edmund Spenser; Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590), honouring Elizabeth I, represents the ongoing struggle between (Protestant) Christendom and the forces perceived to threaten it. In Spenser the enemy is basically anyone who can be classed as non- or anti-Christian. The preferred term is "Saracen," and at the outset the poem promises a final showdown between "the great Faery Queene," Gloriana, representing Elizabeth herself, and the "Paynim (pagan) king," whetting its readers' appetites with the prospect of fields stained "with Sarazin bloud." The poem is "overrun with Paynims, Idolaters and Infidels" (Britton and Coles); while "Saracen" was mostly applied to Muslims (superseded by "Turk"), its meaning extended to denote "generic non-Christian villain." Benedict Robinson carefully describes the word as a "mobile and resonant term of difference" (33). It retained its Eastern connotations, however—the Ottomans were well-established as the "evil Empire," *the* great threat to Christendom; by the later sixteenth century, Spenser himself was drawing on a long tradition of Muslim representation. The idea of the "Saracen" persisted; Keats could rely on his audience recognizing his reference to "swart Paynims" in *The Eve of St Agnes* (1820), where it contributes to the medieval atmosphere he is seeking to create. Lewis's Calormenes are Saracens. Not that this excuses the racism; numerous scholars have pointed out that the term and the idea of the "Saracen" are loaded with opprobrium—"a sweepingly pejorative term" (Quinn 19), "an exceedingly hostile epithet" which carried with it "simple behavioral stereotypes" (Sauer 35) such as "treachery, greed, cowardice" (351).

One other influence should be mentioned; the children's writer E. Nesbit, whom Lewis greatly admired.[5] Of particular relevance is her representation of Babylon in *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), where magical powers enable the child-protagonists to visit a variety of ancient locations,

[5] Lewis told American writer Chad Walsh in 1948 that he was finishing off a book for children "in the tradition of E. Nesbit" (Green and Hooper 238).

Babylon among them. This is a model for Lewis's Calormen,[6] but there are some significant differences. One is the ease with which Nesbit allows the children to witness—innocently—a display of what must be relaxed eastern sexual mores; after a Babylonian banquet, the children observe each of the adult women pairing off with a man: "who seemed to be her sweetheart or her husband, for they were very affectionate to each other" (Nesbit 7.120). Though seen through the children's eyes, they think nothing of it; it is just part of the way Babylonians conduct themselves. Nesbit's children are similarly unfazed by what can only be a display of belly-dancing—something else consistently associated with the East.[7] In *The Story of the Amulet*, the children witness a Babylonian entertainment: "[T]here was a dancer, who hardly danced at all, only just struck attitudes. She had hardly any clothes, and […] the children were rather bored by her, but everyone else was delighted, including the King" (7.121).

Another reference that (for various reasons) has no place in Lewis, is to a feature routinely associated with Babylon—the Hanging Gardens. The youngest child does not like the sound of these—"I suppose they have gardens on purpose to hang people in" (Nesbit 6.98). While hanging gardens do not appear in Lewis, hanging (of a sort) does, as I shall show; and hanging is also evoked in *Twelfth Night*, where Feste's innuendos add a distinctly sexual significance to the idea. "He that is well hanged in this world," he declares on his first appearance, "need fear no colours" (1.5.4-5), before going on to announce that, "[m]any a good hanging prevents a bad marriage" (18-19). In Feste's word-play connotations proliferate promiscuously—linking sex and death, Priapic masculinity, capital punishment, and associating both with the institution of marriage. The liberties Feste takes with language are characteristic, and represent the larger liberties suggested by the play's sustained evocation of misrule. The twelfth night marks very precisely the *end* of the season of misrule; the play must finally discipline and contain the unruly impulses and energies that have been unleashed and allowed an indecent freedom. The festive world of "cakes and ale" (2.3.113), presided over by "Sir Toby and the lighter people" (5.1.333), must give way to the sober world of "manners [...] decency [… and] respect" (2.3.85, 90) that Malvolio invokes. Lewis must end *The Chronicles of Narnia* with a similar act of discipline and containment—in his case, the discipline and containment of Susan Pevensie, in whom those unruly impulses appear to have come to reside. This reveals another point of connection between *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Twelfth Night*—the endings of both have been found wanting precisely because that final act of containment fails to satisfy: "Susan

[6] In particular the Calormene formula of "may he live forever," used whenever the ruler, the Tisroc, is mentioned, comes directly from Nesbit's Babylon.

[7] See Wyn Davies, for instance.

[…] is no longer a friend of Narnia [...] She's interested in nothing now-a-days except nylons and lipstick and invitations" (*The Last Battle* (*LB*), 12.127-8).

The ending of *The Chronicles of Narnia* sees Susan singled out; as A.N. Wilson puts it, "Only one of the children from the original quartet is excluded from heaven. This is Susan. She has committed the unforgivable sin of growing up" (Wilson 228). Dissatisfaction with Susan's fate has been widespread. For Alison Lurie, her "banishment" is "deeply unfair" (12), for J.K. Rowling, it is "a big problem," while for Neil Gaiman, who gave currency to the phrase "the problem of Susan" with his 2004 short story, it is both "intensely problematic and deeply irritating" (16); indeed, "problem" is the term most frequently used by readers to express their dissatisfaction. A range of cognate terms is chosen to identify what happens to Susan: for A.N. Wilson, she is "excluded"; for Rowling she is "lost"; for both Pullman and Philip Hensher, she is "sent to hell"; Gaiman simply talks about "the disposal of Susan." Ever since the books were first published, this has been seen as an issue; in 1960 a reader named Pauline Bannister wrote to Lewis to express her unhappiness that Susan did not enter Aslan's country with her sister and brothers. Famously, Lewis replied: "I could not write that story myself. Not that I have no hope of Susan's ever getting to Aslan's country, but because I have a feeling that the story of her journey would be longer and more like a grown-up novel than I wanted to write. But I may be mistaken. Why not try it yourself?"(*Collected Letters* [*CL*] 3.1135-36). This sounds like an invitation: a similar invitation was extended a year later to another reader: "[W]hy don't *you* try writing some Narnian tales? […] Do try!" (*CL* 3.1189).

It is an invitation to write something that Lewis feels he couldn't write and does not want to, something "more like a grown-up novel"; Lewis did of course write novels for adults, such as his "space trilogy," *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Voyage to Venus* (*Perelandra*) (1943), *That Hideous Strength* (1945). The dates of these show that he wrote them at the same time as he was writing the Narnia books (1939-1954), so it must be Susan's story in particular that he did not want to write. Is that a tacit recognition that her story might have had to include sex? He would not have been alone in thinking that this would make it unsuitable for children, of course. I doubt that Lewis could have foreseen some of the developments that have made it possible for others to take up his invitation (reflecting Susan's own interest in invitations). The postcolonial movement known as "writing back," "a field that is ironic, satirical, subversive and crucially concerned with undercutting, revising, or envisioning alternatives to reductive representations in the colonial mode" (Bartels et al 189), has recently produced an example highly relevant to this discussion: Saladin Ahmed's "Without Faith, Without Law, Without Joy" (2013), which writes the story that Spenser couldn't or didn't want to write, the story of the Saracen brothers

Sansfoy, Sansloy and Sansjoy from Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. Like most of the other dissatisfied readers cited earlier, Gaiman, who inspired the collection in which Ahmed's story appears, feels like other readers that Susan's interest in "nylons and lipsticks and invitations" (*LB* 12.128) is an expression of her sexuality, and that she is punished for this by not being admitted to Aslan's country in *The Last Battle*. On behalf of those readers who have shared Bannister's dissatisfaction, Neil Gaiman responds with "The Problem of Susan" (2004). One might nevertheless wonder why Susan's relatively modest interest might merit punishment, and how it might be considered equivalent to those unruly desires that *Twelfth Night* makes it its business to discipline and control.

At the end of the *Chronicles*, Aslan welcomes the others to heaven by telling them: "[A]ll of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadow-Lands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning" (*LB* 16.171). On the face of it, exactly the opposite could be said of *Twelfth Night*—the holiday is over, the term is beginning. Christmas misrule must end. Part of that ending is the punishment and eventual departure of Malvolio—for whom, it seems, no other outcome is available. The treatment of Malvolio has been one cause of dissatisfaction; Logan wonders whether or not he "deserves" what happens to him (228); Lindheim refers to "the unfair punishment of Malvolio" (680). Introducing the 2008 Arden edition of the play, Keir Elam moves from talking about "the duping" to "the tormenting of Malvolio" and then to "the maltreatment of the steward" (Elam 7-8). The play's ending sees Malvolio storming from the stage vowing revenge; despite Orsino's instruction (to no-one in particular, it seems) that he should be "entreat[ed] to a peace" (5.1.373), he does not return. Are we to consider him, like Susan, "excluded" and "lost," his fate a "banishment"? As evidenced by his fantasy—surely a libidinous daydream—of "having come from a day-bed, where [he has] left Olivia sleeping" (2.5.45-6), it seems that he himself has harboured unruly desires. So he and Susan may have a little more in common than a shared interest in hosiery.[8]

It is not the case that Susan has never shown an interest in sex in the course of the *Chronicles*. As Kings and Queens, the Pevensies exercise good government over Narnia, and their reign is "long and happy":

> And they themselves grew and changed as the years passed over them […] Susan grew into a tall and gracious woman with black hair that fell almost to her feet and the Kings of the countries beyond the sea began to send ambassadors asking for her hand in marriage. (*LWW* 17.167)

[8] Lewis refers directly to "the cross-gartered Malvolio" in *An Experiment in Criticism* (54). He also discusses Orsino in "Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem" (58-59).

Susan is desirable, then—and desired. Jennifer Miller points out that "[t]hese marriages […] never take place, and […] the desire for [Susan] is 'beyond the sea,' rather than […] actual romantic love or sexual desire exist[ing] in Narnia"; she takes this as "further reinforcing the idea that sexual desire has no place in Narnia" (114). While there is no doubt that this is the kind of world Lewis wishes to create, it is not quite borne out by the texts. One king who sends ambassadors to Narnia for precisely this reason is the ruler of Calormen, the Tisroc—while Calormen is not "beyond the sea," it is a different country. And when the foreign prince, Rabadash, is in Narnia, he acquits himself well, as Susan recalls, conducting himself "meekly and courteously" while a guest at the Narnian court (*The Horse and His Boy* (*HHB*) 4.57). In *The Horse and His Boy*, the Narnians are in Calormen: Susan is sufficiently interested to be returning the state visit—knowing perfectly well that marriage was the reason the ambassadors and the prince himself came to Narnia. The fact that she, along with her royal brother and their entourage, are in Calormen, following up the ambassadors' initial approaches and the prince's own later overtures, may surely indicate desire on Susan's part. If so, then contrary to Miller's point, this desire has been conceived and nurtured *in Narnia*, where it has been sustained for long enough to motivate this visit to Calormen.

Even Susan's brother, Edmund, though he may not approve of the possible match, seems to see this; he remarks on the "favour" Susan has shown Rabadash, and refers to him in somewhat Byronic terms, describing the Calormene prince as "dark" and "dangerous" (*HHB* 4.56, 58); Rabadash is described as "tall [and] young," like Susan herself, with bright eyes and gleaming teeth (7.88). He is eager and passionate; it is common knowledge in the Calormene capital of Tashbaan that he is "madly in love" with the Queen of Narnia (7.81). Physical and athletic, he has impressed Susan by the display of his masculine prowess—she speaks admiringly of the "marvellous feats" he achieved in the tournaments and fighting games put on for him by his Narnian hosts (4.57).

Rabadash's own dreams of a future with Susan feature their offspring as rulers of Calormen—a wish to procreate, an indication of sexual desire. Though he is aware of the strategic and political advantages of such a match, confident that High King Peter will recognise "the high honour and advantage of being allied to our House" (*HHB* 8.94), this appears to be an afterthought compared to the urgency of his desire—"I *want* her [...] I must have her. I shall die if I do not get her […]!" (8.89). The fact that she seems to be seriously considering this marriage suggests that Rabadash's desire may be matched by her own—she is, then, not just desirable but desiring in her own right.

So we might conclude that Susan *does* desire her "dark-faced lover" (*HHB* 56—the term is Edmund's). But this desire cannot be satisfied—cannot be allowed, in Lewis's scheme of things.

The reason for this is quite straightforward: race. Rabadash is a Saracen, a *paynim*, an infidel. He is the demon "other," "Calormene" having been established, like "Saracen," as Robinson's "mobile and resonant term of difference." Lewis's handling of race has been another major cause of readerly dissatisfaction; writing in 1998, Pullman finds it unnecessary to go into details because others have already done this so thoroughly: "the American critic John Goldthwaite, in his powerful and original study of children's literature *The Natural History Of Make-Believe* (OUP, 1996), lays bare the misogyny, the racism, the sado-masochistic relish for violence that permeates the whole cycle."

One does not have to go as far as Pullman, who, in addition to finding the books "nauseating" and "loathsome," "ugly and poisonous," describes the ending of *The Last Battle* in particular as "[o]ne of the most vile moments in the whole of children's literature." One might admit, like Gaiman, that "there is so much in the books [to] love" (16); Gaiman recalls that he read the *Chronicles* "hundreds of times" as a child himself, and then read them "aloud, as an adult, twice, to [his own] children" (16), but still, when it comes to Calormen, as Kyrie O'Connor puts it, "you don't have to be a bluestocking of political correctness to find […] this […] anti-Arab, or anti-Eastern, or anti-Ottoman." Greg Easterbrook simply states, "[t]he Calormenes are unmistakable Muslim stand-ins." O'Connor usefully summarises a number of salient details:

> [T]he land of Calormen is not simply a bad place […]. Worse, the people are bad—or most of them, anyway—and they're bad in pretty predictable ways. Calormen is ruled by a despotic Tisroc and a band of swarthy lords with pointy beards, turbaned heads, long robes and nasty dispositions. Calormen is dirty, hot, dull, superstitious […].
>
> Here's Lewis's description of ordinary Calormenes: "men with long, dirty robes, and wooden shoes turned up at the toe, and turbans on their heads, and beards […]" [*HHB* 1.11]. And here's the city: "What you would chiefly have noticed if you had been there were the smells, which came from unwashed people, unwashed dogs, scent, garlic, onions, and the piles of refuse which lay everywhere" [*HHB* 4.50]. (O'Connor)

As suggested earlier, Calormen is deliberately constructed in opposition to Narnia: it is hot where Narnia is cool; the interior is a desert where "the heat shiver[s] on the ground," and the sun is "blazing" (*HHB* 2.23), the streets of its capital city are flanked with "burning pavements" (4.50) in contrast to the "cool woods and dewy slopes" of Narnia (5.58). The country's name derives from the word for "heat," *calor*:

> [T]he sun rose […]. The double peak of [the mountain] flashed in the sunlight […]. Then the light became a nuisance. The glare of the sand made [Shasta's] eyes ache […]. Then came the heat. He noticed it the first time when he had to dismount and walk: as he slipped down to the sand the heat from it struck up into his face as if from the opening of an oven door. Next time it was worse. But the third time, as his bare feet touched the sand he screamed with pain […]. (*HHB* 9.104)

Courtly and sophisticated where Narnia is rustic and simple, Calormen is (as the reference to opening an oven door could not make clearer) "cooked" where Narnia is "raw." In contrast with the desert sand and painful heat of Calormen, arrival in the north brings the travellers to a "glade full of the coolest, and most delicious smells," carpeted with "soft grass"; after they have slept, "the cool morning hours" bring them to a "valley […] with its brown, cool river, and grass and moss and wild flowers and rhododendrons" (*HHB* 9.107-9). The word "cool" is repeated three times in as many pages. Owing much to the *Arabian Nights* (which we know from his letters that he had read in Edward William Lane's mid-nineteenth-century translation) and Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (which Lewis liked so much he read it no less than six times),[9] Lewis's construction of Calormen might be summed up in three words—dark-skinned, dirty, and despotic (in Calormen they practise slavery whereas Narnia is "free" [*HHB* 9.109]; and arranged marriage—in Narnia "no maiden is forced to marry against her will" [3.38]).

But Calormen is sexy. The river-sides of Tashbaan are lined for miles with "gardens and pleasure houses," for instance (*HHB* 3.43), and on the river itself there are "pleasure boats" (9.100); Rabadash himself, in the passion, ardency and heat of his desire, sounds sexy. Since Lewis was a consumer of those materials identified by Said as constituting the discourse of Orientalism, it seems worth reiterating the point made by both Said and Wyn Davies, cited above, on the association between the Orient and sex (Said 309). Both writers also pick out one particular cultural icon that Lewis may well have been familiar with—Rudolph Valentino and his 1921 film *The Sheik*. Actually Italian by birth, Valentino was the original "Latin lover"; indeed, the term was coined for him. A later example is the Egyptian-born Omar Sharif, who featured in David Lean's epic *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962); more contemporary "Latin lovers" include the Spanish-born Enrique Iglesias. Perhaps if Rabadash were regarded as a kind of composite of these we might better appreciate why Susan might desire him—his very otherness (dark-skinned, culturally different) might well make him all the more exotic and attractive to the twenty-six-year-old Susan, surrounded as she is by pale sexless Narnians in a country that can't even muster a lustful faun.

[9] 11 December, 1916. Joel Heck gives a reference to *The Lewis Papers* V.173.

Calormen is sexy, Narnia is not. In Narnia, not only the sexual licentiousness associated with the East, but sexuality itself, are systematically denied. Narnia is Arcadian in conception—Laura Miller remarks in interview, "A lot of what we [are] responding to when we're responding to Narnia is the idea of Arcadia, from classical mythology" ("A Spy in the House of Narnia"). Rustic, peaceful, simple and bucolic—but in classical mythology, Arcadia is the home of Pan, who is also its patron. Pan is a fertility god, described by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as "vigorous and lustful"—a Priapic image of sexual licentiousness. What Lewis gives us in Narnia is Arcadia without Pan, a systematically *desexualized* version of Arcadia. With the hindquarters, legs, and horns of a goat, Pan is like a satyr or a faun. But in Narnia, fauns are desexualized—Tumnus, the first Narnian Lucy Pevensie and the reader ever encounter, may be a little like his classical forebears in meeting and befriending a little girl who is lost in the woods, and "us[ing] music and a magical fire to seduce Lucy into falling asleep" (J. Miller 126), but sex is the last thing on his mind. Instead, he is thoroughly domesticated, serving Lucy "a wonderful tea" of toast, sardines, and cake (*LWW* 2.19-20). When we meet Tumnus again in *The Horse and His Boy* he is once more engaged in serving food (*HHB* 5.64), as if to confirm his domesticated, safe, and non-sexual nature. In general, Jennifer Miller finds "a marked lack of sexuality and treatment of sexual desire in all the [Narnia] stories", entirely "consistent with Lewis's desire to create a world of innocence for children," but nevertheless "problematic" (113), in the ways described.

But it is possible that Lewis's own attempt to exclude sex and sexuality from Narnia is not entirely successful, as Jennifer Miller suggests. This attempt may be seen as a repression that is subverted because, as Freud has taught us, the repressed will always find a way of returning. The unruly desires which *Twelfth Night* and *The Chronicles* both work so hard to contain, so strenuously to control, may not be easily dealt with. So, sex has a way not only of persisting, but of insisting on making its presence felt (sometimes at altogether unexpected moments). So, on Tumnus' bookshelf, Lucy notices a book called *Nymphs and Their Ways* (*LWW* 2.19), a very minor detail but nevertheless a reminder that Tumnus's sexual origins have not been entirely expunged. We might recall that the Greek Pan, who presides over Arcadia, and became the Roman Faunus, had a particular penchant for nymphs.[10]

[10] Joe R. Christopher draws attention to the first line of one of Horace's odes, which describes Faunus as "lover of the flying nymphs," "*Nympharum figientum amator*" (*Carminvm* Book 3, No, 18) (86).

However, Susan's possible desire for "Eastern promise" in the form of her "dark-faced lover" has larger ramifications; the fact that she may be attracted to this alluring embodiment of otherness is itself transgressive due to all that Calormen is made to stand for, and so represents an unruly desire which must be governed and disciplined out of existence.

It is not enough for Susan to find that she cannot have the object of her desire. In *Twelfth Night* not only must Orsino learn that he cannot have Olivia, he must settle for Viola; Olivia herself must not only learn that she cannot have Cesario, she must settle for Sebastian. It is (merely) a question of transferring desire from an unavailable (and impossible, disallowed, forbidden and/or transgressive) object to an object that is available. Normality is reasserted, order restored; misrule, with its indulgent and questionable pleasures and riotous inversions, is banished; feverish, cruel Calormen with its dark skins, turbans, and scimitars gives way to temperate, cool Narnia with its northern faces, fair hair, and swords which are "long and straight, not curved like Calormene scimitars" (*HHB* 4.52).

But in the end there remain those whose desire is supplied with no object to which it can be transferred, those who are not included in what Orsino calls the "golden time" (5.1.375): Malvolio, Antonio—and Susan.

If the idea of the disciplining of unruly desire makes sense, as a means to control and curtail misrule in favour of the restoration of order, and to discredit sexy Calormen in favour of wholesome Narnia, then Malvolio must learn that he can't have Olivia, Antonio that he can't have Sebastian, Susan that she can't have Rabadash, and all of these must content themselves with nothing. So perhaps it is not only readers who are left unsatisfied—perhaps the dissatisfaction actually originates with the characters.

Susan must learn *not* to desire Rabadash; and "the unfortunate Rabadash" (*HHB* 15.152) must prove his undesirability. She is perhaps remarkably easily persuaded to agree with her brother Edmund that her "dark-faced lover" is not as desirable as she had thought—"in his own city, he has shown another face." Edmund, somewhat gleefully, elaborates, "We have now seen him for what he is: […] a most proud, bloody, luxurious, cruel and self-pleasing tyrant" (*HHB* 4.57). A true Calormene/Saracen, in other words. As Said says, the discourse of Orientalism is at times opaque, but "On rare occasions—as in the work of Léon Mugniéry—do we find the implicit made clear: that there is a 'powerful sexual appetite […] characteristic of those hot-blooded southerners'" (Said 311). "Luxurious" is as close as Edmund gets. But for Susan and the other Narnians, the immediate problem is how to get out of the clutches of this bloody tyrant. And the plan they come up with bears a striking resemblance to the deception practised on Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*.

Both plans involve invitations, one of Susan's favorite things. Malvolio is to be duped into believing that Olivia loves him; Rabadash is to be duped into believing that Susan loves him, that there is still a chance of her accepting him in marriage. Malvolio will receive a duplicitous letter—"some obscure epistles of love" (2.3.150-10)—and Rabadash will receive a duplicitous invitation, "worded as graciously as the Queen can contrive […] so as to give the Prince a hope that she is weakening" (*HHB* 5.61). Malvolio will be invited to appear in yellow stockings and cross garters; Rabadash will be invited to appear at a great banquet aboard the Narnian ship berthed in the harbour. In *Twelfth Night* this "device" (2.3.157) is proposed by the servant, Maria; in *The Horse and His Boy* it is proposed by the faun, Tumnus, proving that what he lacks in goatish sexuality he makes up for in cerebral ingenuity. In both cases, the proposal is met with great enthusiasm by the collaborators—"Excellent," cries Sir Toby Belch (2.3.157); "very good," applauds the Narnian raven, Sallowpad. "You shall hear no better plot" (*HHB* 5.62).

In both cases, the plot succeeds; the victims believe what they want to believe—Malvolio, "sick with self-love," "so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him" (1.5.86, 2.3.145-7), Rabadash "self-pleasing," as Edmund describes him, are both taken in. Malvolio dresses up and smiles, exactly as instructed; the Narnians make their escape while Rabadash (presumably) is dressing appropriately for a royal feast.

Just as Malvolio swears, "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" (5.1.371), Rabadash too swears revenge: "Every insult you have heaped on me shall be paid with oceans of Narnian […] blood. Terrible shall the vengeance of the Tisroc be" (*HHB* 15. 169).

There are a number of levels on which he must be punished. Not only the Narnians, but the Calormenes too must witness this; and most importantly, it must be endorsed by the reader.

First, the military threat must be defused. Rabadash must be defeated in battle, to demonstrate Narnia's *moral* superiority as well as to prove its strength. In Spenser's terms, Christendom must defeat Heathendom; "Briton" must conquer "Paynim"; the swarthy infidel Calormenes/Saracens must be vanquished. So Rabadash is beaten in the fighting and he is humiliated into the bargain. He leaps upon his enemies, intending to cut a "very grand and very dreadful figure" as he descends with a cry of, "The bolt of Tash falls from above!"[11] Unfortunately, due to an earlier skirmish, there is a hole in his mail-shirt; this catches on a hook in the wall, and he ends up hanging there; a good

[11] Presumably intended as a version of the *takbir—"Allahu Akbar!*" ("God is great!")—the traditional Arabic formula, used as a battle-cry.

hanging, no doubt, that prevents a bad marriage. Looking like "a piece of washing hung up to dry," this is far from the spectacle he planned to create. Instead of inflecting the idea and the image of hanging in terms of enhanced and prodigious masculinity, Lewis takes it in the opposite direction: the simile deliberately domesticates him, just as Tumnus has been domesticated, completely deflating the warlike image intended. While hardly the bloodbath that Spenser promises (and never actually delivers), the battle is a decisive victory for the Narnians; furthermore, Rabadash ends up "with everyone laughing at him." We are told that "though he could have faced torture, he couldn't bear being made ridiculous" (*HHB* 13. 152-3). In *Twelfth Night* it is part of Maria's plan from the start that Malvolio should be humiliated: she swears to make his name into a byword for stupidity and make him a laughing-stock (2.3. 131-132); now Rabadash too has been made a laughing-stock. This then is a *public* punishment.

But further ridicule is to come. The second level of punishment to which he must be subjected is a *personal* one: he must demonstrate his unsuitability as either a mate or an appropriate object of desire for Susan. So he is reduced to childishness—after the Narnian plot is put into practice he protests "sulkily" to his father the Tisroc, before growing exasperated and furious, kicking the Gran Vizier and demanding that Calormen's armies should immediately be mobilized to invade and lay waste to Narnia, "killing their High King and all of his blood except the queen Susan. For I must have her […] though she shall learn a sharp lesson first" (*HHB* 8. 90). What looked like urgent desire now looks more like the petulant wilfulness of a spoiled child. This is the Rabadash of whom Edmund remarks, "He is little used […] to having his will crossed" (*HHB* 5.58). When his father's agreement is not instantly forthcoming (he does, after all, have eighteen other sons, clear evidence of Calormene potency *(HHB* 8.98)), Rabadash says he will take matters into his own hands, seize the royal castle of Cair Paravel, and take Susan by force. He continues to act like a child, "sulking […] furiously," "stamping and roaring and cursing" (*HHB* 15.168), making this seem a mere temper tantrum.

But there is a third level on which he is to be dealt with: the *providential* level. Aslan appears on the scene, predicting "doom" for Rabadash; furious, Rabadash pulls what he thinks is a terrifying face, shrieking insults, calling Aslan a "demon," "the foul fiend of Narnia," "the enemy of the gods," a "horrible phantasm." His final threat, however, proves the last straw—"I will never desist until I have dragged to my palace by her hair the barbarian queen, the daughter of dogs […]" (*HHB* 15.170). Aslan proceeds to transform him into a donkey.

This may be a further parallel to *Twelfth Night*. Maria refers to Malvolio as an ass, telling him to "go shake [his] ears," and the conspirators vow to "make him an ass" (2.3.122, 143, 163-4); Lewis literalizes Shakespeare's metaphor.

For the moment, the metamorphosis is only temporary. Rabadash will remain in his ass's shape until the Autumn Feast, after which he will resume human form. But for the rest of his life, should he ever venture more than ten miles from Tashbaan, he will be turned back into a donkey. "And from that second change," warns the lion, "there will be no return" (*HHB* 15.172). This means that he can never again pose a military threat to Narnia or any other country, and as a result he becomes "the most peaceful Tisroc Calormen ha[s] ever known" (*HHB*, 15.73).

Nor is that quite all. There is one Saracen whose name became a byword for chivalry and generosity, and who has been described as "a handsome young Turk,"[12] "a glamorous and charming infidel" (Phillips), much as I have been suggesting Susan might have regarded Rabadash: this is Saladin, over the years a hero for both Europeans and (latterly) for Arabs. Described as "a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*,"[13] the absolute epitome of chivalry, Saladin was immortalized by Dante as one of the "virtuous pagans" (Canto II, IV). C.S. Lewis's love for Dante is well known; he first read the *Inferno* in Italian in his teens. Petrarch too hails Saladin;[14] and in one way or another so do writers including Walter Scott, for whom Saladin is "grave, graceful and decorous" (*The Talisman* 36). We know how highly Lewis thought of Scott.[15] A different model, then, was available to Lewis had he wanted Rabadash to be a suitable partner for Susan. The Rabadash we have is of Lewis's choosing. And *that* Rabadash is not remembered as "a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*"; instead, he is memorialized in Calormene history books as "Rabadash the Ridiculous"—"and to this day in Calormene schools, if you do anything unusually stupid, you are very likely to be called 'a second Rabadash'" (*HHB* 15. 173). The process of humiliation is complete.

The demonstration of Rabadash's unworthiness, his defeat, debasement, and degradation, are all part of the systematic disciplining of desire which directly parallels the process Logan describes in *Twelfth Night*; in fact, the behaviour Rabadash is made to display may incline us to be less sympathetic to his situation than commentators have been to Malvolio's. Yet we may still feel

[12] By Voltaire, in the *Essay on Morals* (see David 80).

[13] By Kaiser Wilhelm II, on a visit to Damascus seeking a military alliance with the Ottomans in 1898 (see Klaussmann 320-321).

[14] In *The Triumph of Fame* (1351-74) Petrarch lists Saladin alongside Alexander the Great and King Arthur.

[15] Lewis was president of the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club in 1955, and discusses Scott in his inaugural lecture as Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Poetry at Cambridge (1954).

disquiet, even dissatisfaction, at the ease and speed with which he degenerates into another cliché of Orientalism—hot-blooded with a powerful sexual appetite, but not capable of satisfying it. Said suggests that "the absolutely inviolable taboo in Orientalist discourse is that that very sexuality must never be taken seriously" (311).[16] It is not only that Rabadash degenerates into a joke, but that his creator ensures that he does so. Just as his final humiliation is at the paws of Aslan, so his debasement is at the hands of Lewis. And might we not conclude that, like Malvolio, "he hath been most notoriously abused" (*Twelfth Night*, 5.1.372), a "poor fool, […] baffled" by the machinations of his enemies?

It is Lewis, too, who determines that Susan's desire is frustrated. This is part of the disciplinary process; as is her return to sexless Narnia and a sexless existence, as is her treatment in *The Last Battle*. As noted above, readers immediately expressed their dissatisfaction: the final instalment of the *Chronicles* was published in 1956; the following January, Lewis is writing to Martin Kilmer:

> Susan […] is left alive in this world at the end, having by then turned into a rather silly, conceited young woman. But there is plenty of time for her to mend, and perhaps she will get to Aslan's country in the end—in her own way. I think that whatever she had seen in Narnia she *could* (if she wanted to) persuade herself, as she grew up, that it was "all nonsense". (*CL* 3.826)

This sounds as if Lewis recognises that he has a case to answer. But why might Susan *want* to believe that it is nonsense? Why might she *want* to forget?

Unlike Olivia, Susan takes an active part in the duping of Rabadash, thus in the frustration and denial of any desire she herself might ever have had for him. She is no less gleeful than the others when they hear Tumnus's plan—perhaps more, "catching his hands and swinging with him as he dance[s]," and crying out, "Oh Master Tumnus, dear Master Tumnus […] You have saved us all" (*HHB* 5.62). None of the others expresses their approval quite as enthusiastically, though Edmund is described as "rubbing his hands" (*HHB* 5.62) with satisfaction at the faun's scheme. I have suggested that for Susan, Narnia might come to stand for the frustration, and her own collusive repression, of her desire. Freud has taught us that "forgetting is very often determined by an unconscious purpose, and […] it always enables one to deduce the secret intentions of the person who forgets" (254); as remarked, he also teaches us that what is repressed will return—if Susan were a real person, rather than a product of Lewis's imagination, one might conclude that her

[16] So in *The Sheik*, for instance, Valentino's character turns out to be the child of a British father and a Spanish mother, adopted and brought up by the old Sheik, whose position he has taken over on the old man's death.

interest in nylons, lipsticks, and invitations signals the return of that long-repressed sexuality when she once again reaches her early twenties, the age she was in Narnia when she at least entertained the thought of a mature sexual relationship with Rabadash.

It is clear in *The Last Battle* that the heaven which Susan is not admitted is Narnia writ large, "the real Narnia," in Lewis's Platonic terms. Digory explains:

> When Aslan said you [the Pevensies] could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our world, England and all, is only a shadow or a copy of something in Aslan's real world. […] And of course [this] is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream. (*LB* 15.160)

Although Peter tells the others, "I've a feeling we've got to the country where everything is allowed" (*LB* 13.129), one might ask whether this is in fact true, whether the new Narnia (the "real" Narnia) is any less inimical to those unruly desires, like Susan's, than the old Narnia proved to be? If for Susan Narnia is a place of desire denied, frustrated, stifled and repressed, why would she want to be in a heaven like that? Why would she want to be a friend of Narnia? Forever? Condemned to a sexless eternity, not allowed to desire (let us say) Rabadash? Lewis no doubt means it as a comfort when he assures Martin Kilmer that Susan may yet get to Aslan's country, but we might see Susan's absence from the heaven that is (just) another Narnia not as a banishment, an exclusion or a disposal, but instead as something to be celebrated—a positive thing, rather than a negative thing? A triumph, rather than a defeat? Turning away rather than being turned away? "[L]eft alive," as Lewis puts it in that letter to Martin Kilmer, Susan has access to experience and possible fulfilment that were not available to her in Narnia; she is free to explore her impulses and desires, however unruly. Gaiman does not quite give her this in his intervention into "the problem of Susan," but at least he gives her the opportunity to have sex and perhaps marriage, if that is what is signified by the change of name of his central character—not Pevensie, but Hastings. And he gives her intellectual success and academic achievement—she is a professor—and a degree of fame—she is being interviewed by a journalist, and people are clearly interested in her views.[17]

[17] Perhaps making her a professor is an act of revenge for Lewis having described her as "no good at school work." At any rate, Gaiman has her looking back and reflecting that "[i]t has been a good life" (248).

Lewis's aim is the construction of an imaginary world for children which has been purged of sex. Jennifer Miller suggests that this is why he chose the form of the fairy-tale: it "seemed to demand no love interest" ("Sometimes Fairy Stories may Say Best What's to Be Said" 46) he wrote, also stating that "[w]riting 'juveniles'[…] excluded erotic love" (Higgins 534). Whether this is in fact true is debatable; one way or another, sex keeps cropping up, despite Lewis's sustained efforts.

In part this is due to the unruly and resistant nature of the subject matter: in the example that has been the focus of this discussion, Susan's possible desire for Rabadash, all manner of contradictions may be discerned—as Wyn Davies observes, the discourse of Orientalism is riddled with inconsistencies. With "all its jumbled ambiguities," she remarks, "[t]here is no single consensual narrative of Orientalism. A welter of ideas twist, turn and morph into contradictory formulations. [...] What best defines Orientalism is not so much its monolithic consensus but the confusion of its tropes." So Rabadash must be both desirable (enough for Susan to come to Calormen) and undesirable (enough to justify rejection); Calormen must be dirty and smelly and at the same time luxurious and alluring; cruel and courtly; debased and refined. Tashbaan is "one of the wonders of the world"—"terrace above terrace, street above street, zigzag roads or huge flights of steps bordered with orange trees and lemon trees, roof-gardens, balconies, deep archways, pillared colonnades, spires, battlements, minarets, pinnacles" (*HHB* 4.47). Shasta is awed, saying, "This is a wonderful place" before they discover the piles of refuse in the lower streets[18] and the smell of "garlic [and] onions" (*HHB* 4.50). Yet Calormene cuisine is impressive—it is a Calormene feast that the sexless faun Tumnus serves up in *HHB*:

> lobsters, and salad, and snipe stuffed with almonds, and a complicated dish made of chicken-livers and rice and raisins and nuts, and there were cool melons and gooseberry fools and mulberry fools, and every kind of nice thing that can be made with ice. (*HHB* 5.64)

"I don't know whether you would have liked it or not," the narrator says, "but Shasta did." Even so, he is required to prefer the homely fare served up by the dwarves when he gets out of Calormen: bacon, eggs, mushrooms and toast—

[18] It is appropriate that the dirt and smells are located on the lower levels, the splendor and elegance on the top levels, as if a glittering surface masked a filthy underlying reality; precisely what Lewis wants to suggest about his Saracens: corruption is concealed by jewels, and odors are masked by heavy scent.

> It was all new and wonderful to Shasta for Calormene food is quite different. He didn't know what the slices of brown stuff were, for he had never seen toast before. He didn't know what the yellow soft thing they smeared on the toast was, because in Calormen you nearly always get oil instead of butter. (*HHB* 12.136-7)

Calormen is allowed its excellence in the art of story-telling (*HHB* 2.35), and its baths are said to be justly "famous" (*HHB* 7.82), but these details merely punctuate a story whose overall trajectory, both at the main plot level—Aravis and Shasta—and at the level of the Susan sub-plot, is away from Calormen and towards Narnia. Aravis, a Calormene, is allowed what Susan is not: a cross-cultural marriage. Jennifer Miller suggests that as "their marriage focus[es] around quarrelling and arguing, rather than love, desire, and sex" (115), sexuality is still excluded. More to the point, however, is that Aravis is a willing convert, a Calormene who rejects Calormen, a would-be Narnian, whereas Susan perhaps rejects Narnia. William Chad Newsom, who sets out to defend Lewis against racism, argues that Aravis is one of the only "noble Calormenes depicted in the books."[19] Laura Miller says that this "sounds suspiciously like 'some of my best friends are . . .'" (125); and Newsom is forced to admit that Aravis's "nobility consists, in part, in [her] rejection of certain aspects of Calormene culture ([she] leaves an oppressive life in Calormen for freedom in Archenland)." Both characters are, I would say, Narnians at heart—so Aravis can go on to become Queen of Archenland and the mother of Ram the Great (*HB* 175) because in the end, allegiance counts for more than skin color. She has moved away from Calormen and all that it stands for. Susan must move in the same direction, though perhaps it is significant that she is absent from the story after the Narnians leave Calormen—in the final chapter we are told that this is because "She's not like Lucy […] who's as good as a man, or at any rate as good as a boy. Queen Susan is more like an ordinary grown-up lady" (*HHB* 13.144). This sounds a lot like the charge that is levelled at Susan in *LB*: "She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown-up," Jill says impatiently (*LB* 12.128). "She has committed the unforgivable sin of growing up," Wilson says (228), expressing his own dissatisfaction with Susan's fate. Susan's absence from the last chapters of *HHB* prefigures her absence from the final book, her absence from heaven.

These are not the only occasions in which she is absent from the *Chronicles*. Susan may not get to go to heaven. But she does get to go to America. Could there be a connection? This is one of the reasons for her absence from *The Voyage of the "*Dawn Treader" (*VDT*). Lewis either doesn't want to, or can't, tell

[19] There is only one other—Emeth, in *LB* (10. 106-7; 14-15. 150-55). And, like Aravis, he turns out to be a Narnian under the skin.

us about her experience in America, so there is a four-month gap in Susan's story that we know of only as an absence. Lewis's lack of interest is signaled by the fact that it is only once Susan has been dispatched to the USA that we are told, "[t]he story begins […]" (*VDT* 1.8). But we know that that is where she has gone, and we are told why. Her father has a job lecturing there for four months; the children's mother is going with him, and Susan is selected because "she [is] no good at schoolwork" (Peter is studying hard for an exam) and because she "would get far more out of the trip to America than the youngsters" (*VDT* 1.8). Are the two things—being no good at school and going to America—related? Is Susan to learn a lesson from this trip? If the experience of America sets her apart, what might she learn from it that the others don't learn?

Lewis sends her to America at a particular moment in history. It is often as if he forgets that the war is on—as if it is no more than a convenient plot device to enable the children to make their first trip to Narnia. The ending of *Prince Caspian* (*PC*), where we are of course given the other reason for Susan's absence from the *Dawn Treader*, that is, Aslan's decree that she and Peter are now too old (*PC* 15.188), is a case in point: transported back to England, the children find themselves back on the railway platform where this particular story began: it is "unexpectedly, nice in its own way what with the familiar railway smell and the English sky and the summer term before them" *(PC* 15.190). This is 1941: that sky is full of bombs; and the railways are a particular target. And whatever the Pevensies might like to think, whatever Lewis might like to think, those bombs are proof that it is not just an *English* sky. There is war in heaven.

In the same year that Susan and her brothers and sister are contemplating their ownership of the sky, that same sky above Honolulu is filled with Japanese bombers. It is 1942 when Susan goes to America. She is visiting a country newly—and more than a little reluctantly—drawn into that war. Unlike Peter and Edmund and Lucy, Susan is to gain first-hand experience of the war as a world-wide phenomenon in which nothing and nobody is safe, and *everything* is to be fought for. America too is under threat. If America is the New Jerusalem then the Saracens are at the gates.

As Susan is preparing to cross the Atlantic, some young Americans are preparing to make the same journey in the opposite direction. She may have been aware of the arrival of the first US servicemen in Britain, in January 1942. These young men, some of them only a few years older than Susan (she is fourteen), come armed with a book called *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain* (*IAS*), a pamphlet distributed by the United States War Department.

The *IAS* is a strange hybrid. On the one hand, it is a guidebook, designed to promote cultural understanding. On the other, it is a kind of secular bible. Or at least, a secular *Paradise Lost*—it sets out to justify the ways of war to man. In the interests of fulfilling such ambitious aims in a scant 31 pages, it

reveals a lot about how America sees itself: as "a country where your house is still safe, food is still plentiful and lights are still burning" (23). Quite explicitly, as the land of plenty, the terrestrial Paradise.

Had Lewis wanted to represent America, he could have found ample characterizations of the New World as a place of plenty in the literature which afforded him precedents for his representation of Calormen; in *The Faerie Queene*, for example, Spenser writes of "fruitfulle *Virginia*"[20]; or he might have considered the way that ancient myths and legends locating the blessed realm in the west were transmuted into the notion of a "Terrestrial Paradise," and then into ideas of Utopia, something that could be *built*,[21] but as suggested, he is not interested; America serves merely as a narrative device to get Susan off the scene. We are left to fill in the gaps ourselves—but we should remember that we have been invited to do so.

In passing, the *IAS* reminds its readers that New York is founded upon a rock—this is the reason that city can have skyscrapers (and London can't). But the document makes almost no reference to religion as such: God is mentioned just once, in the title of the British national anthem; churches are mentioned as potential tourist attractions, "if you feel like it, do not hesitate to walk in" (17-18). Otherwise, Sundays are an inconvenience: "The British make much of Sunday. All the shops are closed, most of the restaurants, and […] there is not much to do" (17).

The *IAS* details "the things which Americans take for granted" (23): it even refers to a home-grown trinity—"baseball, jazz, and Coca-cola" (14), as if the Declaration of Independence had been sponsored by Joe DiMaggio. These are what is at stake, these are what is under threat. A litany of these "things" is given: skyscrapers, automobiles, trains, radios; achievements of modern building. But now even mundane substances like soap are threatened—the shortages which Britain is now enduring are the signs of what America might have in store. The land of plenty may be transformed into a land of scarcity: like Britain, it could become a place of "shortages, discomforts, blackouts and bombings" (23). In 1942, these deprivations are beginning: the first ration cards are introduced in the USA in May; gasoline is one of the first "things" to be rationed, along with car tires and automobiles; by the end of the year the list would include nylons.

Susan may be debarred from the land of Narnia, but she does go to the land of nylon. Invented in America in 1935, nylon was used for women's

[20] Book 2, Prologue 2.3. See Whitney, 143-162.

[21] See for example, Adams, 100-115. In departing from the tradition that locates the Terrestrial Paradise in the West (Aslan's country is in the East), Lewis shows his readiness to transform his source materials to suit his purpose.

stockings not long after that—"The modern miracle of that first pair of stockings represented the epitome of human superiority over nature," Kimbra Cutlip says, enthusiastically if hyperbolically. What it has in common with the *IAS*'s list is that it is human-made: the first useful synthetic fiber to be synthesized in the laboratory, out of "coal, air and water" as Cutlip reminds us. If not a miracle, then evidence of the human ability to make things. But nylon can also be made into other things: and in 1942 it is needed for a number of those other things: especially parachutes, but also for glider tow ropes, aircraft fuel tanks, flak jackets, shoelaces, mosquito netting, and hammocks. Eventually the only stockings available were those sold before the war or bought on the black market.

Before he disposes of her, Lewis points out that despite Susan's deficiencies at school work, she is "otherwise very old for her age" (*VDT*, 1.8), an indication of those aspirations to adulthood that she would be so disparaged for in *The Last Battle*. He has also stressed another quality: "[g]rown ups thought her the pretty one of the family" (*VDT* 1.8), something which will be stressed when Susan makes another brief appearance in the book from which she is meant to be absent, in Lucy's jealous vision in the magician's house: "Susan […] had always been the beauty of the family" (*VDT* 10.119).

A pretty, precocious fourteen-year-old girl in America for the first time with her mother—what do they do while Mr. Pevensie is lecturing? If they meet American women and girls of around their ages, such as the wives and daughters of Susan's father's colleagues, what kind of conversations might they have? Lewis seems to think he knows: when the adult Lucy meets Aravis for the first time, "[t]hey […] soon [go] away to talk about […] getting clothes for [Aravis], and all the sorts of things girls do talk about on such an occasion" (*HHB* 15.167).

But Susan would not be alone in taking an interest in nylons. Those young GIs, whose journey across the Atlantic in 1942 mirrors Susan's, are to become popularly known in Britain as "oversexed, overpaid and over here,"[22] a label dripping with equal measures of envy and resentment. Not all of them had observed the advice of the *Instructions,* warning them of the two actions guaranteed to alienate their British counterpart: "swiping his girl […] and rubbing it in that you are better paid than he is" (*IAS* 18). An Englishwoman only a few years older than Susan recalls that the American servicemen "used to arrive with their packs full of nylons and they undoubtedly thought that British girls were a pushover for a pair of these and a bright red lipstick. And truth to tell some of them were." She immediately adds that "a wise girl got her eagerly and hoped for gift first and then disappeared before she was further

[22] Attributed to British comedian Tommy Trinder (1909-1989), but disputed.

committed, or the guy thought he was on to a promise" (MacDermott). Knowledge of what human beings do can be strategically useful if what they want to do is not what you want to do. And the duplicity for which Spenser's Duessa is ultimately rewarded with execution might come in handy on occasions like this.

A Fats Waller song that was released just after Susan's return to England, in 1943, looks forward to the day when nylon stockings are freely available again; because "cotton is monotonous to men," women are advised to "get some mesh for your flesh." This song—"When the Nylons Bloom Again"[23] —was explicitly addressed to "women of the USA and Britain," so it is possible that Susan might have heard it played on the radio. Not until the war ended, however, did production of nylon stockings resume—and demand so far outstripped demand that in the USA the result was "The Nylon Riots" of 1945-46 (Spivack). But the lesson for Susan is surely that human beings can make nylon into stockings or parachutes; they can make it into objects of value and objects of sexual exchange: none of these is an intrinsic quality of nylon. In and of itself it is neither good nor bad.

Perhaps, then, Susan might get something from her experience of America that is not available to the others: an enhanced sense of the human ability to *make*; not only nylons but wars. Such an awareness might lead to an increased sense of the value of such things; an enlarged appreciation of both their precariousness and their preciousness. If this leads to a privileging of the things of this world over those of the next world then Lewis could not endorse it; for him an awareness of the precariousness of things leads to contempt of the world, via that favorite topic of those he read, mutability.

If Lewis senses that this is where Susan might be led, that could be why he doesn't want to write it; indeed, why America, like sex, must be kept at bay; it also corresponds with the idea of Susan as disobedient, which is precisely what emerges from her dalliance with Rabadash. Perhaps this is what has to be disciplined, in the interests of correcting— "mend[ing]"—it.

She is finally left behind to "mend," to repent, and to gain access to heaven "in her own way," though Lewis has to qualify that—"perhaps." It is as if his efforts have grown increasingly desperate—but what if Susan has no desire to enter Aslan's country? The attempt throughout this discussion has been to focus on Susan's possible desire—perhaps this focus could be sustained by a reading of the ending which sees her absence as a *rejection* of what Aslan's country—heaven—stands for. Turning away from Narnia, exclusion, and banishment, might then be seen as an attainment of freedom, a refusal of the discipline that she has been subjected to. The "problem of Susan" might not be

[23] The title both evokes and secularizes (and sexualizes) the idea of resurrection.

Susan's problem so much as C.S. Lewis's problem—the ending of the *Chronicles* might serve as an acknowledgement that Susan's desires may run counter to those of her creator. Perhaps a susceptibility to the allure of Eastern promise is not confined to just one member of the Pevensie family.

In her conversation with Naomi Rousseau, Tessa Laird draws attention to Lewis's role: "One of the things that has struck me the most on re-reading these books is that C.S. Lewis himself comes off as a kind of God, creating his own world and predestining some of the characters to heaven and some to hell." Gaiman has his Susan reflecting in a similar vein:

> A god who would punish me for liking nylons and parties by making me walk through that school dining-room, with the flies, to identify Ed [after the train crash that has killed the rest of her family], well . . . he's enjoying himself a bit too much, isn't he? Like a cat, getting the last ounce of enjoyment out of a mouse. (246)

Could Susan's absence from heaven be seen as a protest as well as a rejection—as a positive declaration of the resilience and resistance of desire to the forces that seek to discipline and deny it?

I want to conclude by invoking one critic's response, not to Susan Pevensie and the Narnia story, but to another children's story with an ending that has provoked dissatisfaction—Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911). Readers familiar with that text will know that it too ends with the exclusion of a female character, Mary Lennox, from its triumphal ending: Linda Parsons writes, "Some readers are disappointed by the fact that Mary is excluded from Colin's triumphant return to the manor. I rejoice that Mary remains forever in the garden" (Parsons 267). If the outcome for Susan in *The Chronicles of Narnia* is seen not as an exclusion or a banishment, but as a rejection of, even a protest against, the Narnia-that-is-Heaven/the Heaven-that-is-Narnia, perhaps this too may be regarded as a cause for celebration. *The Chronicles* begin with the reinstatement of Christmas (*LWW* 10.97-101); perhaps it is fitting that they should end with *Twelfth Night*, "the whirligig of time brings in his revenges" (5.1.370). Perhaps Malvolio and Susan, perhaps even Rabadash and Calormen, can in some measure be avenged by the expression of dissatisfaction at their fates—whether by writing their stories differently, like Gaiman and Pullman, or just by exposing and interrogating some of the methods that have been used to bring about those fates?

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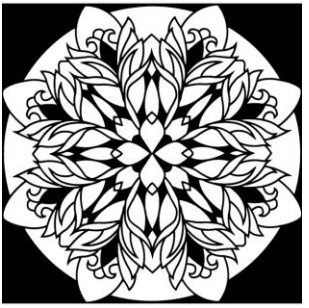

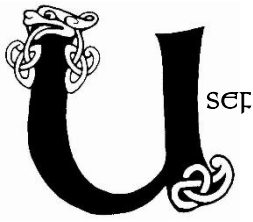

Useful Little Men: George R.R. Martin's Dwarfs as Grotesque Realists

Joseph Rex Young

Examining Daenerys Targaryen's career in George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, Karin Gresham observes that Mikhail Bakhtin's pattern of grotesque realism is "a key component of even her most positive moments" (167). The pattern is, indeed, pervasive. Daenerys's first marriage is presaged by her menarche; her acclimatisation to her husband's culture begins with calluses and leathery skin and ends with her consumption of raw offal. Her sexual assertion of agency within her marriage takes place in the steppe equivalent of Bakhtin's medieval market square; her miscarriage is described in harrowing detail; the hatching of her dragons is accompanied by hair loss and hyperbolic lactation. She conquers Astapor with eunuch soldiers; these troops enter Meereen through its sewers; a virulent diarrhoeal plague complicates her attempts at a reconstruction. Daenerys's first flight on Drogon is a very carnal, seemingly orgasmic experience. Her hike back to civilisation is punctuated by descriptions of sputum, diarrhoea, menses, and the consumption of more, half-charred horseflesh. Gresham's argument that Martin employs Bakhtin's system of imagery to empower Daenerys "to challenge and redefine order" (152) is highly convincing.

This theme is apropos to the function of Daenerys's subplot within Martin's broader narrative. Daenerys's adventures centrally concern the rearing of her dragons, wonders absent from her world for over a century. They are, furthermore, actively *missed*. "Even those who bent their knees may yearn in their hearts for the return of the dragons" (*A Storm of Swords 1: Steel and Snow* [*Storm 1*] 320), observes the aging idealist Ser Barristan Selmy, with demonstrable justification. Ser Jorah Mormont falls "to his knees" (*A Game of Thrones* [*Game*] 780) in reverence at the sight of Daenerys's children. "I should like to see a dragon," notes the apprentice maester Roone. "I should like that very much" (*A Feast for Crows* [*Feast*] 1). "Magic began to go out of the world the day the last dragon died," observes Wisdom Hallyne, the apparent charlatan whose alchemy is working now that Daenerys's infant dragons are, unbeknownst to him, thriving a continent away (*A Clash of Kings* [*Clash*] 647-648). Daenerys's prodigies enact what Clute calls healing (339), addressing

abject problems with the fabric of the written world, a key function of fantasy. As Gresham observes, the grotesque realism of Daenerys's subplot identifies her as "the one who has been able to transform Martin's disillusionment into true heroic potential" (167-168). Daenerys's dragons serve as vivid evidence of healing, providing a thrill of hope to a world in sin and error pining (Young 188-189). Their fire challenges both the ice of the Others and the self-servingly rigid, morally bankrupt regime which is failing to respond to that threat. Bakhtin observes that medieval folk humour and carnival traditions focus on the opening of orifices (oral, genital, or anal) and acts of eating (taking the world into the body), excretion (expelling it back out again) and copulation. These blur the boundaries between the individual body and the outside world. Such smudging asserts and celebrates a kinship with "the great generic body of the people" for which "birth and death are not an absolute beginning and end but merely elements of continuous growth and renewal" (*Rabelais and His World* [*Rabelais*] 88). "Transposed" (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* [*Problems*] 122) into literature, such traditional images vividly evoke transitions and cycles in a narrative by aping lived and sensual experience of kinship with this body. Mocking the notion that the extinction of the dragons was an absolute end, Daenerys is exactly the sort of character whose characterisation would profit from Bakhtin's system of grotesque images.

But this triumphant leap is only the second half of Bakhtin's equation. To emerge from the grave, the written subject must first be put there. The tradition of folk humour Bakhtin analyses therefore inherently incorporates aspects of violence or degradation. "By cutting off and discarding the old dying body," he observes, "the umbilical cord of the new youthful world is simultaneously broken" (*Rabelais* 206). There is therefore a strong parallel between grotesque realism and Clute's concept of healing, which he cites as an essential feature of modern fantasy narrative, and describes as necessarily proceeding from a state of "thinning." According to Clute, a written world must hurt if it is to heal, and tales of healing must therefore begin with the discoursal establishment of a "fading away of beingness" (339). The near-extinction of the Jedi in George Lucas's early *Star Wars* films and the moribundity of English magic in Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* demonstrate the pattern. Healing involves the reversal, diking, or, at worst, bottoming-out of thinning. Both Bakhtin's and Clute's paradigms emphasise damage or degradation as necessary preconditions for recovery.

What Gresham has established, therefore, is that the interdependent fall and rise implied by grotesque imagery evokes an essential point of narrative flux—Clutean healing—in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that Martin repeatedly uses the same pattern of imagery, and in its entirety, to evoke the thinning that such healing remedies. In his 2018 book *Fire*

and Blood, Martin itemises that thinning in great detail. The book is a history of the first seven Targaryen kings of Westeros, Daenerys's ancestors, as written by Archmaseter Gyldayn and "transcribed" (1) by Martin. Gyldayn spends the first half of his book on the first 120 years of Targaryen history then the second half on the course and aftermath of a short but ferocious war of succession between Aegon II and his half-sister Rhaenyra. Dragons are, it transpires, glass cannons, acutely vulnerable to the destruction they dish out. In two years of turmoil and violence, sixteen of the twenty Targaryen beasts are killed; three more go wild or disappear, leaving only Morning, a hatchling bonded to a descendent of the losing party in the war, to embody the mystique the dynasty once enjoyed. There is no apparent way to reverse this loss. Never again will Targaryen kings be able to descend upon a castle from the air, have the populace "gape" (260) at the sight of these grand beasts, and demonstrate the cosmic privilege (and coercive leverage) engendered by their partnership with the great reptiles. This is a downward shift through Northrop Frye's hierarchy of modes, from the romantic (a demonstrable, fundamental superiority to other people) to the high mimetic, in which the dynasty must assert itself by embodying esteemed virtues (Young 68; cf Frye 33-34). Given Martin's ongoing critique of the literary depiction of aristocracy, this is an important business. It is therefore important to give proper scholarly attention to the complete Bakhtinian movement—grotesque rise and fall—evident in the thinning that Daenerys remedies.

Getting grotesque discourse into *Fire and Blood* poses an interesting challenge. By presenting his work as a piece of fictional historiography, Martin essentially turns the entire book into one long Bakhtinian "character-zone" in which the narrative voice is not directly his own but a "parodically polemicized" (Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" 47) representation of somebody else's. That somebody is closely tied to a particular worldview established in Martin's pre-existing volumes. Gyldayn is a maester, one of the polymathic academics of Westeros. Serving principally as physicians, they constitute "caricature[s] of the professional narrow-minded doctor," who reject the "popular elements" Bakhtin identifies in Rabelaisian physicks (*Rabelais* 179). They wear their chains of office day and night, the equivalent of a primary-world doctor displaying a framed medical licence to assert authority over their patients. Maester Pycelle treats the stricken Gregor Clegane with boiling wine (antisepsis) and bread mould (penicillin), suggesting he practices a rough equivalent of modern medicine (*Storm* 2.425-426). It is Qyburn, disbarred by the maesters for unhallowed experiments, who observes Glegane's pyuria (*Feast* 124-125), "read[ing his] patient's fate" in his urine as a Rabelaisian sawbones might (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 180). If this occurred to Pycelle he does not mention it. The at least notional celibacy of the maesters (*Storm* 1.317) is also significant. Their genitals do not generate; they are sealed from the generic body of the

people and thus do not actively participate in cycles of death and rebirth. As such they tend to regard the thinning of their world as irreversible. Maester Cressen assures to Shireen Baratheon that the dragons are dead and gone ("we have talked about this before," *Clash* 4). His colleague Luwin reiterates the point to Bran Stark (401). Those who assert otherwise are marginalised iconoclasts (*Feast* 9). Cowlishaw (62-63) cites such conservatism as evidence of the ineffectiveness of the maesters in Martin's tale of Clutean healing, and in Bakhtinian terms he has a point. These men are what Bakhtin calls *agelasts* ("Prehistory" 58), those who do not laugh, champions of the "petrified seriousness" Bakhtin cites as characteristic of "official medieval culture" (*Rabelais* 73). Maesters speak "an official language that would deny the body, the cyclical nature of human life, and the triumph of the species over the death of the individual" (Glazener 113). Gyldayn demonstrates the pattern. He essentially apologises to his readers for raising the sexual precocity of Princess Saera: "And now, I fear, we must turn our attention to one of the most troublesome and distasteful chapters in the long reign of King Jaehaerys" (*Fire and Blood* 315). Saera's dalliances certainly cause her parents trouble, but for a trained physician to describe them as distasteful betrays the moral sympathies of a Bakhtinian agelast. Having Gyldayn articulate grotesque realism would detract from the effectiveness of the character-zone he serves to create.

Martin's solution is one Bakhtin would recognise. Most "serio-comical" genres, Bakhtin observes, are "characterized by a deliberate and explicit autobiographical and memoirist approach" ("Epic and Novel" 27). The resulting familiarisation of the subjects accords the novelist scope for self-insertion denied by the authors of purely serious genres. So it is with *Fire and Blood*. Martin writes Gyldayn as an empirical historian such as Otto von Ranke rather than a medieval chronicler like the Venerable Bede. His discourse includes deductions from evidence, assessments of competing accounts, and critiques of sources. Such mock historiography allows Martin scope for self-insertion. Much of Gyldayn's information about the war comes from

> *The Testimony of Mushroom*, based upon the verbal account of the court fool (set down by a scribe who failed to append his name) who at various times capered for the amusement of King Viserys, Princess Rhaenyra, and both Aegons, the Second and Third. A three-foot-tall dwarf possessed of an enormous head (and, he avers, an even more enormous member), Mushroom was thought feeble-minded, so king and lords did not scruple to hide their secrets from him. Whereas Septon Eustace records the secrets of bedchamber and brothel in hushed, condemnatory tones, Mushroom delights in the same, and his *Testimony* consists of little but ribald tales and gossip, piling stabbings, poisonings, betrayals, seductions and debaucheries one atop the other. How much of this can

> be believed is a question the honest historian cannot hope to answer, but it is worth noting that King Baelor the Blessed decreed that every copy of Mushroom's chronicle should be burned. (356-357)

Gyldayn thus repeatedly affects the language of a character who revels in grotesque realism. This begins with Gyldayn's paraphrasing of Mushroom's autobiographical discourse. His very name references a lifeform that springs from decomposing matter. It thus has significance in Bakhtin's system of imagery before one even begins speculating as to whether the appellation refers to his huge head or reputedly matching genitals. That Gyldayn's discussion of Mushroom prompts such speculation constitutes a perfect example of how the downward movement of grotesque realism is created, tipping the reader's gaze from the face to the lower, fertile bodily stratum where excretion and generation are effected, returning identities to base matter so they can create themselves anew (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 370-371). Gyldayn's reliance on Mushroom's catalogue of grim death (stabbings and poisonings) and vivacious license (seductions and debaucheries) engenders many Bakhtinian movements in his historical narrative.

Such discourse enters the tale at an apropos moment in Targaryen history. King Viserys, who first employs Mushroom, enjoys "the apex of Targaryen power," a point symbolised by there being "more *dragons* than ever before" (*Fire and Blood* 352) in Westeros. His successors engage in the civil war that thins those dragons out, however; Viserys's failure to address an ambiguous succession gives rise to two competing factions, the "blacks" supporting his daughter Rhaenyra and the "greens" supporting her half-brother Aegon. These two parties turn their glass cannons on each other, and kill off enough dragons that House Targaryen must subsequently reinvent itself. By making Gyldayn dependent on Mushroom, Martin studs the maester's discourse with Bakhtinian character-zones of grotesque realism whereby the agelast, in spite of himself, evokes the fluidity of Clutean thinning.

One of the more vociferous blacks, for example, is Rhaenyra's uncle Daemon. To assess why Daemon supported his niece, Gyldayn must weigh conflicting accounts of their relationship, including Mushroom's. Daemon and Rhaenyra were, the dwarf suggests, sexually involved, a scandal not because it is incestuous (the Targaryen practice of dynastic incest being enshrined in law) but because Daemon is already married. Gyldayn's consideration of *The Testimony of Mushroom* means that his discourse on the affair features various elements of grotesque realism. Daemon began the affair, says Mushroom, by giving Rhaenyra "kissing lessons."

> From there the prince went on to show his niece how best to touch a man to bring him pleasure, an exercise that sometimes involved Mushroom himself and his alleged enormous member. Daemon taught the girl to disrobe enticingly, suckled at her teats to make them larger and more sensitive, and flew with her on dragonback to lonely rocks in Blackwater Bay, where they could disport naked all day unobserved, and the princess could practice the art of pleasuring a man with her mouth. At night he would smuggle her from her rooms dressed as a page boy and take her secretly to brothels on the Street of Silk, where the princess could observe men and women in the act of love and learn more of these "womanly arts" from the harlots of King's Landing. (368)

Despite their physical proximity to the aristocracy, fools are lowly members of Westerosi society. Maester Cressen observes that "*even for a fool*, Patchface was a sorry thing" (*Clash* 3; emphasis added). Exaggerating the extent of Cersei Lannister's promiscuity, Tyrion suggests his sister has copulated with Moon Boy (*Storm* 2.492). Tyrion thus proposes a *mésalliance*, a meeting of people normally separated by social strata. Mushroom's supposed involvement of Mushroom in Daemon and Rhaenyra's trysts is another *mésalliance*. Such meetings combine "the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123) and are cited by Vice (152) as one of the key elements of grotesque discourse. They challenge the boundaries of station and estate by presenting radical, lived alternatives, demonstrating the artificiality of hierarchies and thus challenging them to renew themselves. The notion that brothel harlots would have anything to teach a Valyrian princess is an example of such a meeting. Mushroom's account of Rhaenyra and Daemon's trysts also contain strong grotesque-realist evocations of fertility and rebirth. Gyldayn's mention of Mushroom's "alleged enormous member," here apparently receiving tactile stimulation, conjures the image of the erect phallus, a venerable emblem of fertility. The image of fellatio, combining elements of feeding and sex, is a clear marker of Rhaenyra's involvement in the generic body (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 88). It is also an example of a grotesque-realist downward motion as she, and the reader, explore "the depths of the body" (371), where generation is effected. The liaison between niece and uncle contributes greatly to the outbreak of the war, and thus to the thinning of the world and the subsequent reinvention of the Targaryen dynasty. Martin evokes this notion, per Bakhtin, with reference to a series of evocations of the grotesque body.

The pattern continues. Various sources link Rhaenyra romantically to Ser Criston Cole of the Kingsguard. Gyldayn weighs two competing reports of this association. One tells of Ser Criston begging Rhaenyra to elope with him; she refuses (*Fire and Blood* 370-371). The tale is not far from one of courtly love.

But Gyldayn spends more time on Mushroom's "very different tale" in which Rhaenyra visited Ser Criston and "slipped off her cloak to reveal her nakedness beneath."

> Yet for all her beauty, her entreaties fell on deaf ears, for Ser Criston was a man of honor and true to his vows. Even when Rhaenyra used the arts she had learned from her uncle Daemon, Cole would not be swayed. Scorned and furious, the princess donned her cloak again and swept out into the night […] where she chanced to encounter Ser Harwin Strong, returning from a night of revelry in the stews of the city. Breakbones had long desired the princess, and lacked Ser Criston's scruples. It was he who took Rhaenyra's innocence, shedding her maiden's blood upon the sword of his manhood […] according to Mushroom, who claims to have found them in bed at break of day. (371)

The comparison of the tale of courtly love with a gory depiction of a broken hymen turns Gyldayn's assessment of Rhaenyra's eventful evening into something akin to the "consular diptychs" Bakhtin discusses. Such artefacts depict an idealised mythological scene on one panel and ribald parodies thereof "relocated in a specifically prosaic reality" ("Prehistory" 56-57) on the other. The latter liberates the former from the "narrow frames" of literary pretension while reiterating the symbolic kernel of the subject story. The pattern is evident here. Martin uses Mushroom to create a Bakhtinian character-zone whereby Glydayn describes Ser Harwin and Rhaenyra's liaison in a way that explicitly replaces courtly niceties (Harwin "lacked Ser Criston's scruples") with the anatomical realities of slap and tickle. Mushroom furthermore describes Harwin's interaction with Rhaenyra as a stab to her groin. This is hardly an innovative way of writing coitus, but it constitutes a forthright Bakhtinian debasement, focusing attention on the princess's lower anatomical stratum and what comes out of it. Rhaenyra is now not only a locus of fertility, a symbolic burden borne by all menstruant women, but potentially pregnant. Harwin's actions "have here a broadened, symbolic, ambivalent meaning; they at once kill and regenerate, put an end to the old life and start the new" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 205). The image of the couple being found abed by a lowly jester completes the volte-face, evoking an act of violence and destruction, then turning it into one of laughter and potential rejuvenation.

Rhaenyra, now damaged goods, is married off. Though her marriage produces three children, her husband dies young, and she turns back to Daemon, having further children with him. Not all of them survive. Gyldayn defers to Mushroom's eyewitness account of Rhaenyra miscarrying as Aegon is crowned:

> The princess shrieked curses all through her labour, calling down the wraith of the gods upon her half-brothers and their mother, the queen, and detailing the torments she would inflict upon them before she would let them die. She cursed the child inside her too, Mushroom tells us, clawing at her swollen belly as Maester Gerardys and her midwife tried to restrain her and shouting "*Monster, monster, get out, get out, GET OUT!*"
>
> When the babe at last came forth, she proved indeed a monster: a stillborn baby girl, twisted and malformed, with a hole in her chest where her heart should have been, and a stubby, scaled tail. Or so Mushroom describes her. (402-403)

This traumatic experience links Rhaenyra with Daenerys, who delivers a stillborn and, reportedly, deformed child (*Game* 731). This is an example of the grotesque-realist emphasis of the symbol of the open, unfinished body as "an incarnation of this world at the absolute lower stratum, as the swallowing up and generating principle, as the bodily grave and bosom, as a field which has been sown and in which new shoots are preparing to sprout" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 27). From the blow of her grotesque stillbirth, Daenerys rises, per Bakhtin, with new strength, finding "solace and strength in her dragon eggs, the symbol of her earlier identity" (Gresham 158). The experience, in Gresham's estimation, prompts her to hatch her three dragons, and thereby prompt to "the birth of a new community" (159) of followers who follow the mother of dragons, healer of a thinned world. Rhaenyra's actions after her miscarriage are comparable. She rises from her bloody bed to attend a black war council. Those who attend this meeting, like those who follow Daenerys into the Red Waste (*Clash* 171-175) know this is a do-or-die moment. Rhaenyra's half-brother is now King Aegon II, and by throwing their lot in with the princess they are attainting themselves. Like the piddling *khalassar* Daenerys leads, their army "leaves something to be desired" (*Fire and Blood* 403) But again like Daenerys, Rhaenyra has dragons, possibly three times as many of these potent weapons as the greens. "That," she says, "is how we shall win this war" (405-406). Rhaenyra, like Daenerys (Gresham 162), is acting like a true Targaryen, utilising her kinship to dragons at a crucial point in her career. Like Daenerys, Rhaenyra is empowered to become her true self via an authorial exercise in Bakhtinian grotesque realism.

The green party has its part in the thinning of the world. Martin's construction of character-zones of grotesque realism within Gyldayn's narrative allows him to sneak in some choice tales about their leader as well. The broad similarity of such tales to that of Rhaenyra's miscarriage is worth noting. Aegon initially cannot be located on his father's death:

> Princess Helaena was breaking her fast with her children when the Kingsguard came to her […] but when asked the whereabouts of Prince Aegon, her brother and husband, she said only "He is not in my bed, you may be sure. Feel free to search beneath the blankets."
>
> Prince Aegon was "at his revels," Munkun says in his *True Telling*, vaguely. *The Testimony of Mushroom* claims Ser Criston found the young king-to-be drunk and naked in a Flea Bottom rat pit, where two guttersnipes with filed teeth were biting and tearing at each other for his amusement whilst a girl who could not have been more than twelve pleasured his member with her mouth. (397-398)

In Bakhtinian terms Queen Helaena's statement is a billingsgate, a semi-ritualised insult. She knows full well that Aegon is likely to be practicing Westeros's (much-discussed; Carroll 96-100; Spector 182-183; Young 60-61) sexual double standard. Helaena's politeness ("you may be sure […] feel free […]") is "excessively servile" (Vice 158) a rhetorical affectation "ironic and ambivalent [and] on the brink of abuse" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 165)—she is drawing attention to Aegon's infidelity. For a woman to presume to do so overturns gender hierarchies by highlighting their iniquities, and thus challenges them to reform themselves. Helaena challenges her husband in this way as he faces another challenge to the privilege of his gender in the form of Rhaenyra's claim to the throne. Helaena knocks Aegon down, per Bakhtin, so that he can rise to this challenge. The challenge extends to the Kingsguard. "Curses," Bakhtin observes, "always indicate a downward motion, directed to the ground, the legs, the buttocks" (*Rabelais* 166). Blankets do not cover the head, accentuating the face as a crown might. They gesture towards the lower bodily stratum, the buttocks and genitals whereby one is linked with the generic body of the people, often while actually in bed. By inviting the Kingsuard to root around in bedding, Helaena imposes a similar downward motion upon those who—as the bodyguards—must help Aegon assert his claim.

If Helaena's billingsgate seems subtle, Mushroom's is not. The phrase "Flea Bottom rat pit" is a list of grotesque-realist evocations. The slugfest Aegon was reputedly watching is a blur of compromised somatic integrity, combatants "biting and tearing at each other," each using orifices to rip open the other's body. This violent image is quickly followed by a mésalliance as the girl unites the great with the insignificant via her act of fellatio. Both Helaena's passive-aggressive observation and Mushroom's ensuing story throw the subject down to earth to effect its rejuvenation; the prince emerges from the stews as a king who can press his claim to the throne. That contest has dire consequences for Martin's invented cosmos. In Aegon's camp as well as Rhaenyra's, therefore, as the cosmic flux of Clutean thinning begins, bodies open, jibes achieve deep-

seated symbolic significance, and the topsy-turvy effect of grotesque realism, privileging the lower stratum, comes into effect, evoking the cosmic shift.

Billingsgate against Aegon's party is not restricted to the king himself. When Lucerys, Rhaenyra's son, flies to Storm's End on his dragon Arrax to rouse the support of House Baratheon, he encounters Prince Aemond, the king's brother, who has just agreed to wed one of Lord Borros Baratheon's daughters and thus secure his support for the green party. Aemond, blinded in one eye by Lucerys in a childhood brawl, demands satisfaction from his cousin, and Lucerys leaves. "And there it might have ended," observes Glydayn, who relies on Mushroom's account of the encounter,

> but for the girl Maris. The secondborn daughter of Lord Borros, less comely than her sisters, she was angry with Aemond for preferring them to her. "Was it one of your eyes he took, or one of your balls?" Maris asked the prince, in tones sweet as honey. "I am *so* glad you chose my sister. I want a husband with all his parts." (421)

Maris's insult is another billingsgate, couching abuse in tones "sweet as honey." Aemond rises to Maris's challenge. Having arrived at Storm's End on his own dragon, Vhaegar, he pursues Lucerys and Arrax over Shipbreaker Bay and kills both dragon and rider. Aegon welcomes Aemond home as "the true blood of the dragon" (422). Maris Baratheon, as quoted by Mushroom, knocks Aemond down so he can reconstruct himself, and what he reconstructs himself as is a dragonslayer.

The blacks suffer further attrition. Another of their dragons (and its rider) are killed in a dogfight with Aegon and his beast, Sunfyre (434-435). Although Aegon is gravely wounded, the loss leaves the blacks wary of pressing their advantage. Gyldayn credits Mushroom, privy to the black war councils, with finding a solution. The fool echoes Rhaenyra's plan for finding riders for the wild dragons that haunt Dragonstone; these new dragon-riders, he quotes himself as saying, will be found "under the sheets and in the woodpiles, wherever you Targaryens spilled your silver seed" (440). The image of semen trickling over bedding and firewood is another evocation of lower, open, fertile bodies. This pattern of imagery is continued in "the Sowing of the Seeds," the search for Targaryen bastards willing to try to approach the wild dragons that haunt Dragonstone. The name once again evinces a downward movement, the deployment of potential into the fertile earth to effect regrowth. Not all sprout; various would-be dragon-riders are eaten by these ferocious, unpredictable beasts. Mushroom himself claims to have tried his luck and been sent "running across the ward of Dragonstone with the seat of his pantaloons on fire" for his troubles. Gyldayn describes this as "a droll moment in what was otherwise a ghastly business" (441), providing the corrective laughter required to turn death

and destruction into an occasion of rebirth in which a few dragons do consent to being ridden by little-known individuals. Mushroom's lavatorial mindset and flammable trousers therefore cast black hopes into the earth so that they may leap back out of the fertile grave, whereby the blacks to shore up their faltering draconic assets.

The democratization of such assets leads to two disastrous instances of thinning, however. Firstly, it emboldens Rhaenyra to descend on King's Landing. She captures the city without fire or blood, though also without the king. Aegon is spirited into hiding by loyalists, leaving only "his bed, empty, and his chamberpot, full" (455)—another downward movement that fertilises Westeros for his eventual re-emergence. Rhaenyra takes the throne, but like Cersei Lannister in Martin's other novels, her lust for power outruns her capacity to govern. Order in King's Landing falters, and Lord Celtigar, her covetous treasurer, is lynched. Large crowds fall under the sway of an orator Mushroom names as the Dead Shepherd, "filthy and unwashed and smelling of the sty," missing a hand and "as pale and foul as a corpse fresh-risen from its grave" (493). Under his influence King's Landing descends into anarchy. "The Shepherd held sway over half the city," Gyldayn reports,

> whilst strange lords and kings of misrule squabbled o'er the rest. Hundreds of men gathered around Wat the Tanner, who rode through the streets on a white horse, brandishing Lord Celtigar's severed head and bloody genitals and declaring an end to all taxes. In a brothel on the Street of Silk, the whores raised up their own king, a pale-haired boy of four named Gaemon, supposedly a bastard of the missing King Aegon II. Not to be outdone, a hedge knight named Ser Perkin the Flea crowned his own squire Trystane, a stripling of sixteen years, declaring him to be a natural son of the late King Viserys. (510)

Three demagogues—the Shepherd, Gaemon, and Trystane—thus rule petty urban kingdoms amid the disintegrating Targaryen regime. During this anarchy a mob, whipped into a frenzy by the Shepherd, storms the Dragonpit, the great dome where the Targaryen dragons lair, and kill the five beasts resident there amid great loss of human life (518-520). When her own dragon Syrax is killed, Rhaenyra flees the city.

The storming of the Dragonpit obliterates a third of Westerosi dragonkind; no single incident in Glydayn's history is a more effective example of Clutean thinning. It is therefore noteworthy that the riot takes place as Martin effects Bakhtin's notion of carnival time, a concept closely associated with grotesque realism. Carnival is that period in which the high seriousness of the agelasts is replaced by ritualised evocations of such realism, which cast down existing hierarchy to challenge them to reiterate themselves (Bakhtin, *Problems*

126-127). The crowning of a temporary mock king, a master of revels who overturns stated hierarchies by his low station and topsy-turvy policies, is one of the key rituals of this "piece of mythicised literary history" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 124; cf. Vice 150). Martin punctuates the undermining of Targaryen power by crowning three such lords of misrule. The Dead Shepherd—filthy, named for a humble plebeian profession, noted for his grotesquery and physical incompleteness—is "not separate from the rest of the world" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 26). He exhorts his flock to "walk barefoot through the world" (*Fire and Blood* 525), erasing their own divisions from the earth. Gaemon passes "one decree after another […] each more outrageous than the last" (525), overturning various axioms of Westerosi government, notably its patriarchy. He attracts followers when "an army of whores bestowed their favors freely on any man willing to swear his sword" (512) to the young potentate, the source of his power signalled by his nickname "King Cunny." Bodies "not separated from the world by clearly-defined boundaries" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 27) thus secure the suspension of the existing regime. Trystane meanwhile becomes a puppet of Larys Strong, King Aegon's spymaster, who emerges from "wherever he had been hiding" (*Fire and Blood* 524) when Rhaenyra flees. Strong, like his latter-day equivalent Varys, is physically deficient, being lame in one leg and nicknamed Clubfoot. With this inscrutable cripple whispering in his ear, Trystane overturns the rationally quantifiable fiduciary basis of the Targaryen regime, repealing taxes and cancelling debt (525). This trio of mock kings all embody, or take their strength from incidences of, grotesque realism. From a Clutean perspective, this makes sense. House Targaryen, which previously owed its supremacy to its draconic assets, will have to reconstitute its power on human principles. Gyldayn, an agelast, cannot see the rebirth Bakhtin identifies in carnival, hence his damning of the mock kings as outrageous. Nor could he credibly evoke the possibility of renewal without recourse to *The Testimony of Mushroom*, whose author witnessed this misrule. Mushroom appreciates that "[c]arnival is not just time wasted but time filled with profound and rich experience" (Clark and Holquist 302), chiefly that of the potential for rebirth inherent in the levelling of institutions. The fool saw the Dragonpit burn and collapse from a neighbouring hill, and Gyldayn quotes him as saying "Never have I seen a sight more terrible, more glorious" (522). With this character-zone Martin allows his sceptical focaliser to evoke both the power of the turb that overturns the basis of Targaryen regime and that of the family to be reborn from its ashes.

The other noteworthy consequence of the Sowing of the Seeds is the empowerment of two lowly individuals whose attempts to crown themselves bring about a similar moment of thinning. The great dragons Vermithor and Silverwing consent to be ridden by Hugh Hammer and Ulf White, a pair of illiterate plebeians. Sent to buttress black forces holding the town of Tumbleton

against Prince Daeron and his dragon Tessarion, they promptly defect and help Daeron capture the town, hoping for better rewards from the greens. The ambitions of the "Two Betrayers" swiftly run away with them, however, and Hugh begins styling himself as a king-in-waiting (526-527). As members of the green party conspire to deal with these upstarts, further black re-enforcements unexpectedly arrive, led by Ser Addam Velaryon riding the dragon Seasmoke. Hugh and Prince Daeron are killed by conspirators while hastening to mount their dragons, while Ulf White spends the battle "sleeping off a night of drinking at an inn called the Bawdy Badger" (530). Thanks to the hubris of the Two Betrayers three riderless dragons—Vermithor, Silverwing, and Tessarion—take to the air to oppose Seasmoke. Tessarion and Vermithor bear him to the ground and kill him, but both are mortally wounded in the crash; Silverwing goes feral, never to be ridden again (533-534).

Martin has Gyldayn heighten the pathos of this episode by suggesting Silverwing tried to coax Vermithor back into the air, not realising he was dead (536). With regard to the anthropoid authors of this horrendous episode of thinning, however, Gyldayn defers to Mushroom, who provides "most of what we know" (482) about the Two Betrayers, and who true to form wallows in grotesque realism. Hugh Hammer, he claims, is killed by green-party hardliner Jon Roxton, who thrusts his sword "deep into Hammer's belly, before opening the bastard from groin to throat." Tardily intercepted by bodyguards, Roxton supposedly fights bravely but "died when his foot slipped on a coil of Hugh Hammer's entrails" (531). Note the repetition of a violation of the pattern that Mushroom reports with regard to Harwin Strong and Rhaenyra (371). Just as Mushroom's grotesque-realist evocation of Rhaenyra's violation launches a process of thinning, so the culmination of that process is evoked by references to the violation of the lower bodily stratum. The undoing of Ulf White is similar. Ser Hobart Hightower, a knight of dubious repute, brings him a gift of (poisoned) wine. Ulf warily insists Ser Hobart drink with him. Gyldayn reiterates Mushroom's report of how the knight therefore

> let the squire fill his cup, drank deep, and asked for more. Once he saw Hightower drink, Ulf the Sot lived up to his name, putting down three cups before he began to yawn. The poison in the wine was a gentle one. When Lord Ulf went to sleep, never to reawaken, Ser Hobart lurched to his feet and tried to make himself retch, but too late. His heart stopped within the hour. "No man ever feared Ser Hobart's sword," Mushroom says of him, "but his wine cup was deadlier than Valyrian steel." (536-537)

Gyldayn agrees that Hightower redeems his dubious reputation. That he does so with his fingers down his throat, frantically trying to vomit, echoes the death of Jon Roxton. Mushroom again leavens a tale of violence with reference to the organs of digestion and excretion. Like the storming of the Dragonpit, the Second Battle of Tumbleton is, in Clutean terms, an occasion of terrible thinning, but those dragons die so that Daenerys can, generations later, heal an ailing world. Per Bakhtin, Martin punctuates Gyldayn's narrative with a character-zone in which grotesque realism evokes the potential for rebirth amid destruction.

The blacks eventually lose the war. Aegon resurfaces, captures Rhaenyra, and feeds her to his dragon Sunfyre, crippled in a succession of dogfights. The victory is pyrrhic, however. Sunfyre succumbs to his injuries and Aegon has been shattered by his own. His sons were killed in the war, and when he dies less than a year later he is succeeded by Rhaenyra's son, also named Aegon. From a Bakhtinian perspective, however, Aegon the Younger is better-qualified than his uncle to enact a reconstruction. During the war, as Gyldayn relates, he was caught in a naval battle while being ferried to safety in Essos. He witnesses the death of his older brother Jacaerys (shot down with his dragon) but mounts his small dragon Stormcloud and flies to safety on Dragonstone. Stormcloud, wounded in the escape, "died within the hour, hissing as the hot blood gushed black and smoking from his wounds." His nine-year-old rider was "white with terror, Mushroom tells us, shaking like a leaf and stinking of piss" (445). The detail of hysterical urination subjects the pathos of Stormcloud's death and Jacaerys being "swallowed by the sea" (447; note further references to eating), to the corrective of grotesque realism, as enacted by Aegon's open body. Bakhtin identifies "drenching in urine" as a form of grotesque debasement, and thus as a literary act that has an "essential link with birth, fertility, renewal, welfare" (*Rabelais* 148). This is significant because the reconstitution of the Targaryen dynasty rests on the shoulders of this poor lad. Princess Rhaenyra's ultimate victory comes not through her dragons, as she predicted, but through a son capable of enacting a new, post-draconic future for the dynasty. Aegon III is empowered in the same way Daenerys is generations later—via his kinship, discussed by Mushroom, to the generic body of the people, for which death is a milestone rather than a conclusion.

Crowned at age ten, Aegon III clashes repeatedly with his regents. The most serious such incident comes when they remove his Hand of the King, Thaddeus Rowan, from office in an attempted palace coup (681-682). The eleven-year-old king barricades himself in Maegor's Holdfast, the royal castle-within-a-castle, demanding Rowan's reinstatement. When soldiers try to winkle the boy out of his stronghold, they are confronted by his bodyguard, the mysterious foreign gladiator Sandoq the Shadow.

> Black of skin and black of hair, he stood almost seven feet tall. His face, which he oft kept hidden behind a black silk veil, was a mass of thin white scars, and his lips and tongue had been removed, leaving him both mute and hideous to look upon. It was said of him that he had been the victor of a hundred fights in the death pits of Meereen, that he had once torn out the throat of a foe with his teeth after his sword had shattered, that he drank the blood of the men he killed, that in the pits he had slain lions, bears, wolves and wyverns with no weapon but the stones he found upon the sands. (683-684)

Sandoq evinces various points of contact with grotesque realism. As a fictional gladiator he inescapably recalls his historical equivalents in ancient Rome, whose career arc—disenfranchised men placed in situations of mortal danger in order to show "enough courage to be granted [their] life" and thus be socially reborn (Wiedermann 165)—Bakhtin would recognise. His mouth is incapable of expressing his individuality via speech; it is good only for consuming, an activity for which it is always open, rendering him permanently part of the generic body. He actively pursues this role, biting flesh and drinking blood, turning his body into a conduit for repurposing living matter as fertiliser in which new bodies may be born. And he stoops to find stones with which to counteract danger in the arenas of Meereen, voluntarily descending to the earth and rising equipped to counteract attempts to toss him there permanently. Gyldayn relies on Mushroom's eyewitness account of what happens when the soldiers rush him, resulting in a character-zone replete with further Bakhtinian images. "It did not look so much like a swordfight," Mushroom avers, "as like a farmer reaping grain. With every stroke more stalks would topple, but these were living men who screamed and cursed as they fell" (684). Mushroom's ability to find replenishment in destruction turns this violence into an act of medievalist catering. The impression is furthered when Sandoq begins booting men off the drawbridge and onto the "hungry" spikes below, again describing combat as a prandial exercise. This symbolic dinner came, according to Mushroom, with a matching floor show; "The Shadow made a dance of it." When Aegon subsequently demands that Lord Rowan be released, Gyldayn reports that "His words rang across the inner ward, and in that moment, the broken boy Aegon III seemed every inch a king" (690). Small wonder therefore that when Aegon achieves majority he has Sandoq with him, glowering over his shoulder, as he dismisses his regents (704; cf. illustration 705). The Shadow is grotesque realism incarnate, turning violence into rebirth, empowering the young reformer to "challenge and redefine order" (Gresham 152) much as Daenerys later does.

Traumatised by the war, Aegon III matures into something of an agelast, a rigidly reserved man noted for never laughing. Mushroom, says Gyldayn, despaired of such an audience and skipped the country (*Fire and Blood* 706). From Martin's perspective, the fool is redundant. Vice (25) notes that in Bakhtinian terms characters exist to create literary discourse, not vice versa. Mushroom is a tool whereby Martin can impose character-zones of grotesque realism upon Gyldayn's history, evoking the dynamism of Clutean thinning as the agelast focaliser cannot credibly do himself. With Westeros's dragons all but extinct by Aegon III's majority, that thinning is done, and Aegon must build a new regime in place of what has been lost. Having empowered the king to make that shift, Mushroom's purpose in the narrative is complete.

It is worth noting, however, an incident in Martin's main sequence of novels in which a dwarfish jester uses grotesque realism to rescue a thinned world from agelast officialdom. Tyrion Lannister is well aware that his physical irregularity allies him in the popular imagination with "capering fools in motley" (*Game* 53)—the Mushrooms of Martin's medievalism, or the mock kings and feasting fools of Bakhtin's. He leans into this role via his drinking, womanising and wisecracking. Tyrion's chapters in *A Song of Ice and Fire* are character-zones in which an unpretentious hedonist speaks truth to the power of a frequently hypocritical post-draconic regime. It is he, for example, not the evasive and pretentious Cersei, who observes the likelihood that Joffrey's decision to have Sansa Stark publicly stripped was motivated by Joffrey's interest in Sansa's body and thus raising the matter of the thirteen-year-old king's own developing lower stratum (*Clash* 480). Defending this regime, he loses his nose, a worry given Bakhtin's equation of the nose with the phallus (*Rabelais* 316), though the subsequent depiction of his erection—"ugly, thick and veined, with a bulbous purple head" (*Storm* 1.394)—carefully places his enduring fertility on the narrative record. When he attacks the regime, he does so by killing his father while the elder Lannister is seated on the lavatory:

> The proof was the sudden stench, as his bowels loosened in the moment of death. *Well, he was in the right place for it*, Tyrion thought. But the stink that filled that privy gave ample evidence that the oft-repeated jape about his father was just another lie.
>
> Lord Tywin Lannister did not, in the end, shit gold. (2.499)

The death of Tywin, the most poker-faced agelast of the post-draconic Westerosi establishment, is marked with toilet humour. Rather than simply alleviating the gravity of Tyrion's parricide, such comedy provides a material demonstration of victory over the fear that the regime Tywin self-servingly upheld is a permanent state of affairs, a central function of Bakhtin's pattern of images (Glazener 113-114). Tywin joins the generic body and provides fertiliser within

which a new regime can germinate. Having started this process, Tyrion then begins his long journey to join forces with Daenerys and thus link her with the thinned land she must heal. Martin uses one dwarf with a prominent penis and a good line in smutty jokes to empower one Targaryen to adjust to the loss of the dragons; he uses another to empower the dynasty to bring them back.

This accounts for the impact of Martin's narrative. The tale resonates due to the vividness of his characters and their aggressive, often brutal struggle. In *Fire and Blood* the toxic ambition that fuels Aegon II and Rhaenyra's war is made all the more apparent by the alacrity with which they abuse their cosmically privileged position in relation to the dragons, and thus squander these irreplaceable wonders. In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, meanwhile, characters such as Tywin Lannister (*Storm* 1.263) and Hizdahr zo Loraq (*A Dance with Dragons* 812) have their mean-spiritedness and lack of insight and gnosis signalled clearly by their refusal to engage with the reawakening of the world demonstrated by the re-emergence of dragons. That is to say that Martin makes use of formalised Recovery, the neo-Romantic notion that the supernatural accentuates the natural, identified by Tolkien (146) as a key function of modern fantasy narrative. The vividness of the emotions and ambitions that drive these plots derives from the fact that both the events of *Fire and Blood* and the game of thrones are taking place in relation to drastic changes in the fabric of the written world—Clutean thinning in the former case, the healing that thinning implies in the latter. As identified by Gresham, the healing phase of this history is clearly evoked via Martin's use of grotesque realism in his depiction of Daenerys's body and what comes out of it. As shown here, the thinning required to enable that healing is similarly evoked by such matters as Rhaenyra's liaison with Daemon, her miscarriage, the billingsgate against Aegon II and Aemond, the Sowing of the Seeds, the outbreak of carnival time in King's Landing, and Aegon III's choice of coercive leverage in asserting his right to reconstruct the dynasty after the war. Wheels are evident within wheels here. Both the thinning and healing of this world—and the human emotions and drives they serve to Recover—are evoked by the full pattern of death and rebirth implied by Bakhtinian grotesquery.

The excuse for such discourse is another recognisable cog in a Bakhtinian machine. Choosing to focalise the thinning from the perspective of an agelast, Martin inserts purpose-written character-zones in which he affects the language of Mushroom, just as he uses Tyrion Lannister to speak truth to the agelast regime that succeeds the faltering Targaryens. These discoursal plaques allows the literary effects Gresham identifies to come into effect—and indeed to signal the capacity of the thinning as a precondition of the healing. Westeros hurts, as so many fantasy worlds do, so that it can heal. Bakhtin's process of symbolically interdependent destruction and renewal is a fitting

pattern of imagery for a narrative principally concerned with human responses to a process of death and rebirth. Martin's use of libidinous, physically deficient, slyly irreverent commentators to voice it demonstrates his understanding of the rhetorical value of these "little men with foul tongues" (*Fire and Blood* 706).

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1. MINUTES: Take and write up the minutes from the quarterly Steward Meetings per year held via conference call. After the Call to Order, the Recording Secretary takes attendance and reports to the President the names of the attending Stewards. The previous meeting minutes are then voted on for acceptance with or without corrections. If corrections, additions, etc., need to be made, the Recording Secretary will make any changes, corrections, etc., and then post the amended minutes to the Steward's List. The February meeting's focus is the annual budget for the Society. The July or August meeting usually takes place at Mythcon.

2. ANNUAL REPORT: Every year, each Steward writes a report for the Society's Annual Report (AR). As a non-profit organization, the Society is mandated by California law to write and submit an AR. The Recording Secretary creates a short summary of the year's meeting minutes.

3. ELECTION RECORDING: Every three years, the Society holds an election for all the Steward offices. The Membership Steward creates both an electronic and paper ballot which is sent to all members. Any member can choose to run for any Steward office. The election period is generally a month long (1 November - 1 December). The Recording Secretary reads and records all submitted ballots. At the end of the election period, the election results are tabulated by the Recording Secretary and reported to the Stewards via the Steward's List. The results are published in *Mythprint*, the Society newsletter.

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The Inner Consistency Of Mythology: The Mythological Kernel And Adaptation In *The Golden Compass*

Douglas A. Barnick

> Fantasy has also an essential drawback: it is difficult to achieve. Fantasy may be, as I think, not less but more sub-creative; but at any rate it is found in practice that "the inner consistency of reality" is more difficult to produce, the more unlike are the images and the rearrangements of primary material to the actual arrangements of the Primary World.
>
> —J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories" 48

J.R.R. Tolkien asserts that an "arresting strangeness" (48) is fundamental to any conception of fantasy. Since creating an "inner consistency of reality" (47), a hinge point between the *real* and the *unreal*, draws the reader into the world of the fantasy created, they experience this fictional Secondary World as both fantastic and possible.[1] While much has been written about how fantasy fiction relates its material and messages to the reader, especially with regards to Tolkien's corpus,[2] what has been overlooked in examinations of fantasy fiction is how mythology acts as a way of investigating the relation between the real (the mimetic) and the unreal (the marvellous). The real/mimetic is that which in fantasy fiction is drawn from or related to the reader's actual world; it is an imitation of that real world, but which is couched in the unreal/marvellous. The unreal/marvellous are the fantastical, often magical, elements in fantasy fiction that are impossible or inconceivable in reality. Rosemary Jackson clarifies that the fantastic "*enters a dialogue with the 'real' and incorporates that dialogue as part of its essential structure*" (36, italics in original)—that the fantastic is situated between the unreal/marvellous on one hand and the real/mimetic on the other. This paper develops upon the idea that mythology functions as a kernel—a necessary, core element—of fantasy fiction, although specifically regarding Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass*. Of particular importance is the narrative

[1] See Tolkien's "On Fairy-stories" for a complete description of "Secondary World" (46-56).

[2] For an analysis of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* with regards to its narrative development and cohesiveness, see Brian Rosebury's chapter "*The Lord of the Rings*: Achieving the Narrative," pp. 60-88.

structure through which the convention of mythology functions by inviting the reader to relate the real/mimetic to the unreal/marvellous. The novel's major thematics (its core meanings)—the *bildungsroman* (Lyra's self-actualization) and (mis)interpretation (deciphering truth from untruth)—are couched in the marvellous. Critical engagement with the marvellous through the mythological construction of the alethiometer—the golden compass Lyra consults to aid in her quest—reveals these thematics as imbued in the mimetic imitation of the reality Pullman's novel creates.

Thematics is a central element of the mimetic regarding the categorization of the novel within the genre of fantasy fiction. It is also fundamental to an analysis of the Sega Corporation's adaptation of *The Golden Compass* video game *as* fantasy fiction, which itself adapts elements from the film, both of which released in 2007.[3] Since the video game uses the title from Pullman's novel, and thus shares a franchise with the novel, it adopts, perhaps undeservedly, its status *as* fantasy fiction. However, the video game's adaptation from the novel, and to a visual and aural extent from the film, challenges Jackson's argument that the real/unreal relationship in fantasy fiction is its essential feature. Discerning the mimetic from the marvellous in terms of the video game's themes is subverted by the shift in the audience's mode of engagement with the alethiometer from reading to interacting. In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon suggests that "there has been a long debate recently about whether interactivity and storytelling are at odds with one another" (13). Recent critical studies of digital narratives have, however, sought to argue the interdependence of storytelling and interactivity. Frans Mäyrä and Amy M. Green argue extensively over the necessity of the interrelation between player interaction and narrative development in video games. A seminal point in Mäyrä's book is the convergence of player and video game in co-constructing interpretive contexts for studying the culture of video games (13). He specifically underscores the notion of "playing as a form of understanding" (14), especially with regards to the balance of play as decoding (38). Green similarly (and rightfully) echoes Mäyrä's notion, and while her primary focus in analyzing digital storytelling is the story itself, she does examine how gameplay elements function in progressive and reductive ways to the service of the story (15-17), as well as how player agency is a key element to story development (44). Reading, viewing, and performing a narrative are different activities requiring different kinds of agency from the participants, and while my analysis here is not primarily concerned with *viewing* or *playing through* a narrative, I am

[3] I have elected to leave out the 2019 HBO series *His Dark Materials* from my analysis, since it occurs after the release of the video game and is not part of the novel-to-film-to-videogame sequence discussed in this paper.

concerned with the changes that occur to narrative's relation to mythology when an participant's engagement shifts from reading to performing. While Hutcheon somewhat elides the narrative shift that occurs between novel and video game, it is my contention that the adaptation of the alethiometer (the mythological) in *The Golden Compass* disengages the player from experiencing the video game as fantasy fiction. The video game glosses over the core element of the relation between the real and the unreal that relates the video game to its source text.

This paper examines Philip Pullman's novel *The Golden Compass* and its film and video game adaptations in two ways. First, it is necessary to determine that the core element of fantasy in *The Golden Compass* novel is mythology and bound to the function of the alethiometer. The alethiometer acts as Pullman's specific way of structuring the novel by condensing myth and narrative into a comprehensive point of focus—a structure that the film replicates via the dramatic performances, as well as visually and aurally. Second, the paper explores the functional changes that occur to the alethiometer when Pullman's story is adapted to the mode of video game. While the alethiometer remains a convention in the video game used to navigate the story, the video game privileges narrative action, which mutes thematics (the mimetic mode of understanding). The alethiometer, then, does not function as a necessary component that invites the player, like the reader, to investigate the real within the unreal; resultingly, the video game cannot be considered fantasy fiction. Additionally, the film serves as a sort of intermediary between the two versions. While not the central focus of my investigation of mythology, it bears mention that the film does provide a visual and aural basis for the video game, what Green might suggest is part of "the intersection of the literary and the ludic" (136), and that would serve as a point of engagement for the player had they also viewed the film prior to playing the video game. However, the intertextual referencing (which as a corollary to literature might be understood as extradiegetic) enabled through the player's engagement with the alethiometer can enhance the player's story experience by synthesizing contextual elements from both the novel and the film into the video game.

Mythology And The Kernel

Before analyzing the function of mythology in *The Golden Compass*, it is necessary first to define the sense in which I employ the term. Mythology has a broad range of interpretive meanings, although commonly referring to ancient cultural modes of understanding, such as Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Norse gods and goddesses. In its traditional uses, mythology "served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do [and] to provide a rationale for social customs and observances" (Abrams 178). Other conceptions of

mythology refer more generally to recurrent patterns of images and plot, much like Jungian archetypes operating as reference points for the comprehension of everything from literature to commercial advertisements. However, in this paper, I refer to mythology through the framework of Heidegger's definition, that mythology functions as a mode of "unconcealing" or "'bring[ing] into view'" (111). The question here is, of course, what do these related processes disclose? My application of mythology can be understood to aid the reader in the discovery of meaning located in the real, which is fundamental to the thematics of *The Golden Compass*. In his examination of modernist mythopoeia, Michael Bell remarks on Heidegger's view of myth stating "Heidegger […] thought that modern man had lost the sense of Being, and he similarly emphasizes that myth is present not in the object seen, but in the *way of seeing*: for myth is 'the only appropriate kind of relation to Being in its appearance'" (121, emphasis mine). Bell further argues that mythology as a "way of seeing" has become "[b]y the end of the twentieth century […] a means of investigation" (128). Mythology is not in and of itself specific to an object, person or place that *is* mythical, but rather as a way of evoking, according to Julie Sanders, "age-old, even universal, themes, alongside time- and place-specific issues" (63). While Sanders refers to mythology as a set of central stories that inform a text, her statement suggests mythology's investigative capability. In this sense, mythology has a similar function to Tolkien's "inner consistency of reality" (47). Whereas Tolkien's term is fundamental to fantasy fiction in general, I propose that mythology is fundamental to *The Golden Compass* as a relational vehicle between the real and the unreal. Mythology is the basis of what makes the novel fantasy fiction; it functions as a *kernel* of fantasy.

It is important to note that the use of the term *kernel* is not new to analyses of literature and language, and that, for my purposes, *kernel* refers specifically to mythology as a logical and necessary part of *The Golden Compass* as fantasy fiction. Notably, Roland Barthes discusses, in his chapter "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," two prime components or functions of narratives, "cardinal functions" and "catalyses," that drive and sustain narrative action. While catalyses, he suggests, "'fill' narrative space" and sustain "the contact between the narrator and the receiver of the narrative" (108, 109), cardinal functions, commonly referred to as kernels, "constitute veritable *hinges* of the narrative" and are both "consecutive and consequential" (108, emphasis mine).[4] "[H]inges," which "inaugurate or conclude an uncertainty" (108), are a necessary component for the forward movement of the plot structure of a narrative. While this paper does develop how mythology is linked to the

[4] Note that Barthes's term "cardinal function" is equivocal to the terms "kernel" and "hinge."

narrative structure, since the alethiometer, too, is partly a hinge, I am here rather suggesting a revision to the idea of the kernel. Mythology as a kernel is fundamental to discussing relations between the real and the unreal in the narrative, and not simply as a way to differentiate between events that drive the plot and those that do not.

ALETHIOMETER AND NARRATIVE: THE MYTHOLOGICAL KERNEL

The central object of discovery and comprehension in *The Golden Compass*, and indeed throughout Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, is the alethiometer. The alethiometer is first and foremost a "novum": a term Darko Suvin defines, and Adam Roberts refines, which indicates an essential element or object in a fictional secondary world, here discussed in science fiction, that "puts us [the reader] in a position of rewriting [and] reconceptualising the reality with which we are familiar" (Roberts 20). Borrowing from Samuel Delany, Roberts also identifies the novum as "a door through which we step into a different way of looking at things" (20). The concept of applying alternative perspectives is an essential element for both science and fantasy fictions. Tolkien's notion of "recovery" closely resembles the Suvinian novum: "[r]ecovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining—regaining of a clear view […] [by] 'seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them'—as things apart from ourselves" (57-58). By definition, the novum of the alethiometer, which in part links to the notion of recovery, should be related to the function of mythology, as it is both a convention that aids the reader in engaging with the marvellous fictional world and one that operates as an investigative tool. Readers know that mythology is marvellous and that it creates a sense of estrangement with the novel's fictional elements, but it also enables readers to understand the significance of those elements in the development of the central meanings in the story. Furthermore, to bring together the concepts of mythology, kernel, narrative, and novum into an analysis of the alethiometer in *The Golden Compass* is to examine the relation between the real/mimetic and the unreal/marvellous. In this way, the alethiometer serves two interrelated functions: first, it invites the reader to engage with the mythological, thus partly sustaining Tolkien's "inner consistency of reality" (47) that draws the reader into the fictional Secondary World created; and second, it establishes mythology as a mode of investigation for the novel's thematic topics, and which aids in decoding and interpreting them. Therefore, through the alethiometer's dual process, the reader is invited to reconceptualize the unfamiliar and marvellous in the story as a way through which the mimetic—the novel's major themes of the bildungsroman and (mis)interpretation—are effected and commented upon.

Beyond being the namesake for *The Golden Compass*, which denotes its significance to the plot structure, the alethiometer's name derives from the Greek goddess of truth, Aletheia, and etymologically from a river in the Greek underworld, Lethe, which means forgetfulness or concealment. The alethiometer, then, is both an object connected to mythology in its more typical sense, and also a paradoxical interplay of truth and untruth discovery, both of which are forms of knowledge requiring interpretation of the discovered information via Lyra and the reader. Even the alethiometer's description suggests something uncertain about its function. While Lyra prepares to leave Jordan College to continue her tutelage under her (as yet unbeknownst) mother, Mrs. Coulter, the Master gives her the alethiometer and indicates that it "tells you the truth" (*Compass* 73). Farder Coram, on the other hand, suggests to Lyra while she attends a meeting to decide the actions the Gyptian's should take against the Gobblers (child kidnappers) that "it's a truth measure" (125). The most useful definition of the alethiometer's function comes from Lyra, whose reading and interpretation of the device indicates that it produces a kind of knowledge, although, as she states, "this is a different kind of knowing . . . . It's like understanding" (150). The alethiometer metaphorically operates as a mode of discovery; even mythology's usefulness in discovering untruth, Heidegger suggests, "is not fixed in falsity" (67). The alethiometer does not reveal or unconceal a *correct* way for Lyra to proceed through her journey or for the reader to comprehend the novel's central themes. Rather, the alethiometer provides for Lyra and the reader a perspective through which to understand the events that occur in the story, as well as the expectation for active reader interpretation of the meaning of the compass and of the attending thematic developments.

Readers understand that Lyra can use the alethiometer to elicit information, and while told what some symbols mean, readers remain ignorant as to *how* these specific symbols mean. For instance, Farder Coram explains the specifics of the golden compass's symbols:

> "All these pictures round the rim," said Farder Coram, holding it delicately toward John Faa's blunt strong gaze, "they're symbols, and each one stands for a whole series of things. Take the anchor, there. The first meaning of that is hope, because hope holds you fast like an anchor so you don't give way. The second meaning is steadfastness. The third meaning is snag, or prevention. The fourth meaning is the sea. And so on, down to ten, twelve, maybe a never-ending series of meanings." (126)

The alethiometer is the vehicle of discovery, a motif enabling the reader to engage with the marvellous, while the symbols here represent a series of meanings that Lyra's use of the device brings into perspective for the reader. However, the symbols require an act of decoding and interpretation on the part

of their reader (Lyra), and, since the narrative's focus is through Lyra, the reader is invited into the process of unconcealing the alethiometer's meanings. The golden compass becomes a suture point in conjunction with Lyra for the reader to enter into the novel's fictional world. Moreover, the alethiometer begins as a process of unconcealing the unfamiliar, as part of a reading/interpreting strategy for the novel as a whole.

Lyra's reading of the alethiometer's information via its symbols, which are described along the lines of visions, simultaneously illustrates the "arresting strangeness" (Tolkien 48) of the novum and further aids in the reader's comprehension and interpretation of the story, even though we are again ignorant of Lyra's exact process of interpreting the visions she sees. Like the notion of unconcealing, Lyra's visions aid in reader comprehension of the novel as a kind of discovery process. As Lyra tells Farder Coram about how she finds the alethiometer's meaning, we get a description of her feeling of learning to know:

> "I kind of see 'em. Or feel 'em rather, like climbing down a ladder at night, you put your foot down and there's another rung. Well, I put my mind down and there's another meaning, and I kind of sense what it is. Then I put 'em all together. There's a trick in it like focusing your eyes." […] It was a sensation of such grace and power that Lyra, sharing it, felt like a young bird learning to fly. (151)

The complex ladder metaphor and bird simile here, like the complex function of the alethiometer and unconcealing, are not unlike the reading process. The above descriptions enable a sense of demystification of the alethiometer's function, while they are also metaphysical descriptions that defamiliarize the exact process of comprehension because Lyra must trust what she has discovered. In other words, the reader is, like Lyra, drawn into the possibilities of knowing and eliciting meaning, while always uncertain as to the outcome of knowing such information. However, Lyra's command of the alethiometer is always moving toward an understanding of the compass itself, even if she does not always fully comprehend the information it provides. This is not unlike the viewer of the film whose immersion into the story is one of mystification and anticipation enabled by their limited agency in knowing what occurs next. However, increasingly progressive throughout the novel is Lyra's naturalization of the alethiometer's function: "know[ing] where most of the symbols are […] [w]ithout even having to think about it," and feeling "her mind settle into the right meanings like a complicated diagram" (204). Near the end of the novel, the questions she asks the compass "sorted themselves out into their constituent symbols as naturally as her muscles moved her limbs" (327). Lyra's process of understanding the alethiometer's answers—of learning to know—parallels the

reader's movement from being unfamiliar with the marvellous, fictional elements in the text to being familiar with them, to experiencing them as part of the believable rendering of the fantastic and its interconnectedness to the reader's experience. The reader's contact with the fictional elements of the novel therefore becomes part of their movement towards understanding the narrative and comprehending the marvellous occurrences in the story.

Because reading *The Golden Compass* requires this movement on the part of the reader from experiencing the unfamiliar as familiar, plot forwarding, such as Barthes has outlined, cannot, in itself, be an analytical way of investigating the thematics that the novel illustrates. Structural analysis of the text's narrative alone does not indicate *how* or *why* the text develops its multiple levels of meaning through the themes associated with Lyra's process of self-actualization and (mis)interpretation. While, on the one hand, Barthes's notion of cardinal functions serves to articulate the "moments of risk of the narrative" (109), they do not, and cannot, articulate how those hinge moments in the plot structure, moments that "inaugurate or conclude an uncertainty" (108), reveal and offer a way to investigate the relation between the real and the unreal. On the other hand, the alethiometer's way of unconcealing, its function as a way of discovery, furthermore aids in the unpacking of the major themes in the novel. Lyra uses the alethiometer at moments that are narratively important, since her use of it simultaneously initiates an uncertainty and signals to the reader a thematic component that Pullman wants the reader to engage with.

The *bildungsroman* structure built into *The Golden Compass*, the theme of Lyra's personal growth and self-actualization, is thus carried by the motif of the alethiometer. The alethiometer operates as part of the narrative strategy in the novel that conceptualizes thematic components that intersect with the plot. The mythological kernel in the novel should be understood as operating linearly and consecutively like Barthes's notion of cardinal functions in plot, but that also clusters together interrelated episodes. Through consideration of the function of mythology in the novel, readers are aided in conceptualizing and investigating the meaning of the real. To illustrate this distinction, it is necessary to examine the episode where Lyra answers Lord Faa's question concerning the Gobblers's defence of Bolvangar (204), which is significant to both the narrative action of the plot and Lyra's personal growth:

> "It's just like the witch's daemon said, Lord Faa. There's a company of Tartars guarding the station, and they got wires all round it. They don't really expect to be attacked, that's what the symbol reader says. But Lord Faa […] It's telling me something else. In the next valley there's a village by a lake where the folk are troubled by a ghost." (204-5)

Lyra's facilitation of the alethiometer's message introduces a major plot component and also reveals a major thematic line embedded within it: the moral obligation of the Gyptians to return the missing children to their families (including those children not belonging to the Gyptians), which Lyra notes is "important too" (206). This plot moment intersects with Lyra's maturation in terms of her own sense of duty and moral obligation. The ghost turns out to be one of the missing Gyptian children, Tony Makarios, whose daemon, a novum representing the outward manifestation of the soul, was cut away (213). Lyra's discovery through the alethiometer drives and sustains narrative action, where rescuing Tony emotionally charges, and thus partially determines, the Gyptians's attack on Bolvangar later in the novel. Thus, this episode as a cardinal function, as a consecutive and consequential hinge between plot moments, does not, in this case, enable the reader to interpret meaning in the novel other than through foreshadowing of plot development. However, Lyra's use of the alethiometer underscores a corollary thematic to her maturity—that of questioning authority as a process of self-actualization. Her quest to save Tony introduces a critical, interpretive question for investigating thematics: what is the relationship between Lyra's challenging of authority and the development of meaning in the novel? The alethiometer partly answers this question by introducing and intersecting with another thematic topic: (mis)interpretation. For instance, the climactic episode of Roger's death, where Lord Asriel creates a link between Lyra's and Will's worlds by severing Roger's daemon (393), is in fact an intersection of the thematic topics of self-actualization and (mis)interpretation. Lyra's final reading of the alethiometer signals to the reader the importance of the interpretive act. While consulting the alethiometer about Mrs. Coulter's intentions toward Asriel and Lyra, it once again tells Lyra something else:

> She bent over the instrument, concentrating furiously as the needle darted this way and that. It moved almost too fast to follow; Roger, looking over her shoulder, couldn't even see it stop, and was conscious only of a swift flickering dialogue between Lyra's fingers turning the hands and the needle answering, as bewilderingly unlike language as the Aurora was. […] "She wants something I've got, because Lord Asriel wants it too. They need it for this . . . for this experiment, whatever it is . . . " […] *Something was troubling her, and she didn't know what it was. She was sure that this* something *that was so important was the Alethiometer* […]. *She felt that something had gone out of her during that last reading*. (359-360, emphasis mine)

Since Lyra misinterprets the alethiometer, because, as we find out, what Asriel "wanted was a child" (380) and not the golden compass, Lyra's final

consultation with the golden compass in the novel indicates part of her maturation process, the recognition of her fallibility. Lyra's feeling that "something had gone out of her" gestures toward her difficulty in consulting the alethiometer in the second and third books of Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*, which parallels her maturation—her "changing" (*Subtle* 259). The more Lyra becomes an adult, the less capable she is of consulting the alethiometer and of questioning authority as she did in the past, until, finally, she loses her ability to intuitively consult the alethiometer altogether (*Amber* 488-91). Ultimately, Lyra's ability to accurately interpret the alethiometer is inversely proportionate the trajectory of her personal growth. The alethiometer facilitates for the reader the understanding of real/mimetic—the novel's themes—while relating them through the unreal/marvellous—the alethiometer. In this way, mythology is both part and facilitator of the real and the unreal.

Subsequently, what we are meant to interrogate as readers here is the notion that Lyra's maturation, as enabled through the alethiometer, functions as a foil for Pullman's investigation of religious doctrine and authority throughout the trilogy. Mrs. Coulter's plan to destroy Lyra to "prevent another Fall" (*Subtle* 314) connects to Lyra's ability to read the alethiometer "by grace" (*Amber* 491), since Lyra's maturation and self-actualization throughout the trilogy is couched in Christian religious terminology. The notion of religious dogmatism, the control the Magisterium (the Church) attempts to assert over man, is scrutinized while it is reflected in Lyra's developmental process. While the reader champions Lyra's cause (her quest), it is the fulfillment of that quest which foregrounds the dangers of misinterpretation. The meaning of alethiometer as both truth-discovery and untruth-discovery takes on an additional significance, since it is both an aid for the reader in discerning the themes in the trilogy, and also functions as a metaphor indicating the necessity for readers to be cautious of how culture is interpreted in the primary world, the reader's reality. Pullman's cultural critique of the real through the alethiometer suggests a relevance to the reader that extends beyond the novel's narrative.

The thematic topic of (mis)interpretation that Pullman's alethiometer points the reader towards further comments on the alethiometer's function as a reading strategy for the narrative as a whole, and even the artistic process involved in creating *The Golden Compass* fantasy fiction. Throughout the novel, there is a continual synthesizing process that occurs between Lyra and the alethiometer. As previously noted, the alethiometer eventually becomes an extension of her body's natural movements (*Compass* 32); however, the inverse is also true, and Lyra inhabits the paradoxical functions of the mythological alethiometer: she tells truths and untruths, she unconceals and conceals. After being caught at Bolvangar and rescued by Mrs. Coulter from the intercision

(daemon-cutting) process, Lyra constructs an elaborate story to earn sympathy from Mrs. Coulter:

> With every second that went past, with every sentence [Lyra] spoke, she felt a little strength flowing back. And now that she was doing something difficult and familiar and never quite predictable, *namely lying*, she felt a sort of mastery again, *the same sense of complexity and control that the alethiometer gave her*. She had to be careful not to say anything obviously impossible; she had to be vague in some places and invent plausible details in others; she had to be an *artist*, in short. (281, emphases mine)

While initially this passage elucidates part of the mystery of the alethiometer's function, that it provides a "sense of complexity and control," it also signifies how the novel is constructed as fantasy fiction, as a dialogue between the mimetic and the marvellous, to again use Jackson's terms (36). Lyra here constructs a narrative, and Pullman suggests that *this* narrative, *The Golden Compass* as fantasy fiction, metaphorically operates as Lyra and the alethiometer do: "careful not to say anything impossible" and "be vague in some places and invent plausible details in others." The liar/artist here is both Lyra and Pullman. The mythological kernel in Pullman's novel, the alethiometer, enables him to couch the real within the unreal, and to bring into view the significant thematic topics of Lyra's self-actualization and (mis)interpretation which can then be investigated.

ADAPTING THE MYTHOLOGICAL KERNEL

Mythology in *The Golden Compass* novel functions as a reading guide for interpreting the text and as a way to investigate the real/unreal relationship. The reader is positioned in an interpretive role, which aids them in the possibility of decoding and eliciting meaning from the text. This is a central function of novel's narrative. The interpretive role that readers inhabit—part of their identification with the text that engages both the themes and the motif of the alethiometer—can be characterized, in Hutcheon's words, as the "space of the mind […] that novels portray so well" (14). However, it is that very same space of the mind that Hutcheon notes "videogames […] cannot easily adapt" (14). Video game adaptations necessarily elide the novelistic convention of thematics because they are difficult, if not impossible, to reproduce. Moreover, Hutcheon argues that the movement from the telling mode of novels to the interacting mode of video game engagement "entails changes both in the story and even in the importance of story itself" (13). I would add here that the film adaptation maintains the investigatory function of the alethiometer and its use in developing hinge moments in the narrative and thematic development. The same anticipatory ambivalence in Lyra's consultations with the alethiometer

occur in both the novel and the film. And while Lyra's maturation and self-actualization are accelerated via the necessary condensing of the film's mode of representation, the effect is similar, if not as nuanced, as the novel's. The "changes" that Hutcheon suggests occur when stories are adapted from novel to video game are, in *The Golden Compass*, alterations to the mythological function of the alethiometer. Furthermore, I argue that the interpretive role of the player changes along with the shift in the mode of engagement. In this section, I explore both what *The Golden Compass* video game adaptation does to considerations of the mythological kernel in the novel, and to the film to a lesser degree, as well as what the video game indicates about the adaptation process.

What makes fantasy fiction indeed *fantasy* is in a video game not as simple as rendering interactive what a novel creates textually or a film produces visually and aurally. Certainly reproducing in video game form the fictional Secondary World from the novel is necessary to indicate that the video game's fictional world is virtual, but what is the difference, then, between a virtual world and a fantasy world? While this question is too broad to answer in full given the scope of this paper, subsequent questions can be addressed: if a major structural element of a novel is mythological, as it is in *The Golden Compass*, how can mythology be adapted from novel or film to video game? Does a change in the mode of representation from novel or film to video game alter *The Golden Compass*'s original status as fantasy fiction? Does it even matter if mythology is adapted? This section explores first, how the kind of audience engagement in *The Golden Compass* video game subverts novelistic development of the mythological kernel and the real/unreal relationship. In other words, the transition from a *telling* (or a *viewing*) to an *interacting* mode of engagement in the adaptation from the novel and film to the video game privileges a plot-based narrative over the thematic development enabled through mythology, and even the type of agency that would be required. Second, this section examines the shift to interactivity with the alethiometer which enables for the player an intertextual engagement that brings together the novel's (and the film's) and the video game's narratives. The interpretive role of the player, therefore, negates the thematic investigation that the reader fulfills in the novel and film and privileges the facilitation of contextual material from the novel and film in the video game. Since the video game is visually an aurally borrowing directly from the film, it is necessary to discuss the scope and limitations of the video game's dependence upon the film. Ultimately, the video game adaptation reworks part of the source-text's narrative structure—mythology—and creates an interrelation with the novel and film. However, because adaptation changes the function of the mythological kernel, such that the real/unreal relationship fundamental to the novel is muted, *The Golden Compass* video game does not participate in the established genre of fantasy fiction.

In explaining her theory of adaptation from novel to video game—telling to interacting—Hutcheon argues that an "audience's engagement is *different in kind* than when we are told or shown the same story" (26, emphasis mine). However, it is worth noting that Hutcheon does not develop this key notion through analysis of fantasy-like video games. In *The Golden Compass* video game, this different "kind" of engagement that players have with story disrupts what mythology enables in the novel. Hutcheon also suggests a similarity between telling and showing (reading and viewing) that the adaptation from novel to film maintains because of the uninterrupted interpretive agency of the reader and viewer—the hinge moments of discovery are narratively identical, even though the film renders them visually and aurally. Interacting, which I will examine more deeply later, interrupts the storytelling experience in *The Golden Compass* and those hinge moments in which revelatory and transitional aspects necessary to thematic development are customarily established. For example, while at Dr. Lanselius's house, the player, through the avatar presented as Lyra, is given the objective of using the alethiometer to pick out Serafina Pekkala's bow from amongst those resting on the fence. While picking out the correct bow, Dr. Lanselius tells Farder Coram of the witches' prophecy about Lyra, who will "save the world," but must remain ignorant of the task—that she cannot be guided (Sega). In terms of understanding the story the player plays out, this information proves irrelevant because remaining ignorant of her task is a moot point, since it is the player who controls Lyra's actions, and it is the design of the game's logic that the player is constrained by the linear sequence of objectives. Like the novel's narrator, the player becomes part of the diegetic function of the story, what Mäyrä and Green would argue is essential to the co-constructing of meaning in the video game (Mäyrä 13; Green 28). Both Mäyrä and Green have accurately espoused the essentialness of player agency in the meaning-making process. However, there is an awkward conflation of narrative purpose at the confluence of the roles of narrator and player; the sort of extradiegetic role of the *player as narrator*, in which the player participates in the construction/unfolding of plot. This may be akin to the reader having to read the novel in order to progress through the plot or the viewer pressing play on the remote. However, where the reader and viewer are allowed the freedom to understand the story in a multitude of ways, even to misread it (even upon a second or third reading/viewing), and still be able to progress through the novel or film, the game delimits the options deemed necessary to fulfill the programming of the story structure—there is only one way, then, to complete the story, even if the player were to play through the game a second or a third time. Therefore, the adaptation of the event in which Lyra selects Serafina's bow disrupts the thematic relevance it had in the novel and film, where the reader and viewer learn that Lyra's self-

actualization, part of the bildungsroman structure of the novel, is part of the mythological function of the alethiometer, that which enables an investigation of the real and the unreal. What is only partially important in the novel and film, then, is vitally important in the video game: the sequencing of plot points. And if, as Green argues, gameplay elements function in the service of story, in *The Golden* Compass video game that service is not to nurture the mythological underpinnings of the fantasy fiction genre. In his article, "Toward a Theory of Interactive Fiction," Nick Montfort comments on the value of these types of in-game puzzles, such that "a solution may restrict rather than enlarge a player character's, and therefore the interactor's, options" (50). If we allow what Mäyrä and Green assert about the interdependence of the player and video game to the story, that play is understanding, the restriction of interpretive options for the player's gameplay must also restrict the potential of those moments as analytically important for the story's thematics. Thematic development cannot here be sifted through plot analysis, and video games cannot easily map the space of the mind (thematics and interpretation). This is not to suggest that *The Golden Compass* video game or video games in general lack the immersive capabilities of the novel or film. On the contrary, as Amy M. Green contends, there is a "more active and invested sense of engagement that is drawn out by video games" (37). Yet in *The Golden Compass*, the "negotiated space" that Green indicates helps players "create narrative meaning" (37) is elided, which I will examine in more detail later. What is adapted for the creation of *The Golden Compass* video game, then, is a gesture towards an autonomous fiction that in many ways appropriates contextual elements from the source texts (novel and film), a potential subtype of Cavallaro's definition of the "visual novel" (1) or Astrid Ensslin's definition of a "literary game" (41). But the question arises: does fidelity to the source texts matter?

As both Hutcheon and Sanders argue, adaptation requires first interpretation and then creation, and thus any analysis of the alethiometer's function in *The Golden Compass* video game must account for the limits of the medium into which it is reconceptualized. Hutcheon and Sanders also argue that fidelity to the source text is not the goal of adaptation, but rather an awareness of, as Sanders states, "its shaping intertexts" (22). In this way, the alethiometer's function in the novel and the film to aid the reader in the discovery and investigation of the real cannot function in the video game's program design, since the video game is based on a linear and "progressive" story structure: there is only one preset way to engage the story (Juul 56).[5] *The Golden Compass*'s relation to its shaping intertexts is tangential and is operative

[5] See Jesper Juul's book *Half-real: Video Games Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds* for a full description of "emergence" and "progression" games (56).

only on the level of shared titles, character names, visual and aural renderings, and plot sequence with the novel and film. Moreover, adapting the investigative function of the alethiometer to its necessarily plot-based function in the video game disengages the essentialness of mythology as a component of the game's narrative. As Dave Jones concludes, "if the game only allows a player to move in certain ways or perform certain actions, any thematic development important to the narrative is restricted, too" (26). The unconcealing function of the alethiometer is then substituted for a completionist, "goal-directed logic" (Hutcheon 51). In Lyra's meeting with Dr. Lanselius in the video game, the lack of the thematic component of Lyra's self-actualization is a logical omission, since the meeting is constructed as an objective meant to enable the player to progress to the next point in the narrative, the next goal, of securing the aid of the ice bear, Iorek Byrnison. The programming of the game restricts any thematic development, since it does not allow the player to progress without first completing the objective of answering Dr. Lanselius's questions and hearing the witches's prophecy about Lyra. In the adaptation from the novel and film to the video game, then, fidelity to the source-texts's structure (via mythology) should be necessary to the consideration of the video game as fantasy fiction. Fidelity, or at least an awareness of the shaping intertext, in *The Golden Compass*'s adaptation, should be dependent upon both narrative strategy and format restrictions. *The Golden Compass* video game, therefore, is not a fantasy fiction because the adaptation of the mythological kernel subverts the prime characteristic of fantasy fiction—that, according to Jackson, it must stand in dialogue with the marvellous and the mimetic. I am not suggesting that *all* video games, or even video games that are adaptations of fantasy fiction novels and films, are not fantasy fiction. Rather, I argue that for video games to be considered fantasy fiction, and for them to be recognized as a mode of story that ascends to the level of requiring complete literary and analytic attention, they need to be developed by synthesizing the fundamental conventions of fantasy fiction. For a video game on the verge of being fantasy fiction, such as *The Golden Compass*, the investigation of the real/unreal relationship must be implemented into the game's development in order for it to move beyond its relatively marginalized categorization of what I would consider *Interactive Visual Story*, to adapt Cavallaro's term.[6] However, the limitations of the adapted narrative still yield important information for comprehension of the adaptation process.

While the adaptation of the alethiometer in the video game is restricted in its fidelity to its novel counterpart, the player's interactive

[6] See also Mark Wolf's *The Medium of the Video Game* and Dave Jones's "Narrative Reformulated: Storytelling in Videogames" for excellent introductions into narrative and video games.

engagement with the alethiometer provides intertextual references that heighten the experience of *The Golden Compass* as story. In this way, I partially agree with Hutcheon's argument that "the move to participatory modes in which we also engage physically with the story and its world […] is not more active but certainly active in a different way" (23). However, Hutcheon's notion of video games being "active in a different way" must be explained, since she elides any specific and encompassing rationale for *how* or *why* this activity is so different or important or why interacting modes of engagement are "not more active." Green offers an alterative to Hutcheon's notion by putting it another way, stating that "at a minimum, digital stories have at least as much reach as their counterparts in some storytelling formats, and may well exceed them in others" (7). Activity, or the player's physical interaction with the story, and in the case of *The Golden Compass* video game their interaction with the alethiometer, can be viewed in terms of how the video game integrates the material it adapts. Interactivity in the video game, which is a player's agency, is partly intertextual and explaining what kind of physical engagement the player has with the alethiometer is germane to examining the link between interactivity and intertextuality. For example, in Trollesund, Lyra must consult the alethiometer and tell Iorek where the townsfolk hid his armour (Sega). Throughout the video game's story and its digital Secondary World, the player must discover symbol meanings that correspond to the symbols on the alethiometer. Discovering these symbol meanings makes answering the questions Lyra asks the alethiometer easier, since the more symbol meanings the player can discover, the less challenging it is to obtain the answer to the question the player has Lyra ask the alethiometer. The primary effect of this action is to mimic the maturity Lyra ultimately demonstrates throughout the novel. The Journal, which is unique to the video game, since it is not present in the novel, functions to bridge the plot to the alethiometer and enables the player to progress through the video game's story. Essentially, some of the Journal questions are embedded plot devices that require the player to complete the alethiometer's function—obtaining the answer to the question—before being allowed access to the next section of the video game. After selecting the question in the Journal, the player either confirms the symbols or attempts to fill them in randomly. The alethiometer appears and the three symbol hands move to the selected symbols, while the fourth swings around to other symbols to give the answer. During this time, the player attempts to maintain Lyra's focus on interpreting the question by using the controller's analogue stick to centre her concentration. Lyra's focus is seen in the game as a white light that, once centred, enables the player to select the appropriate cross-hair and complete the alethiometer's function of answering the selected question (Sega); naturally, the

more symbol meanings the player can insert, the easier it is to maintain Lyra's focus.

While some of the Journal questions correspond to game objectives and function primarily to "open" and "sustain" narrative action, to again use Barthes's language, most of the Journal questions provide intertextual references to the novel. Furthering Hutcheon's and Green's ideas, this different way of examining audience engagement, although not providing a way to investigate the real/unreal relationship, adds an element to the video game that attempts to equate the three different story modes, the novel, the film, and the video game. Questions such as, "Why does uncle Asriel have to travel so much?", "Why do the Gobblers kidnap children?", "Why did I stay at Jordan College all these years?", "Why can Pan only get so far away from me before it hurts?", "Why is the Magisterium so interested in me?" and "Why do all the staff members at Bolvangar seem so docile and complacent?" (Sega) have no bearing on the gameplay of *The Golden Compass*. However, when (and if) the player answers these questions, they are rewarded with story information from the novel. It is by answering these questions through the alethiometer, however irrelevant to the progression of the game's narrative as they are, that the video game subverts the linear, plot-based structure of the story and engages the player in a discovery of contextual story elements from the novel and film. In a sense, the video game operates in conjunction with the novel and film versions in order to direct the player to contextual material from them that makes *The Golden Compass*'s story experience more rewarding by localizing player agency in an immersive process. In another sense, since there is the possibility that the player has already read the novel or viewed the film, this intertextual information functions as the basis of the reward for playing, since the game is unable to develop a more enriching thematic investigation. And while not a standardized aspect of the video game narrative, this mechanism of game play does provide story elements. In one of the more unique rewards for completing the list of Journal questions, the video game provides a deleted scene from the film that shows the reunification of Lyra with Asriel while he's exploring the Northern Lights and just before he creates the bridge to the parallel world by killing Roger (Sega; New Line Cinema). The film ends prior to this scene (and to the novel's original ending) presumably because this scene was to be used at the beginning of the second film, which never occurred. Subsequently, the video game seems positioned as a transition point between the first and second films, and while *The Subtle Knife* was never dramatically realized, *The Golden Compass* video game is uniquely positioned as a sequential narrative transition, itself worthy of commentary and acknowledgment.

The alethiometer, then, is perhaps the video game adaptation's most innovative feature, since it functions to link intertextually *The Golden Compass*

video game to the novel and film. The player can choose not to answer all of the questions in the Journal, yet many of those questions pertain directly to story information to which the reader of the novel would have access. While intertextuality cannot fully consolidate the novel and film within the video game, since the video game lacks mythology's investigative property essential to a thematic analysis, it does gesture towards the video game's analytical potential. If *The Golden Compass* video game, and other fantasy-type video games, can be related to an established fictional genre such as fantasy fiction, there can perhaps be elicited new ways of comprehending narrative form because of the connection between interactivity and storytelling.

Conclusions And New Directions

As I have argued in this paper, mythology is a fundamental element of *The Golden Compass* as fantasy fiction. While functioning as a way for readers to engage with the marvellous in the novel's fictional Secondary World, the mythological kernel (the alethiometer), also offers the reader an opportunity to comprehend meaning in the novel by providing them with a way to identify and interpret themes in the novel that run corollary to the plot structure. Furthermore, the mythological kernel provides the reader with a reading strategy for the novel and even for the trilogy as a whole. While this analysis has been limited to *The Golden Compass* fantasy fiction, the mythological kernel is not limited to just *The Golden Compass*. As Jackson argues, it is the fundamental component of fantasy fiction to be in dialogue with the marvellous and the mimetic (36). Mythology as a way of relating the marvellous and the mimetic in order to investigate notions of the real can have applications to other fantasy fictions that also employ mytho-narrative structures—narratives that rely on mythology as a central tenet of their story structure.[7]

Along these lines, the function of the alethiometer as the mythological kernel in *The Golden Compass* changes when it is adapted from novel and film to video game. Since the alethiometer is, in the video game, a device for plot-logic, for directing and sustaining narrative action, its lack in terms of investigating the real/unreal relationship indicates a need for some fidelity to the source text, namely through consideration of mythology. It is because of this lack of awareness of the novel's and film's mythological structure as part of the video game's shaping intertext, to use Sanders, that *The Golden Compass* video game does not fit the established generic conventions of fantasy fiction. However, the video game gestures toward warranting critical evaluation because of its intertextual capability. The alethiometer as the vehicle through which the video

[7] See Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Fionavar Tapestry* and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Earthsea Trilogy* to name but a couple mythology-based fantasy fictions.

game intertextually links to the novel and film, then, enhances the experience of *The Golden Compass* as a story through the integration of some of the novel's and the film's contextual material. However, the adaptation of *The Golden Compass* novel and film into video game form raises a complex question partially answered in this analysis: what is the difference between a virtual world and a fantasy world? I have begun exploring this question by examining the mythological kernel in *The Golden Compass*. However, virtual worlds are becoming increasingly complex in terms of what actions the player can perform through their avatars, which can significantly influence how *narrative* a game can truly be. As fantasy-like video game worlds become more realistically rendered in terms of their graphic quality, aural dimensions, and fully navigable environments, developing thematics does not seem that far a stretch. To this end, recent video games should also receive critical attention in relation to the establishment of them as fantasy fiction or possibly the extension of the generic conventions of fantasy fiction to account for alternative ways to receive and process information.[8] Video games adapted from source texts, such as 4A Games's *Metro 2033*, which is based on Dmitry Glukhovsky's novel of the same title, or those adapted from source lore, such as Monolith Productions's *Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor* and *Middle-earth: Shadow of War*, which are based on J.R.R. Tolkien's work, or those which draw from and adapt cultural mythologies, such as Bioware's *Assassin's Creed* franchise, all necessitate scrutiny of their various implications for the development of fantasy fiction and possibly as interpretable and literary modes of representation. Therefore, applying mythology as a lens through which to examine such games may very well produce significant insight into how narrative is constructed in fantastic virtual worlds.

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[8] See Amy M. Green's chapter "Video Game Study and the Higher Education Classroom" for an excellent overview about incorporating video game analysis for student learning and how video game storytelling is analogous to studying written texts.

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Tom Bombadil and the Spirit of Objectivity

Dani Inkpen

For decades readers of *The Lord of the Rings* have been occupied by the questions: Who is Tom Bombadil? What kind of being is he? This, despite a stern warning from the Oxford don that Tom Bombadil is an enigma who will not be improved by philosophizing (*Letters* 192, #153). Bombadil enters the story for three brief episodes and then exits only to be mentioned in mysterious terms a handful of times in subsequent chapters. He is described by Elrond as "Iarwain Ben-ader […] oldest and fatherless" and by Gandalf as "his own master" (*The Lord of the Rings* [*LotR*] II.2.265). Goldberry answers Frodo's queries about her spouse's identity by stating, "He is." "He is as you have seen him," she explains, "He is the Master of wood, water, and hill. […] He has no fear. Tom Bombadil is master" (I.7.124).

To the hobbits who meet him and through whose eyes we see him, he is a benevolent oddity: quick to laugh; perpetually singing; and more than a tad ridiculous. Stomping about in his yellow boots and bright blue jacket, feather jutting from his cap, Bombadil has the quality of a crayon drawing. His exuberant joy stands in sharp contrast to the more realistic and darker tones in *The Lord of the Rings* and the Legendarium more generally. Yet, he is spoken of in terms of respect by highly respectable people. There is no other character quite like him. Perhaps therein lies the temptation to speculate.

Indeed, few of Tolkien's readers have heeded the professor's admonition. Fans have speculated that Bombadil is a member of the order of the Ainur, or even Ilúvatar himself. Scholars have surmised that he is Aulë, craftsman of the Earth, concealed in humanoid raiment (Hargrove 23), or that he is a great mythic singer modelled on lusty Vaïnamoïnen of the Finnish *Kalevala* (Flieger, *There Would Always be a Fairy Tale* 190-91). Many agree that he is some form of protective nature spirit, perhaps even the spirit of Arda itself—an "exhalation of the world" in Tom Shippey's words (*Road* 107) or "a personified force of nature" in those of Verlyn Flieger (*Fairy Tale* 110). Others have analyzed Bombadil for the literary functions his character serves in the text, pointing to his role as nexus of fearless joy (Chapman-Morales 59), and as narrative midwife to the hobbits' transition from the pastoral world of the Shire

to the Wilderness beyond (Treschow and Duckworth 181-82). In the Old Forest and Barrow Downs, the hobbits have their first real encounters with danger and Bombadil shepherds them out of harm's way, providing them with weapons and wisdom that serve them well at later points in their respective journeys. It is with the barrow knife given to him by Tom that Merry wounds the dread Witch-king and "break[s] the spell that knit his unseen sinews to his will" in the battle of the Pelennor Fields (*LotR* V.6.842).

For Tolkien, Bombadil served quasi-allegorical and literary functions. In his letters Tolkien characterized Bombadil as "the spirit of the (vanishing) Oxford and Berkshire countryside" (*Letters* 26, #19); as an "enigma" that enhanced the reality of a mythical world; and as a "comment," the function of which was to illustrate a "natural pacifist view" amidst a contest between conservative and destructive forces (*Letters* 174, 179, #144). Yet, Bombadil's identity and what type of being he is remains unspecified. In the census of peoples of Middle-earth, Bombadil appears to be a one-member category, a *lusus naturae* as Shippey notes (*Road* 105).

I have little to say about the question of Bombadil's species membership, agreeing with Verlyn Flieger's assessment that he ultimately defies definition (*Fairy Tale* 61). Still, much may be learned about a thing without having to classify or define it. Even enigmas have qualities that may be profitably investigated to thereby render them less enigmatic.[1] In this essay I aim to better grasp Bombadil's nature by deciphering a set of comments Tolkien wrote in a 1954 letter to Peter Hastings, the manager of Newman Bookshop, a Catholic book store in Oxford. Hastings had reached out to Tolkien because he was concerned that certain aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* "over-stepped the mark in metaphysical matters" (qtd. in *Letters* 187, #153). He specifically cited Goldberry's description of Tom as "Master" and her assertion that "He is" (*LotR* I.7.124). To Hastings, these comments echoed God's declaration in the Old Testament, "I am," drawing an uncomfortably close parallel between Bombadil and the Christian divinity. Tolkien responded by highlighting the grammatical differences between "I am," and "He is," and their ontological ramifications. To the question of mastery, he replied:

> He [Tom] is *master* in a peculiar way: he has no fear, and no desire of possession or domination at all. He merely knows and understands about such things as concern him in his natural little realm. He hardly even judges, and as far as can be seen makes no effort to reform or remove even the Willow. (*Letters* 192, #153)

[1] Suzanne Jacobs has recently analyzed enigma in this context, pointing to its modern and medieval meanings. The medieval Latin *enigmata* poses Tom not as an indefinitely inscrutable mystery but as a riddle to be solved (80).

He explained further that Tom Bombadil fulfills a particular function in the text. Although Tolkien famously disavowed allegorical thinking, he confessed that Bombadil was:

> an 'allegory', or an exemplar, 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: Zoology and Botany not Cattle-breeding or Agriculture. [Italics in original] (*Letters* 192, #153)

This intriguing description has received little probing from scholars. What did Tolkien mean by "pure (real) natural science" and a "spirit coeval with the rational mind?" And what, precisely, do these traits have to do with having no desire for domination and wanting to know things "*because they are 'other'*"? In what follows I look to the history of science to illuminate Tolkien's words to Hastings. Science has taken many historical forms. Appreciating what Tolkien might have meant by *science*, and what he did not, will enhance our understanding of Tom Bombadil's nature *vis-a-vis* the letter to Hastings. Grasping why Tolkien would have described him as the spirit of pure science requires looking to the history of natural history, a form of scientific inquiry that was especially popular during Tolkien's youth and formative years. To understand his association of the scientific outlook with renunciation of control, we must look to the history of objectivity. Unlike other virtues attributed to successful and laudable knowledge-makers—such as a commitment to portraying the hidden truths in nature—objectivity explicitly associates the ability to produce knowledge with the knower's capacity for self-renunciation and self-control. Objectivity is the cardinal virtue of modern science, imbuing it with an ethics founded in ideas of self-mastery that are relevant to understanding Bombadil's symbolism. While my analysis will not answer the vexed question of Bombadil's species membership in Middle-earth, it provides an answer to the question, "Whom or what is Tom Bombadil master of?", shedding light on his nature and his significance within *The Lord of the Rings*.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATURAL HISTORY

Today the term "science" conjures images of laboratories, white coats, test tubes, large, expensive machines, and computers. These associations are not particularly well-suited to the profoundly silly, pastoral Tom Bombadil. They betray a distinctly late twentieth-century sensibility and must be historicized if we are to grasp what alternative image of science Tolkien evoked in 1954. Tolkien wrote to Hastings in the midst of an upheaval in how science was

practiced in the modern world. Large-scale wartime endeavors like the American Manhattan Project and the British Tube Alloys Project—which together produced the world's first atomic weapons—set a new precedent for what could be achieved through technoscientific endeavor. Such wartime undertakings changed how research was done, what purposes it was intended for, and the institutional settings in which it was performed. In elephantine, centralized projects, teams of (often military-supported) scientists and technicians worked toward a practical or technical goal in large, industrial-style laboratories. While theoretical knowledge was involved, scientists were as much engineers and project managers as they were scientists. Historians refer to this style of research as "Big Science," and it was heir to centuries of laboratory science, writ on the industrial scale (Weinberg 161).

Laboratory science is a modern invention rooted in an early modern epistemology, according to which, in the laboratory, scientists isolate the phenomenon of interest and manipulate variables in systematic ways to see what does and does not affect it. Many grade school students would recognize this as *the* scientific method, a testament to the influence of this conception of science. The idea that nature could be studied by intervening upon it has a long and storied lineage. Though it may be traced back to alchemical traditions, it received its most polished and rhetorically persuasive treatment in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during what is commonly referred to as the Scientific Revolution. At this time advocates of "The New Philosophy" articulated an approach to natural philosophy (a precursor to modern science) rooted in intervening upon nature and forcing it to reveal its secrets. Nature was most tellingly revealed, wrote Francis Bacon, one of the New Philosophy's most eloquent champions, "under constraint and vexed; that is to say, when by art and hand of man she [*sic*] is forced out of her [*sic*] natural state, and squeezed and molded" (82). Simply observing nature's regular processes, Bacon insisted, was not enough; would-be knowers needed to break things down and intervene upon the pieces one by one. Investigating nature was a highly manipulative and interventionist process.

In the nineteenth century this approach moved to the halls of universities as chemists, biologists, and physicists developed techniques for investigating phenomena in the artificial setting of the laboratory. In the lab, it was believed, conditions could be better controlled to isolate the desired phenomena. Accordingly, it was advocated as the best place to investigate the natural world. Twentieth-century science inherited this experimentalist-laboratory lineage. But it was filtered through a new vision of what it meant to intervene upon nature that was articulated during the decades when Tolkien first began to shape Middle-earth. In the 1910s and 1920s scientists argued that the creative and manipulative practices of engineering could lead to knowledge

of even the biological realm. The process of making something, argued French biologist Jacques Loeb, revealed information about how it works. "The idea is now hovering before me," he wrote to the philosopher Ernst Mach, "that man himself can act as a creator even in living nature, forming it eventually according to his will. Man can at least succeed in a technology of living substance" (qtd. in Pauly 51). Just as mechanical, civil, and electrical engineers had produced railroads and telegraphs, the engineer of living substance would create fabulous new forms (though Loeb himself achieved little more than Tubularia—a colonial salt water creature that resembles fantastic trees in a Dr. Seuss book—with heads on either end of their bodies). The essence of the Loebian standpoint, according to historian Philip Pauly, "was the belief that biology could be formulated, not as a natural science, but as an engineering science" (199). This stance, that of an engineering ideal, encapsulated a faith in maker's knowledge as the best kind of knowledge.

The engineering ideal underlay much of twentieth-century Big Science and is alive today in areas like synthetic biology where scientists trained as engineers or computer scientists create rabbits that glow nuclear green with genetic material from sea jellies, and chimeric potatoes that harbor the genes of moths and bees. Fulfilling Loeb's wildest dreams, this latter day alchemy blurs divisions between making knowledge and making artifacts, between nature and artifice (Roosth 9, 15).

None of this resonates with the character of Tom Bombadil. The New Philosophy and the engineering ideal share an emphasis on the ability to produce knowledge through manipulating nature. Both carry connotations of dominance and practical application that we see in much scientific research today (including, for example, in geo-engineering research and cancer research). But Bombadil is "entirely unconcerned with 'doing' anything" with his knowledge (*Letters* 192, #153). Rather, this interventionist and practical tradition more aptly applies to Saruman.

After learning that his fellow Istari has used secret arts to decompose white into many colors, Gandalf cautions, "he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom" (*LotR* II.2.259). Saruman's experiments in color, and Gandalf's criticisms of them, echo a famous episode in the history of early modern science. The idea of white as the conglomeration of multiple colors resulted from Isaac Newton's optical experiments of the 1660s and 1670s. In his *experimentum crusis*, Newton used prisms to fracture white light into the colors of the visible spectrum. The *experimentum crusis* was celebrated by the promotors of the New Philosophy as an exemplary case of their preferred mode of interventionist inquiry. Yet Newton's approach to colors was famously criticized by the Weimar polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who advocated instead a more holistic approach to the investigation of color. "Phenomena," Goethe

emphasized in florid prose, "must be freed once and for all from their grim torture chamber of empiricism, mechanism, and dogmatism" (309). To decompose colors was to destroy them, a sure way to leave the path of wisdom.[2]

Saruman is a technologist. In his account of Saruman as technologist, Tom Shippey analyzes the etymology of Saruman's name, tracing links among the Mercian (the language of The Mark) *saru* and West Saxon *searu*, noting the latter's connotations of metal, iron, and cunning (*Road* 170). After he betrayed the White Council around 2851 of the Third Age, Saruman's lore turned to what may be called "research and development" of domineering technologies to be used in subjugating other peoples. The explosive powder deployed against the Rohirrick defendants of Helm's Deep (*LotR* III.7.175) and the ballistic liquid fire turned toward the Ents during the Siege of Isengard are two such technologies (III.9.215). Like mustard gas, tanks, and automatic weapons, phenomena Tolkien encountered during the Great War, they are technologies engineered to kill other living beings *en masse*. Tolkien's ambiguous feelings toward technology, no doubt partly shaped by his wartime experiences, are well known. In a letter to Christopher Tolkien, written while his son was serving in the Royal Air Force, Tolkien disparaged and lamented "the tragedy and despair of all machinery." Machines, for him, were actualizations of the mind's desires. Unlike art, which merely expressed sub-creative thoughts, engineering attempted to "create power" in the material world (*Letters* 87, #75). Informed by a Catholic theology, Tolkien viewed all human creations as subject to the decree of The Fall. "Our devices not only fail of their desire," he told Christopher, "but turn to new and horrible evil. So we come inevitably from Daedelus and Icarus to the Giant Bomber. It is not an advance in wisdom!"(88).

Saruman, then, represents a technical and bellicose approach to knowledge. He is, as James G. Davis has argued, a *faber*—a word that originally meant "smith" but came to mean a creator of artifacts in general, bearing connotations of the industrial and the technocratic (56). In this, he is

[2] None of this goes against Verlyn Flieger's well-known analysis in *Splintered Light*. There, Flieger reads the history of a fallen Middle-earth in terms of the parallel splintering of originary White Light (into the Lamps of Arda, the Trees Laurelin and Telperion, the Silmarils, Galadriel's phial) and Logos, the originary Word (into languages). Although specific moments in the history of splintered light are enacted by individuals, its historical logic is at the foundation of Arda, marred by the discordance sowed by Melkor before the world came into being. Flieger is less concerned with the ethics of individual acts of splintering light than its world-historical, metaphysical, and psychological ramifications. She makes clear that Tolkien believed some good could be found in splintered light, as it served as material for sub-creators like himself to compose new beauty in the world (62). Her discussion of Saruman's conversation with Gandalf is brief and focuses more on his hubris than the act itself (144).

diametrically opposed to the way of knowing represented by Tom Bombadil. The dominant image of modern science as an experimental and laboratory-based activity, best captured by Saruman's style of knowledge-making, has historical roots in philosophies of intervention and practical mastery. It thus fails to capture the vision of science appropriate to Bombadil and so cannot account for Tolkien's words to Hastings. We must, then, set aside many of our modern conceptions of science when considering the case of Tom.

Instead we must look to another tradition in the history of Western science. When Tolkien referred to Bombadil as the spirit of pure science, he likely had in mind something more like natural history, a branch of knowledge-making that traditionally focused on studying nature *au plein air*. In its broadest sense, natural history is the study and taxonomizing of the natural world. Its origins date to the Renaissance when savants and wealthy amateurs looked up from their books and scrolls and began to investigate the natural world around them, creating compendiums—*histories*—detailing what they found. Natural history was chiefly characterized by the activities of collecting, describing, and cataloguing specimens, be they botanical, zoological, geological, or anthropological (Strasser 304). Its primary products were the atlas or encyclopedia, the museum display, and the specimen drawing. It blossomed in quiet, local chapters of amateur enthusiasts devoted to studying of their particular corner of the countryside, and eventually in globe-spanning voyages of famous men like Charles Darwin.

European natural history reached its zenith in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, becoming a geopolitically powerful practice of nations during the Age of Empire. Naturalists encircled the globe, riding upon on the networks of empire, delving into places unexplored by Europeans and returning with specimens and facts that increased the storehouse of European knowledge. They were, according to Londa Schiebinger, "agents of empire" and their taxonomies and nomenclatures, "tools of empire" (11). It is difficult to overstate the importance of natural history to Victorian Britain. It was integral to the imperial project and interwoven in the daily life of citizens through news media, public ceremonies, neighborly gossip, and literary works of every variety (Browne 305). The importance of natural history to the Empire reverberated into the Edwardian years.

Growing up in Edwardian England, Tolkien would have been familiar with natural history and known natural historians to be persons who sought an understanding of how things worked in nature. When he describes Bombadil as knowing and understanding things in "his natural little realm" and as "observing," he paints a portrait of a natural historian poking about the countryside, learning about the plants, rocks, and animals that live there. Tom is analogous to the erudite local society member who knows everything about

the structures, life cycles, and distribution of fungi in Lancashire, as well as which are delicious and which are dangerous. Tom's musical knowledge of the denizens of his realm is equivalent, though deeper in scope and reach. Our mycologist is limited to a language that seeks to describe a world separate from itself. Her taxonomies are based on arbitrary characteristics of fungi, picked out by fellow naturalists, and will forever be incomplete and imperfect. Bombadil's knowledge possesses no such inadequacies. His language *is* the language of nature. His songs for Willow-man, Badger-brock, Barrow-wight, and River-woman's daughter in "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" have a natural power over each because they express their true natures. Bombadil's speech encapsulates the myth of a lost natural language, an uncorrupted Ur-speech that is "isomorphic with reality" (Shippey, *Road* 106). Nevertheless, it is a knowledge of names and natures, different only in degree and scope from what the mycologist knows. It is not different in kind.

Zoology and botany, the sciences Tolkien cites in reference to Bombadil, were transforming into laboratory-based endeavors during his adult lifetime, but were still rooted in the tradition of natural history that privileged observing organisms in their natural environments without manipulating them or intervening upon their natural cycles. It is this passive, observational approach to which Tolkien refers when he contrasts them to the practical, interventionist arts of agriculture and breeding. The latter two, with their connotations of the mechanical and practical arts, share more with Saruman's technical knowledge. The spirit of "pure" science represented by Tom is that of natural historical observation and understanding, untainted by interventionism and the desire to manipulate.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OBJECTIVITY

We are now in a better position to analyze the ramifications of Tolkien's statements to Peter Hastings. The spirit of pure science refers to an idea of science as natural historical observation for the sake of knowing and appreciating nature's wondrous diversity. But how does this account of science entail fearlessness and an abjuration of domination? Tom "has no fear, and no desire of possession or domination at all. He merely knows and understands about such things as concern him in his natural little realm," Tolkien told the bookstore owner. According to this formulation to know and understand is to lack a desire to possess. Grasping this equation requires delving into the history of objectivity.

For many people objectivity is *the* defining virtue of modern science. The image of the disinterested scientist, enrobed in a white lab coat, emotionally detached from the outcomes of her research, is perhaps the most ubiquitous icon of modern science. As heirs to the world of professional science that emerged in

the nineteenth century, we tend to think of objectivity as the *sine qua non* of science. Proper scientists are objective scientists. Yet, this image, like science, has a history. Objectivity is only one of several traits believed to have defined the virtuous scientific knowledge-maker over time. Appreciating its historical specificity brings its ethical contours into relief.

"Objectivity has not always defined science," write historians Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison in their seminal study of the topic; "[n]or is objectivity the same as truth or certainty, and it is younger than both" (17). Before objectivity other virtues and normative imagery were associated with knowledge making. Indeed, prior to the late eighteenth century the words "objectivity" and "subjectivity" meant the opposite of their present definitions. When a thing was said to be objective it meant that it existed purely as an "Object of the Mind." "Subjective" referred to things as they existed in themselves. This changed around the time of the French Revolution when philosophers and scientists began to use "objective" to refer to the objects in themselves, and "subjective" to mean the perception or cognition of them in our minds (29). This shift in meaning was consequential for the ethics of knowledge-making.

Daston and Galison reveal objectivity to be a historically-specific epistemic virtue that rose to prominence during the nineteenth century. Epistemic virtues are ethical characteristics believed to be relevant to producing knowledge. They are normative codes of conduct that are "preached and practiced in order to know the world" (39). Before objectivity, an epistemic virtue that they call "truth to nature" dominated Renaissance science. Natural historians and philosophers who adhered to the virtue of truth to nature sought to represent the hidden truth behind the diverse and passing expressions of the natural world. One finds in Renaissance encyclopedias drawings of dioecious plant specimens that include male and female reproductive parts on the same plant though in reality they are found in separate individuals. The bisexual representation was thought to capture the ideal form of the plant as it existed in the "Book of Nature." Although curious to modern minds conditioned by a rigorous empiricism, for those who abided by truth-to-nature there was a divinely ordained Book of Nature: a set of ideal blueprints ordered by a logic that was veiled by the hurly-burly of worldly phenomena. It was the task of the student of nature to perceive this truth behind appearances.

The personal skill of the observer and the artist was ineliminable in this process. Only the most gifted of observers could ascertain the truth hidden in the multiplicity of appearances and extract it for reproduction on the page. This entailed celebrations of individual genius. At the twilight of the truth-to-nature era, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (who, incidentally, lambasted Newton's optical experiments) was celebrated for his uncommon ability to perceive the archetype behind all plants, the *Urpflanze*. The *Urpflanze*, or Ur-plant, he

believed, was the ideal blueprint from which all plant types were derived by accentuating or downplaying various aspects of a prototypical leaf structure. A root was a modified leaf that stayed underground and sucked fluid, a bulb was a conglomeration of root leaf structures, a stem was a leaf stretched out, and so on for other parts of a plant. To Goethe's eye, the diverse realm of plants was the result of the continual metamorphosis of a single leaf-like archetype. Typical representations of the *Urpflanze* resemble Tolkien's drawings of the Tree of Amalion, a tree that bears many different types of leaves and flowers (Hammond and Scull 64). Goethe's work required a particular ability to see the hidden unity in diversity. His *Urpflanze* research contributed to the celebration of his unique, multi-faceted genius. Grasping the truth in nature was regarded as a product of Goethe's exceptional proclivities; his ability to do so was the *result*, not the effacement, of subjective perspective (Hallet 191; Daston and Galison 69-71).

Objectivity, on the other hand, was an escape from perspective. "To be objective," write Daston and Galison, "is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower—knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgment" (17). Objectivity is the opposite of subjectivity; it is its negation. Yet it is essential to it. As right defines left, objectivity cannot be understood without the idea of a subjective self as a potential impediment to accurate knowledge. Being objective means overcoming aspects of the self to see nature as it really is irrespective of perspective. Thus understood, it is an ethical achievement: a mastery and effacement of self, or an "assiduous cultivation of a certain kind of self" as Daston and Galison phrase it; a self capable of mastering its own desires and impulses (40).

The possibility of objectivity as an epistemic virtue demands a particular conception of the psychological self. The self to be overcome through objectivity is a willful psychological agent that requires taming to prevent it from skewing one's perspective on the world. Daston and Galison maintain that this particular understanding of the self arose in the nineteenth century, the result of new psychologies that overthrew an earlier faculty psychology model in which the psyche was comprised of competing but generally equal faculties (e.g., Reason, the Passions, Imagination). The model of the psychological self underpinning the idea of objectivity was not a mishmash of equal faculties vying with one another, but a top-down model in which the will, properly cultivated, possessed the capacity to direct attention, subdue the passions, and fortify itself. This willful self can be glimpsed in clichés about "will power" and of needing to "fortify one's will." These are ways of saying that one must gain control over mind and body, and the underlying idea was as common in Tolkien's time as in our own. Indeed, self-mastery and the will to resist the Ring's temptation are Frodo's perpetual trials, both of which he ultimately fails. When objectivity is

understood as the achievement of self-effacement or self-control, a willful self is its necessary foil. Appreciating this historically-situated, conceptually-necessary opposition of self and object shines light on the question of Bombadil's mastery.

THE ETHICS OF BOMBADIL'S SELF-MASTERY

In his fearlessness and his lack of desire to control or to even judge, Tom Bombadil captures the pure spirit of disinterested science, the spirit of objectivity. We also know that he is Master. But Master of what? Goldberry clarifies for Frodo that he does not *own* the wood, water, and hill. He "knows the song" for each of the elements in his realm which allows him to direct them away from harming others, as the encounters with Old Man Willow and the Barrow-wight demonstrate in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Yet, this power is exercised with a light touch. Through his songs he *can* manipulate willows, wights, future spouses, and the like. Yet he does so only as needs be, not because he desires to impose his will upon them. Understanding Bombadil as the embodiment of the pure spirit of objective science reveals him as a master of more than wood, water, and hill. Tom is master of *himself* in a philosophically and morally significant sense. Bombadil, as the spirit of objective science, has no desire to dominate, to make things other than they are, or to alter his relation to them by modifying them. He seeks to know about his fellow denizens of Creation purely for the sake of knowing about them, not to make them fit his ends. He makes no effort to "reform or remove" because to do so would be to impose his will on others.[3]

It is not simply a matter of possessing free will. Bombadil is master of those traits that so often bring down the Second Born (and some First Born): fear; jealously; pride; the desire to shape the world according to one's desires. Although common to the Children of Ilúvatar, these traits are essentialized in the characters of Melkor and Sauron. Both dark lords are plagued by fear, arrogance, and a desire to make others do their bidding. Without delving too far into a psychoanalysis of evil in Middle-earth, we can nevertheless note that Tom, as described in the letters and portrayed in the book, has no fear or desire; his love of Goldberry seems free of jealousy. Fear, desire, jealousy are all feelings that suggest a deficit. Lacking them, Tom is perfectly at peace with the world, wishing only to know it for what it is. As the spirit of objectivity, he is master of himself and the psychological weaknesses that underlie evil.

[3] Problematically, the case of Goldberry's betrothal in "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" appears to be an exception to this rule. At the end of the poem Tom catches and holds fast Goldberry, whisking her away to their merry wedding with little concern for her consent. But it is worth noting, as others have, that the Bombadil of Tolkien's poetry differs from the character fleshed out in *The Lord of the Rings*. There, Goldberry's autonomy appears to be fully respected (Tolkien, "Adventures" 88).

This resonates with Tolkien's attributing to Tom a "natural pacifist view." In 1954, he told Naomi Mitchison that "rights and wrongs of power and control" are "utterly meaningless" for Tom Bombadil (*Letters* 179, #144). Like the detached scientist, the pacifist is removed from the turmoil of the phenomenal world. The pacifist merely observes, she does not engage. This distinguishes Bombadil from the other forces of good in the War of the Ring. Gandalf and his allies are the opposite of Sauron. They *oppose* him and seek a world order based on different power relations among the citizens of Middle-earth. To put it in absurdly neutral and anachronistic terms, they are fighting for a different distribution of political power than Sauron offers. Enlightened monarchy in the cases of Arnor, Gondor, and Rohan; collective self-governance bordering on enlightened anarchism in that of the Shire. Bombadil, by contrast, eschews political power. He has no desire for that ultimate symbol and expression of power, the Ring. If given the Ring "he would soon forget it, or most likely throw it away. Such things have no hold on his mind," Gandalf tells the council at Rivendell (*LotR* II.2.265). He does not seek to oppose Sauron with an alternative vision of political order. He is, then, in his detached self-mastery, not Sauron's opposite, but his philosophical *negation*.

There are reasons to believe that Bombadil's self-mastery underlies his ability to resist the Ring, a reification of Sauron's will to dominate, rooted in fear, jealousy, and pride. The belief that self-mastery may entail spiritual enlightenment and, sometimes worldly power, can be found in both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions. Nearest to Tolkien's Catholic worldview are Thomist accounts of prudence, which Michael Treschow and Mark Duckworth explore in their analysis of Tom Bombadil.[4] "[P]rudence," they write, following Thomist philosopher Josef Pieper, "is the first and foremost of the natural virtues […]. It is an intellectual virtue by which the knowing mind is able to see clearly, to see how things are and whither they tend, and so to make good choices." Prudence is more than mere knowledge, it is a virtue of the wise (and so distinct from Saruman's technological know-how). It is the virtue, they explain, "that informs philosophy (as the "love of wisdom"), enabling due wonder at the life and existence of the world around us." The contours of prudence are illuminated by considering its opposing vice, lust. Its opposite is not merely sexual lust, but the lust for power, fame, dominance—"the lust for the confirmation of one's own importance" (190). Prudence, then, functions like objectivity. It is a renunciation of willful desires and passions; a mastery of the willful self. The truly prudent person, like the idealized objective observer of

[4] These authors discuss the letter to Hastings under scrutiny in this essay, but do not pursue the question of science, focusing instead on Tolkien's remarks about Bombadil as the embodiment of an idea.

nature, has overcome the temptations of ego and has achieved a relation of respectful wonder for their fellow denizens of the world.

Thinking historically about science reveals different ways of conceiving how knowledge-making ought to proceed, and shows how changeable normative dimensions attended shifting epistemologies of self and world. Much of our modern imagery of science stems from the technoscientific lineage of Western science. Given what Tolkien has written about technology and how he portrayed the character of Saruman, we must look elsewhere in the history of science for the meaning of Bombadilian "pure science." We find it in the tradition of natural history, with its valorization of passive observation over artificial manipulation. Its purity comes from seeking knowledge of things themselves, without the taint of subjective desire or intention—normative ideals associated specifically with the epistemic virtue of objectivity. Unpacking Tolkien's words to Peter Hastings and situating them in the history of Western science allows us to better appreciate Tom Bombadil's symbolic and literary functions in *The Lord of the Rings*. The histories of natural history and objectivity reveal Tom as the distillation of an ethical orientation in which the achievement the self-mastery is done in service of knowing and appreciating things as they are in themselves. Considering this alongside Thomist accounts of prudence suggests that his self-mastery is crucial for his ability to resist the Ring. Probing the Professor's words on science, then, has revealed a richer portrait of the nature of Tom Bombadil. Thus it seems, as with many of the wizard's utterances, there is much to be unpacked in Gandalf's description of Tom Bombadil as "his own master."[5]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Shawn Marchese and Alan Sisto of the *Prancing Pony Podcast* for bringing the connection between Tom and science to my attention. Thank you also to the editor at *Mythlore* and one anonymous reviewer.

[5] I have made no claims as to whence Bombadil's power of self-mastery springs, for this leads to questions about what kind of being he is. Yet, we may speculate that the idea of Tom as self-master may be tied to his portrayal as a nature spirit. The natural elements of Middle-earth, the flora and fauna (with the exception of Old Man Willow, the Huorns, a few talking birds, and perhaps one cognizant fox), do not strive to master the world. Nor do they struggle with vices and psychological weaknesses. They appear to merely act in the world within the bounds prescribed by their natural ways of life, simply existing in their Eru-given relation to the rest of Creation. This self-less mode of being seems related to Tom's objective, pacifist orientation.

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MYTHOPOEIC PRESS

"er Enchanted Hair": Rossetti, "Lady Lilith," and the Victorian Fascination with Hair as Influences on Tolkien

Kathryn Colvin

Born in 1892, near the end of the Victorian era, J.R.R. Tolkien began to pen the material that would become his "legendarium" (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* [*Letters*] 189, #153)—the totality of his writings on Middle-earth and its history—circa 1917 (*The Silmarillion* 10). With his first book, *The Hobbit*, published in 1937, and its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*, published in three volumes in 1954-1955, Tolkien wrote well into the middle of the twentieth century—and retained at least one extraordinary aspect of Victorian inspiration all the while. As Tolkien acknowledges in his letters the influence of William Morris upon his writing (*Letters* 7, #1; 303, #226), and as Morris was closely connected to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (McGann, Introduction xix), it is not a stretch to propose that Tolkien likely also encountered the work of Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood co-founder Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Both Tolkien and Rossetti were medievalists, although at first glance they appear to be in nearly all other respects an unlikely match: Tolkien's reputation for chaste writing and his charming if somewhat staid illustrations bear little resemblance to Rossetti's voluptuous poetry and paintings, the sensuality and sexuality of Rossetti's written work famously derided as "The Fleshly School of Poetry" and going on to inspire "a furious series of further attacks, defenses, counterattacks, and general public clamour" (McGann, Introduction xxi). Significantly, Rossetti had a particular passion for hair and was described by Elizabeth Gaskell as "hair-mad" (Waller 153), a standout hair enthusiast in an age which was itself marked by the "peculiar force and intensity" (Gitter 936) of a cultural fascination with women's tresses. When in "The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination" Elisabeth G. Gitter writes of "the grand woman achiev[ing] her transcendent vitality partly through her magic hair," which is both "enchanting—and enchanted" (936), she is describing Rossetti's painting *Lady Lilith*—but she could just as well be describing Tolkien's character Lúthien Tinúviel. One point at which Tolkien's writing lets down its figurative hair is in its sumptuous descriptions of female characters' abundantly flowing locks, the desire they inspire in others, and even their weaponization: in his distinct and

sensual attention to women's hair, Tolkien was inspired by the Victorians in general, while his depictions of the characters of Galadriel and Lúthien are strikingly similar to the femme fatale Lady Lilith of Rossetti's poetry and painting.

In "'One Strangling Golden Hair': Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*," Virginia M. Allen writes that Rossetti's "consuming interest in women's hair evidently reached the proportions of a fetish," albeit one "widely if not universally shared in his day, and not unknown in ours" (288). A surprisingly pervasive emphasis on hair—especially, though not exclusively, women's hair—is also not unknown in Tolkien. In a passage from his unfinished writings circa 1968 or later (*The Peoples of Middle-earth* [*Peoples*] 331), Tolkien, whose character descriptions are often sparse, devotes approximately a third of a page to a description of the beauty and even political ramifications of the hair of Galadriel: an eminent woman of the Eldar (Elves) and secondary character, whose name itself means "[m]aiden crowned with gleaming hair" (*Letters* 428, #348) in Tolkien's invented languages:

> Even among the Eldar she was accounted beautiful, and her hair was held a marvel unmatched. It was golden like the hair of her father and her foremother Indis, but richer and more radiant, for its gold was touched by some memory of the star-like silver of her mother; and the Eldar said that the light of the Two Trees, Laurelin and Telperion, had been snared in her tresses. Many thought that this saying first gave Fëanor the thought of imprisoning and blending the light of the Trees that later took shape in his hands as the Silmarils. For Fëanor beheld the hair of Galadriel with wonder and delight. He begged three times for a tress, but Galadriel would not give him even one hair. These two kinsfolk, the greatest of the Eldar of Valinor, were unfriends for ever. (*Peoples* 337)

For comparison, in *The Lord of the Rings* the initial physical description of Legolas, a male main character, is limited to "a strange Elf clad in green and brown"; in the same paragraph another male main character, Gimli, is introduced simply as "a younger dwarf at Glóin's side" (*The Lord of the Rings* [*LotR*] II.2.240).

In fact, Tolkien imagined his Elves as having a cultural focus on hair to rival the Victorians themselves. In the same unfinished writings from whence comes the Galadriel hair description, Tolkien discusses the Elvish-language etymology of the name of Finwë, a king of the Elves—"Common Eldarin PHIN 'hair', as in Quenya *finë* 'a hair', *findë* 'hair, especially of the head', *finda* 'having hair, -haired'" (*Peoples* 340)—and goes on to state that "[a]ll the Eldar had beautiful hair (and were especially attracted to hair of exceptional loveliness), but the Ñoldor were not specially remarkable in this respect, and there is no

reference to Finwë having had hair of exceptional length, abundance, or beauty beyond the measure of his people" (*Peoples* 340-341). The sheer degree of emphasis on hair is striking: not only does Tolkien invest his invented Elvish languages with multiple words to describe hair, and not only do multiple characters have hair-related names,[1] but Tolkien goes so far as to create for his Elf characters a cultural fascination with hair and then imagine their detailed assessment of a male Elf's tresses. "There is scarcely a female character in Victorian fiction whose hair is not described at least perfunctorily," writes Gitter, "and often a woman's hair is described repeatedly and in considerable detail" (941); the same could be said of Tolkien, who goes yet a step further by considering also the hair of some of his male Elves.

While the unfinished material above was not published until after Tolkien's death, *The Lord of the Rings*, published during his lifetime, is also full of hair references and contains as well two significant hair-related episodes: one in which Gimli asks Galadriel for the parting gift of "a single strand of [her] hair, which surpasses the gold of the earth" and, "unbraid[ing] one of her long tresses," she surprisingly gives him not one but "three golden hairs" (*LotR* II.8.376); the other when Éowyn, a human woman who rides into battle disguised as a man, pivotally reveals her identity to the evil Lord of the Nazgûl: "But the helm of her secrecy had fallen from her, and her bright hair, released from its bonds, gleamed with pale gold upon her shoulders" (V.6.841). "She should not die, so fair, so desperate!" mentally exclaims Merry, a male hobbit, moved both by her doomed bravery and, it would seem, the beauty of her hair (V.6.841). When Éowyn decapitates the enemy's prehistoric steed, "a light [falls] about her, and her hair [shines] in the sunrise"; after Merry wounds the Nazgûl Lord, thus allowing the valiant woman to deal her killing blow, he gazes through a mist of tears at "Éowyn's fair head" (V.6.842). In the Victorian era, Merry would have been in good company: disorderly hair was to the Victorians associated with sexuality (Gitter 941), flowing tresses signifying "an early form of the erotic icon we now call the femme fatale" (Allen 286); Rossetti wrote of "her loosened hair's downfall" ("Love-Sweetness" l. 1), and according to David Del Principe, "loosening one's hair" in Rossetti's time "implied, not surprisingly, moral looseness and rebellion" (51). Éowyn's unexpected unleashing of concealed hair from beneath a helmet, all the more surprising for its attendant gender revelation, represents a more extreme—and surely, for the

[1] See also *Peoples* page 345: "With regard to *Findekáno* / *Fingon* it may be noted that the first element was certainly Quenya *findë* 'hair'—a tress or plait of hair (cf. *findessë* a head of hair, a person's hair as a whole) […]. In the case of Fingon it was suitable; he wore his long dark hair in great plaits braided with gold."

Victorian man, yet more erotic—version of the Victorian woman letting down her neatly-bound locks.

For all this lavishing of attention upon luxuriant locks, however, it is Tolkien's seemingly direct inspiration from Rossetti's 1868 poem "Lady Lilith"[2] that forms his most remarkable connection to the hair-madness of the Victorian era. In the poem written to accompany his painting of the same name, Rossetti describes Lilith, a demonic figure who was the first wife of the biblical Adam (Allen 286), "the witch he loved before the gift of Eve" (l. 2). Rossetti's Lilith is a temptress and an ensnarer; the mention of the snake in line 3, "shed" in lines 10 and 11—like the shed skin of a snake, an image associated with transformation and therefore deception—and the hissing consonantal sibilance of lines 3 and especially 11 reinforces her connection to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. A magical figure with "enchanted hair" (l. 4), she is ageless, "young while the earth is old" (l. 5), and is associated with the flowers of "rose, foxglove, poppy" (l. 9): rose for her "aphrodisiac quality" (Allen 291), poppy for sleep, foxglove for poison. She "draws men to watch the bright web she can weave" (l. 7) with that uncannily beautiful golden hair, until "heart and body and life are in its hold" (l. 8). This association of weaving with ensnaring is of great significance in the Victorian mythology of hair, which associates hair with both spinning and weaving—hair-working kits were available at the time, with which "the Victorian lady […] could weave hair into basket patterns or construct a landscape to hang on the wall" (Gitter 942)—and then subsequently extends that notion of weaving into one of death by spider-like entanglement. "If [the] woman is a spinner," writes Gitter, "and if some of the threads she spins are her own tresses, the web she produces may prove to be a dangerous snare" (938); elsewhere, Gitter similarly describes that "when the powerful woman of the Victorian imagination was an angel, her shining hair was her aureole or bower; when she was demonic, it became a glittering snare, web, or noose" (936). Rossetti's "Lady Lilith" concludes with precisely this demonic weaponization of beautiful hair, the "bright web" mentioned earlier becoming the noose and snare: at the poem's end, a young man whose "eyes burned" at Lilith's becomes in that moment her prey and victim, her "spell" leaving "his straight neck bent" (ll. 12-13). It is an image of death by hanging, but the noose is displaced to that "one strangling golden hair" around his heart (l. 14). The life of any man who

[2] Initially entitled "Lady Lilith" in 1868, the poem's title was changed to "Lilith. (For a Picture)" for its 1870 printing in Rossetti's *Poems*, then "Body's Beauty" for its inclusion in his *The House of Life* in 1881 ("Body's Beauty: Scholarly Commentary"). I reference the original 1868 text, in which line 9 includes "rose, foxglove, poppy are her flowers" ("Lady Lilith") rather than the later "the rose and poppy are her flowers" ("Body's Beauty"). Foxglove appears also in Rossetti's painting *Lady Lilith,* which the poem accompanies.

looks upon Lilith with desire is swiftly forfeit; he is ensnared to the death by that very hair she uses to draw him in.

It is important to note that the iconography of golden hair as a web of entrapment actually predates Rossetti and the Victorians; that much is clear from Rossetti's own translation of Fazio degli Uberti's "His Portrait of His Lady, Angiola of Verona," as well as his interest in (and translation of a brief passage from) Goethe's *Faust*, the latter an important influence on Rossetti's conception of Lilith (Notes to the Texts 409). Similar imagery can also be found, for example, in Bassanio's description of Portia's portrait in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (3.2.124-126). What sets the Victorian brand of hair fascination in general, and Rossetti's in particular, apart from the lingering tradition is a combination of pervasiveness and morbid intensification: as Robert W. Baldwin describes in a letter to *The Art Bulletin*, "the 'femme fatale' after all was a 19th-century revival of the […] medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque theme," with Rossetti "heighten[ing] the sense of danger," incorporating themes of sleep and death, and "spelling out doom and destruction in the clearest terms" ("Letters" 318). Gitter, on a similar note, writes that "[w]hile women's hair, particularly when it is golden, has always been a Western preoccupation, for the Victorians it became an obsession" (936), a "literary fascination with the magical power of women's hair" which carried even beyond literature and into "an intense popular preoccupation with hair and hair tokens" (942). Never before nor since the Victorian era has hair been so deadly, nor its representation more ubiquitous; and it is this heightened, Victorian-style hair mythology which is exemplified by Rossetti's femmes fatale—particularly Lady Lilith—and echoed in Tolkien. Not only does Tolkien's literary attention to hair rival Rossetti's in its detail and persistence, but it parallels Rossetti's signature inclusions of the themes of sleep, sorcery, and death into the iconography of women's tresses, and at points even echoes phrasings and specific details from Rossetti's work.

Unusual as it seems to imagine Tolkien referencing a figure so plainly aligned with the demonic erotic, especially in constructing characters who are allied with the forces of "good," the similarities are unmistakable in his characters of Galadriel and Lúthien. There is certainly a "Lady Lilith" allusion in Tolkien's description of Galadriel's hair: that "even one hair" she denies Fëanor (*Peoples* 337) and the "single strand of [her] hair" for which Gimli asks (*LotR* II.8.376) are eerily reminiscent of the "one strangling golden hair" around the heart of the man Lilith entraps ("Lady Lilith" l.14), especially when accompanied by the image of light "*snared* in her tresses," which gives Fëanor "the thought of *imprisoning*" (*Peoples* 337, emphasis mine). The word choice is significant: this is Lilith's Victorian hair snare, the "bright web" of her woven locks used for entrapment and strangulation. While Tolkien's extended description of Galadriel's hair did not make it into the posthumously-published

The Silmarillion, it is noteworthy that the much-shortened version which editors Christopher Tolkien and Guy Kay (*Silmarillion* 12) chose to include—"her hair was lit with gold as though it had *caught in a mesh* the radiance of Laurelin" (*Silmarillion* 61, emphasis mine)—retains the imagery of capture, and arguably emphasizes more than the extended version the very Victorian idea that the capture may be by means of a woven net.

These dual themes of sorcerous entanglement and weaving persistently accompany Galadriel. "She herself and her maidens" weave supernatural cloaks as gifts for the members of the Fellowship of the Ring, to whom her people also give the gift of Elvish ropes (*LotR* II.8.370-371). While the material of both is unspecified beyond the ropes being "made of *hithlain*" (the Elvish word is left untranslated)[3] (II.8.371), the notion of Galadriel and her maidens weaving preternatural cloaks and (perhaps) ropes so closely resembles Lúthien weaving a magic cloak and rope from her own hair (*Silmarillion* 172) that, given especially Tolkien's tendency to repurpose aspects of what would become *The Silmarillion* into the Middle-earth material published during his lifetime, it is reasonable to speculate that the Fellowship's gifts may be woven at least partially of hair as well.

Either way, most human male characters in *The Lord of the Rings* view Galadriel as precisely a Lady Lilith-like figure. To Faramir she is the "Mistress of Magic," "the Lady that dies not," and it is "perilous for mortal man" to enter her Golden Wood (*LotR* IV.5.667). "What did she see? What woke in your heart then?" he asks of his dead brother, Boromir (IV.5.667), suspecting Galadriel of having played a part in his downfall; while the reader is to understand that Galadriel awakened in Boromir's heart a fatal desire for the Ring, it remains that Galadriel awakened in Boromir's heart a fatal desire. Boromir himself states at the time that he thought she was "tempting" all of the Fellowship (II.7.358) when she "held them with her eyes, and in silence looked searchingly at each of them in turn" (II.7.357). While here too the outward implication is the temptation of the Ring and its power, or the temptation to turn back and forsake the quest (II.7.358), the concomitant notion of sexuality is reinforced by the hobbit Sam's reaction to Galadriel's gaze: "I felt as if I hadn't got nothing on, and I didn't like it" (II.7.357-358). Attempted resistance to temptation is of paramount importance in Tolkien's moral universe (*Letters* 233, #181; 251-252, #191; 274, #210), and Tolkien, in describing Galadriel's temptation by and ultimate rejection of the Ring when Frodo offers it to her in a subsequent scene (*LotR*

[3] In an earlier manuscript, the ropes are woven from "the fibre under mallorn bark" (*The Treason of Isengard* 249) or "silver fibre of mallorn bark" (251), but as Tolkien made many changes to the chapter prior to publication, it is unclear whether he ultimately retained or rejected this idea.

II.7.365-366), establishes her as a character who is at once temptress and tempted. If in one sense Tolkien reassures the reader of Galadriel's "goodness," clarifying her potential ambiguity by having her "pass the test" of the Ring's temptation and resign herself to the fading of the Elves from Middle-earth (II.7.366), he simultaneously reiterates once more her desire to inspire doomed desire. The fantasy the Ring offers Galadriel is that of dominion: she imagines herself as a "Queen […] beautiful and terrible," at once "fair," "dreadful," and "stronger than the foundations of the earth" (II.7.366). There is both grand ambition and self-consciousness in her speech, a consideration of her own beauty and power that strongly resembles the Lady Lilith of Rossetti's painting of the same name; not coincidentally, the painted Lilith contemplates herself in a hand mirror, which prefigures (at least in name, if not in specificity of appearance or function) the supernatural Mirror of Galadriel. As Galadriel's Ring-inspired vision culminates in what is perhaps her most famous line—"All shall love me and despair!" (II.7.366)—the Ring reveals her greatest desire to be precisely the desire of Rossetti's Lilith: to attract, and then to overpower.

Much like Faramir and Boromir, the men of Rohan view Galadriel as a duplicitous, supernatural temptress and weaver, and the wearers of her cloaks as dangerous by association: "Then there is a Lady in the Golden Wood, as old tales tell! […] Few escape her nets, they say. These are strange days! But if you have her favour, then you also are net-weavers and sorcerers, maybe" (*LotR* III.2.432). Later, the villainous Wormtongue comments that "webs of deceit were ever woven" in Galadriel's forest, calling Galadriel the "Sorceress of the Golden Wood" (III.6.514) and appropriately extending the Victorian weaving mythology into a metaphor for deception and dark magic. Much like Galadriel's rejection of the Ring, in which the memory of the vividness of her ambition endures beyond her stated disclaiming of it, here too the recurring image of Galadriel as supernatural femme fatale nearly subverts its stated negation: the heroic protagonists are offended by Wormtongue's disparagement of her, but for the reader the words are still there on the page, the Lilith allusion—and with it, the dangerous, ensnaring sexuality of Rossetti's femme fatale—once again reinforced. "Hair ceases to be a neutral image or even a woman's crowning sexual attraction for Rossetti; it becomes a net," writes John R. Miller (qtd. in Del Principe 50), using the same word as do Tolkien's Riders of Rohan. To Miller, the Rossetti Woman's net of hair functions as "an organic trap which is both a physical and symbolic method of enthralling both the young man […] and, more significantly, mankind in general" (qtd. in Del Principe 50). In both Tolkien's Elvish Galadriel and Rossetti's demonic and serpentine Lilith, the inhumanity of the supernatural femme fatale—"Not a drop of her blood was human, / But she was made like a soft sweet woman" ("Eden Bower" ll. 3-4), Rossetti writes in another poem about his Lilith figure—gives "mankind in general" yet further

cause for alarm, as the deadly seductress in question is in fact a type of demon lover, a member of "mankind" in neither gender nor species, the heteroerotic mystery and novelty of the other sex at once allegorized and amplified by doubling down on "otherness."

In both the notion of Galadriel's supernatural ability to see into one's heart and her association with nets, she in fact resembles also another female character connected to Rossetti: the central figure of the medieval Italian poem "His Portrait of His Lady, Angiola of Verona" by Fazio degli Uberti, Rossetti's English translation of which is "nearly as central a work in [his] corpus as 'The Blessed Damozel'" (Notes to the Texts 401). "I look at the crisp golden-threaded hair / Whereof, to thrall my heart, Love twists a net" ("His Portrait" ll. 1-2) the poem begins, and Rossetti would later reuse this imagery to voice Lilith's description of herself in "Eden Bower": "All the threads of my hair are golden, / And there in a net his heart was holden" (ll. 23-24). Both prefigure Galadriel-like golden hair and the "net" mentioned twice by the men of Rohan; shortly thereafter in "His Portrait," the speaker states, "I look into her eyes which unaware / Through mine own eyes to my heart penetrate" (ll. 5-6). Though Galadriel seems to be anything but unaware of what she is doing in tempting the Fellowship, she certainly—as Boromir found—has a gaze that penetrates to the heart. Jerome McGann states in his notes on Rossetti's translation of "His Portrait" that "the iconograph of 'The Rossetti Woman' is fully articulated" in Rossetti's translation of the poem (401); Galadriel's parallel with this piece from the core of Rossetti's work, in combination with her strong connection to "Lady Lilith," positions her as a continuation of that very "Rossetti Woman" iconography. Galadriel even at one point wears "a circlet of golden flowers […] in her hair" (*LotR* II.8.372), recalling the circlet of flowers resting on Lilith's lap in the *Lady Lilith* painting and providing the finishing touch to her strikingly Rossettian characterization.

Galadriel's antecedent in the Tolkien legendarium is Melian, a Maia of Lórien, and amongst Lórien's people "there were none more beautiful than Melian, nor more wise, nor more skilled in songs of enchantment" (*Silmarillion* 55). As with Galadriel and (as we shall see) Lúthien, again in the character of Melian is enchantment linked to desire, entrapment, danger, and, of course, hair. In *The Silmarillion*, "an enchantment [falls] on" the Elven lord Elwë (later known as Thingol) while he is walking in the forest and, hearing the voice of Melian amid the singing of Melian's nightingales, his heart becomes so "filled […] with wonder and desire" that he forgets "all the purposes of his mind" and seeks her, entranced (55). Upon finding her he is "filled with love," takes her hand, and "straightaway a spell [is] laid on him" which causes him stand with her, quite literally spellbound, for "long years" before either speaks (55). They become king and queen of the kingdom of Doriath, where "the power of Melian the

queen [is] *woven* about his borders" (151, emphasis mine) to create the Girdle of Melian, a concept Tolkien later revisits in Galadriel's use of Nenya to preserve and protect her and her husband Celeborn's realm of Lothlórien (298). While the Girdle of Melian is consistently depicted in a positive light—a fence to keep evil out—there is still a degree of darkness in its description as "an unseen wall of shadow and bewilderment" (97), and the concept of Melian's "woven" magic wrapping around Thingol's kingdom implicitly echoes the Rossettian theme of the femme fatale strangling her entranced male lover with "her enchanted hair" ("Lady Lilith" l. 4).

More explicitly similar to Rossetti are Tolkien's earliest versions of Thingol and Melian's meeting. In "The Tale of Tinúviel," Melian (here called Gwendeling) is "very dark of hair," and "if ever she sang, or if she danced, dreams and slumbers passed over your head and made it heavy" (6). Thingol (here called Tinwelint) follows the voices of Gwendeling's nightingales until he finds her lying in leaves; looking upon her, he reflects upon her beauty, and "bending forward to *touch a tress of her hair* he snap[s] a twig with his foot" (7, emphasis mine). She becomes aware of him and runs away laughing, singing, and dancing, and he follows "till a swoon of fragrant slumbers [falls] upon him" (7), the entire episode not only conflating the themes of magic, hair, desire, voyeurism, and sleep as in Rossetti's "Lady Lilith"—"shed scent […] and soft sleep" (ll. 10-11) certainly entrap Tinwelint after he becomes attracted to Gwendeling's hair—but also closely prefiguring a similar scene in the story of Lúthien, the daughter of Melian and Thingol. As in the later versions, Gwendeling and Tinwelint marry, and she weaves spells to protect their kingdom ("The Tale of Tinúviel" ["Tinúviel"] 7).

The course of this portion of the story is generally similar in "The Lay of Leithian," yet the depictions of Melian's hair and magical powers are in "Leithian" even more closely aligned with Rossetti's themes. This version places greater emphasis on Melian's hair in general—"dark and long her tresses lay / beneath her girdle's silver seat / and down unto her silver feet" (III.414-416)—as well as a heightening of its danger: Melian's sorcerous sleep-inducing power is now resident not in her song and dance, but in her hair itself. Again Thingol, "enchanted" (III.435) by Melian's voice, seeks for and finds its source (III.435-448); this time Melian is herself asleep when found, but more remarkable is the speaker's emphatic urging of caution in regard to her tempting tresses:

> There after but an hour, him seems,
> he finds her where she lies and dreams,
> pale Melian with her dark hair
> upon a bed of leaves. Beware!

> There slumber and a sleep is twined!
> He touched her tresses and his mind
> was drowned in the forgetful deep,
> and dark the years rolled o'er his sleep. (III.445-452)

The end-rhyme of "hair" and "Beware!" in lines 447 and 448 gains an additional depth of supernatural dread from its evocation of the demonic figure at the end of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan": "And all should cry, Beware! Beware! / His flashing eyes, his floating hair!" (ll. 49-50). Melian's protective magic in turn becomes both more ominous and more intimate in the later "Leithian" material: in what Christopher Tolkien calls "The Lay of Leithian Recommenced," written by J.R.R. Tolkien after the completion of *The Lord of the Rings* (394), the verse describes not a Girdle around the borders of Doriath but Thingol's "deathless queen, / fair Melian," who "wove unseen / nets of enchantment round his throne, / and spells were laid on tree and stone" (1.68-70). While it is possible for "throne" to figuratively refer to Thingol's kingdom as a whole, the imagery still is shifted from weaving magic around Doriath to weaving Lilith-like—and in the minds of mortal men, Galadriel-like—enchanted nets around Thingol himself.

Lilith's commonalities with Tolkien's character of Lúthien, however, are at least as remarkable as the traits she shares with Galadriel and Melian, even down to the similar consonants in Lilith's and Lúthien's names. While the latter's hair (like her mother Melian's) is dark, not golden, and while none of the three Tolkien women is associated with snakes, Tolkien evokes in Lúthien almost every other detail of Rossetti's "Lady Lilith," then adds additional features of Victorian hair mythology. Tolkien's Elves are beautifully ageless to human eyes, ancient and essentially immortal unless slain by violence (*Letters* 147, #131), and thus Lúthien (and also Galadriel), like Lilith, is "young while the earth is old" ("Lady Lilith" l. 5). Lúthien's immortality sets up the drama of her epic love story, which begins when the mortal man Beren falls in love with her, and she with him, while he watches her dance—and, of course, her hair is closely involved. In the "Song of Beren and Lúthien," a poem within the text of *The Lord of the Rings*, Lúthien's hair is mentioned four times; its first reference, "And light of stars was in her hair" (*LotR* I.11.191), recalls a different Rossetti poem, "The Blessed Damozel": "And the stars in her hair were seven" (l. 6). The next three references all associate Lúthien's hair with shadow. While Tolkien conceived this iconic part of the Beren and Lúthien tale watching his wife Edith—whom, not missing a chance for hair detail, he later described as having "long dark hair" (*Letters* 417, #332) or "raven" hair (*Letters* 420, #340), and whom he associated closely with Lúthien—dance "in a small woodland glade filled with hemlocks" (*Letters* 420, #340), and while Lúthien's hair color is modeled upon Edith's, the

shadow comparison is nonetheless unusual. In Tolkien's works, the concept or image of shadow is repeatedly associated with at least death, and more often outright evil: in *The Lord of the Rings*, Sauron is "the Shadow" (I.2.51); his domain of Mordor is "the Land of Shadow" (II.10.407) and "where the Shadows lie" (I.2.50). The association of hair with shadow, however, occurs multiple times in the sonnets of Rossetti's *The House of Life.* In "Love's Lovers," the speaker is "all-anhungered of / Thine eyes grey-lit in shadowing hair above" (ll. 12-13); in "The Love-Letter," the titular letter is "shadowed by her hair" (l. 1); in "Venus Victrix," the speaker mentions a "poet's page gold-shadowed in thy hair" (l. 4). Tolkien's incorporation of such imagery, when combined with his frequent use of "shadow" to indicate villainy, produces in his descriptions of Lúthien's hair an intriguing complication to a quest story framed by Tolkien as being the ultimate expression of heroic, romantic love. There is a dark deadliness to Lúthien, an undercurrent of supernatural danger: "her hair" is "like shadow following," her eyes are "within the shadows of her hair" (recalling Rossetti's "Love's Lovers"), and the fourth reference is particularly interesting from a Victorian standpoint: Lúthien "about him cast[s] her shadowy hair" (*LotR* I.11.191, 193). The phenomenon of a woman covering her male beloved in her long hair occurs frequently enough in Victorian poetry that Gitter gives it the name "hair tent" (941-942); examples include Robert Browning's "Porphyria's Lover"—in which the speaker describes Porphyria sitting next to him, making his cheek rest on her bared shoulder, and "spread[ing], o'er all, her yellow hair" (ll. 14-20)—as well as Rossetti's own "The Stream's Secret," in which the speaker mentions the woman's "fall'n hair at last shed round [his] face" and finds himself "beneath her sheltering hair" (ll. 77, 79). Though the hair tent is a more sensual and less foreboding image than the hair snare, "The Lay of Leithian" associates Lúthien with the latter: Beren "gazed, and as he gazed her hair / within its cloudy web did snare / the silver moonbeams sifting white" (III.557-559), recalling both Thingol's gazing upon Melian and the hair snare imagery of Galadriel and Lilith. While it is unclear as to whether or not Lúthien is actively seducing Beren, "draw[ing] men to watch" ("Lady Lilith" l. 7), her story in all its iterations has a strong element of watching and voyeurism in which her ambiguous role both recalls the gazed-upon subject of "His Portrait" and resembles the attitude of Rossetti's *Lady Lilith* painting. In the painting, Lilith combs her abundant hair as if displaying it, her shoulder casually exposed, gazing at herself in a hand mirror while her eyes seem as if they could turn and fix upon the viewer at any moment: there is a distinct and dangerous sense that she is quite aware of the viewer, acutely conscious that she is being viewed and using that fact to lure another admirer into her trap.

As Rossetti's Lilith in both painting and poem is accompanied by "rose, foxglove, poppy" ("Lady Lilith" l. 9), so the three concepts of love or desire, poison, and sleep are vital to the story of Lúthien. That Lúthien's tale is concerned with love and desire is self-evident, but the two mentions in "The Lay of Leithian" of the "wild white roses" in Lúthien's hair (III.626, VI.1789) specifically recall the white roses that frame Lilith's hair and bare shoulder in Rossetti's painting. In the various versions of her story, Lúthien is nearly always depicted dancing in or near hemlock,[4] a better-known poison even than foxglove; in the "Song of Beren and Lúthien," hemlock is mentioned three times, along with one mention of the also-poisonous nightshade (I.11.191-193). Like Lilith, to desire Lúthien and her hair is deadly, though in this case both to Beren and to Lúthien herself: not only does their mutual, supernatural quest to recover the purposely-exorbitant bride price demanded by Lúthien's father Thingol prove fatal to Beren, but their love results in Lúthien losing her immortality, "snared"[5] ("The Lay of Leithian" IV.790)—that word again!—in his mortal doom. His "heart and body and life" are in her hold ("Lady Lilith" l. 8), but so are hers in his.

It is at this point in the story—Lúthien dooming herself by falling in love with the human warrior Beren—that Tolkien not only first introduces the "Lady Lilith"-like theme of sleep, but does so in a passage that strongly resembles John Keats's poem "La Belle Dame sans Merci":

> But as [Lúthien] looked on him, doom fell upon her, and she loved him; yet she slipped from his arms and vanished from his sight even as the day was breaking. Then Beren lay upon the ground in a swoon, as one slain at once by bliss and grief; and he fell into a sleep as it were into an abyss of shadow, and waking he was cold as stone, and his heart barren and forsaken. And wandering in mind he groped as one that is stricken with sudden blindness, and seeks with hands to grasp the vanished light. (*Silmarillion* 165)

[4] Michael Flowers observes in "Tolkien in East Yorkshire, 1917-1918" that the "hemlocks" amongst which Tolkien watched Edith dance are likely to have actually been a different species of umbellifer: cow parsley (127-130). Nonetheless, and much as Flowers concludes, Tolkien chose to use the word "hemlock" in the story of Lúthien (129). As Tolkien would almost certainly have been aware of the poisonous properties of hemlock—at least due to Socrates's death by poisoning via drinking hemlock (129)—it is reasonable to interpret his selection of the word as an acceptance of that connotation and therefore a conscious allusion to poison.

[5] For the rare example of a strangling "hair snare" turned upon the woman, which this by extension recalls, see also Browning's "Porphyria's Lover" ll. 38-41.

This is precisely a Tolkienian rendition of Keats's knight-at-arms "alone and palely loitering" ("La Belle Dame sans Merci" ll. 1-2) as he languishes away waiting for his erstwhile faery lover; when last he saw her, she put him to sleep after they made love, and he dreamt—"Ah! woe betide!"—a terrible dream of the ghosts of her previous lovers-turned-enthralled-victims before awakening alone "on the cold hill's side" (ll. 33-44). Julie F. Codell calls Keats "paradigmatic" (345) to the Pre-Raphaelite artists, who "visualized and popularized Keats for their Victorian contemporaries" (341), perhaps with Rossetti himself having initiated the idea of Keats as subject (342). Rossetti thought very highly of "La Belle Dame sans Merci" (Scott 503)—indeed, he and his future wife Elizabeth Siddal were the first known to attempt its illustration (Scott 506)—and, true to what would become his form, Rossetti's 1855 drawing of the subject "portrays Keats's Belle Dame as a strangulating *femme fatale* who wraps her hair erotically around the knight's neck, an image that is also followed by John William Waterhouse's later painting of the same name (1893)" (Winters 73), weaving the Victorian hair mythology into the imagery of "La Belle Dame" despite the fact that no hair-enwrapping or strangulation is mentioned in the poem itself. As Rossetti merges Keats's Belle Dame with elements he would go on to develop in his presentation of Lilith (Allen 287)—in "Eden Bower," Lilith tells her serpentine lover to "wreathe thy neck with my hair's bright tether" (l. 139), an image which distinctly resembles Rossetti's illustration of Keats's poem—so in turn does Tolkien merge Keats's Belle Dame, her post-Keats Victorian interpretations, and especially her literary descendant, Rossetti's Lilith, into the character of Lúthien. Tolkien being Tolkien, he also adds an additional layer of medievalism by sending his femme fatale and her human lover on a quest: unlike the hapless knight, Beren's romance does not end with him left alone on that "cold hill's side"; in Tolkien, he and the perilous "faery's child" ("La Belle Dame sans Merci" l. 14) Lúthien are reunited, and the enthralled warrior gets not just a fatal fling but a daring, doomed adventure.

While the word "witch" ("Lady Lilith" l. 2) is not applied to Lúthien, this is ultimately a matter of semantics, as—in an episode from Beren and Lúthien's quest that also strongly incorporates the "Lady Lilith" themes of weaving, hair weaponization, and sleep—Lúthien certainly performs a type of "spell" ("Lady Lilith" l. 13) and as a result has "enchanted hair" ("Lady Lilith" l. 4) which she weaves into accessories that put foes to sleep. In "The Lay of Leithian," an early version of the story, Lúthien, imprisoned in a house high up in a tree, explains to the male Elven minstrel Dairon how she intends to spin "a marvellous thread, and wind therein / a potent magic, and a spell / [she] will weave within [her] web" (V.1469-1471). When Dairon "fear[s] the dark purpose of her art" (V.1475), Tolkien again recalls the Lilith-like sense of sorcerous danger attributed by the Victorians to the spinning and web-weaving of that

"marvellous thread"—which turns out, naturally, to be Lúthien's own hair. While the hair-growing and hair-weaving escape episode encompasses over 150 lines of "The Lay of Leithian" (V.1425-1583), in *The Silmarillion* it is presented more succinctly:

> [S]he put forth her arts of enchantment, and caused her hair to grow to great length, and of it she wove a dark robe that wrapped her beauty like a shadow, and it was laden with a spell of sleep. Of the strands that remained she twined a rope, and she let it down from her window; and as the end swayed above the guards that sat beneath the tree they fell into a deep slumber. (172)

Although the hair rope is not employed as a noose, the similarity and suggestion are unmistakable and it is nonetheless used as a type of weapon. The hair robe is later utilized in a similar fashion. "Command[ing] to sleep" the monstrous wolf Carcharoth (*Silmarillion* 180) and then utilizing both her singing and her magic hair cloak to "cast down in slumber" the Luciferian arch-villain Morgoth—who looks upon her beauty with "an evil lust"—as well as his entire court (*Silmarillion* 180-181), Lúthien's adversaries become those whom "soft sleep shall snare" ("Lady Lilith" l. 11). An earlier version of the hair-growing escape scene, written by Tolkien in 1917 as part of "The Tale of Tinúviel" ("Tinúviel" 1), features a bizarre and almost fetishistic volume of hair that eclipses even the Victorian imagination in its abundance: Tinúviel's magically-growing tresses eventually fill the room while she sleeps, covering and hiding her underneath them, "trailing out of the windows and blowing about the tree boles in the morning" (17). This image of growing hair filling (and in Lúthien Tinúviel's case, overflowing) a confined and confining space as she sleeps resembles, disturbingly, "the story told after the exhumation of Lizzie Siddal," Rossetti's wife, in which "her hair had continued to grow after her death for such a long time and so luxuriantly that it filled her coffin" (Gitter 948). Appropriately for the character of Lúthien, the extended association becomes one of death but also, in a sense, of a form of life after death and therefore immortality.

On the way to Morgoth, Lúthien magically transforms herself into a bat-like female vampire (and Beren into a werewolf) to infiltrate his stronghold, and Beren, looking at her convincing disguise, wonders if she is "a phantom for his ensnaring" (*Silmarillion* 179). In a literary sense he is, of course, absolutely right. Gitter may claim that "the Victorian vision of magic hair did not survive long into the twentieth century" (953), but in Tolkien's early- to mid-twentieth-century writing it is alive and well, and even embellished upon. In Tolkien's repeated, sensual, and often lengthy accounts of women's locks—which are frequently accompanied by a male character who admires or desires them—he

recalls the Victorian-era fascination with women's hair, while his characters of Galadriel and Lúthien resemble Rossetti's Lady Lilith and her enchanted, ensnaring hair with such a high degree of specificity that it is difficult to imagine the similarities being coincidental. In evoking these images, Tolkien creates a legendarium that is at once a little more worldly, a little more supernatural—and more than a little "hair-mad" itself.

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The "Polish Inkling": Professor Przemysław Mroczkowski as J.R.R. Tolkien's Friend and Scholar[1]

Łukasz Neubauer

The name of Przemysław Mroczkowski is not one which is very well known in today's world of Tolkien scholarship.[2] In fact, his acquaintance with the author of *The Lord of the Rings* has never really been common knowledge, even in his native Poland. Even for those Polish academics who came to know him personally and were certainly aware of his contacts with Tolkien, the actual nature of their friendship and correspondence has never really been a matter of serious scholarly discussion. There is, for instance, practically no mention of Tolkien in a volume published in 1984 by the Polish Academy of Sciences in honour of Professor Mroczkowski, who was, at that time, just about to turn seventy.[3] Nor is there much information about Tolkien in the volume of essays celebrating Mroczkowski's centenary, published in 2015 under the editorship of Marta Gibińska.[4] An interesting, if obviously quite

[1] I would here like to thank the people—Przemysław Mroczkowski's family, colleagues and former students (all of whom are now renowned scholars)—who generously agreed to share their personal stories with me, in particular, the professor's daughter Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, Irena Janicka-Świderska, Barbara Kowalik, Marta Gibińska, Andrzej Wicher and, last but not least, John McKinnell, Tolkien's student in the early 1960s. Without their kind assistance and encouragement, the present article would have been much less complete.

[2] In some publications, e.g. Scull and Hammond's *Companion and Guide: Chronology*, his first name is also sometimes incorrectly spelt as *Przemysl* (528, 602 in the 2006 edition) or *Przemysł* (907 in the 2017 edition), which happens to be an earlier, now utterly obsolete (except in the Czech language, where it took the form of *Přemysl*) variant of *Przemysław*.

[3] In it, a comprehensive, though already incomplete, list of the recipient's publications (11-16) follows a short biographical note by Tadeusz Ulewicz. The name of Tolkien is to be found there in connection with Mroczkowski's reviews of *The Lord of the Rings* that appeared in the Polish press in the early 1960s (14).

[4] Apart from the first, introductory essay by Marta Gibińska (7-12), the book's individual chapters deal with a selection of fields representative of Mroczkowski's academic interests: medieval literature (13-32), William Shakespeare (23-32; 71-90), T.S. Eliot and G.K. Chesterton (47-55), Joseph Conrad (57-70) and the history of English literature in

concise, résumé of what Barbara Kowalik refers to as the "medievalist liaison" (3) might be found in her introduction to the collection of essays entitled *"O, What a Tangled Web": Tolkien and Medieval Literature. A View from Poland* (3-5). Some good, but likewise brief, insights into the life of Mroczkowski and his acquaintance with Tolkien are offered online, particularly in the articles published on the *Tolkien Gateway* (in English)[5] and *Parmadili* (Polish)[6] websites. Last but not least, an interesting interview with one of the professor's daughters, Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, focusing primarily upon the relationship between the two scholars, may be read in Polish in one of the latest issues of the hybrid academic-literary journal *Creatio Fantastica* (117-125).[7]

None of the studies could, however, be described as being in any way comprehensive. Furthermore, their analytic scope is for the most part minimal, focusing mostly upon the few (usually the same) biographical details and disregarding the actual significance of Mroczkowski's contribution to the translation and then popularisation of Tolkien's works in his home country as well as the subsequent, if initially slow-burning, development of serious Tolkien scholarship in Poland. Therefore, I hope that the following article (as well as a few more texts to be written in the near future)[8] will, at least in some measure, fill the existing gap and allow the academic community in the field of Tolkien studies—both in Poland and the rest of the world—to more fully appreciate the role that the Polish scholar played in his own country in making *The Lord of the Rings* what it is there today (and has been since 1961-1963), namely a social phenomenon whose impact in the area of popular literary culture in the second half of the twentieth century could, perhaps, be compared with the one that, more or less at the same time, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones had on pop and rock music (in Poland as elsewhere).[9]

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general (33-45). Tolkien is only briefly mentioned there three times (9, 37, and 40), with little insight into the actual character of the scholars' friendship.

[5] "Przemyslaw Mroczkowski" at *Tolkien Gateway*.

[6] See Piwowarczyk in the bibliography.

[7] See Mroczkowska-Brand in the bibliography.

[8] The thematic scope of the planned publications will cover such diverse matters as the scholars' private correspondence, Mroczkowski's reviews of *The Lord of the Rings* in the Polish press, his understanding and interpretation of Tolkien's work, and, lying somewhat outside the areas of standard literary investigation, being invigilated by the State Security apparatus in communist Poland.

[9] It is hard to express in exact numbers the actual degree of Tolkien's popularity in the 1960s (and beyond). Suffice it to say that the entire print run of 10,250 copies of *The Lord of the Rings* sold out very quickly, even though (or, perhaps, because) many of them came to be sold under the table. Because the second edition would not come out until 1981, it is said not to have been uncommon for some of the more desperate readers to borrow the books from the library without the intention of ever returning them (Olszański 16).

PROFESSOR PRZEMYSŁAW MROCZKOWSKI

Przemysław Mroczkowski was born on 28 June 1915 in Cracow, the son of Feliks, a treasury inspector from Lvov Province in present-day Ukraine, and Bronisława. In 1933, having graduated from the Henryk Sienkiewicz 4th Grammar School, where he studied both Latin and French (for five and seven years respectively), he enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, where he pursued his linguistic interests, this time in the fields of Romance (1933-8) and English Philology (1934-9). He obtained his first Master's degree under the supervision of Professor Władysław Folkierski, having submitted a thesis entitled *L'élement romanesque et fantastique comme moteur d'action dans les romans de Chrétien de Troyes*. The completion of his second degree, this time in English, was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War.[10] He would not defend his thesis (*G.K. Chesterton as a Hagiographer*) until 1946, following which he managed to obtain a one-year grant that allowed him to carry on with his work as a research fellow at the University of Notre Dame (summer 1946—October 1947).[11] While there, Mroczkowski studied towards his doctorate, which he completed shortly before the end of 1947, once again focusing upon the author of *The Ballad of the White Horse* (*G.K. Chesterton and the Middle Ages*, written under the supervision of Professor Władysław Tarnawski).

The next seventeen years he spent working at the Catholic University of Lublin, where, in 1951, he also obtained his post-doctoral degree (*habilitacja*). At first, he was employed as an assistant professor (*docent*), then as an associate professor of the Chair of the English Philology. He did not, however, have an easy time there. From 1944 until the late 1980s, the academic staff of the University was under continuous vigilance from the State Security Service (*Służba Bezpieczeństwa*, usually referred to as the *SB*), the proverbial bone of contention being its independence—limited, but independence nonetheless—from the communist authorities. As a result, it was difficult, sometimes even impossible, to obtain a higher degree or publish one's scholarly work, the latter

[10] In 1939, he was mobilised to fight—as a member of the 10th Heavy Artillery Regiment—in what came to be known as the September Campaign, after Poland had been invaded by Germany and the Soviet Union (Ulewicz 8). Following the demobilisation of his unit, Mroczkowski returned to Cracow, was arrested, and spent a few weeks in prison (8). Most of the remaining years of the German occupation of the Małopolska region (i.e. until January 1945), he spent in some provincial areas, teaching French, English, and Latin (8).

[11] Contrary to what the Polish edition of the Wikipedia claims ("Przemyslaw Mroczkowski"), incorrectly quoting from the Tolkien-dedicated website *Elendilion*, he did not at that time go to Oxford to meet Tolkien and Lewis, but only stopped off in England on his way back from the United States. This is probably a consequence of what Tadeusz A. Olszański once erroneously claimed in his article in *Aiglos* (15).

of which was regularly subject to various forms of censorship. Being a Catholic and having fairly systematic contact with the Embassies of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the employees of the British Council, Mroczkowski's peace was regularly disturbed by visits from the agents of the Polish Secret Service.[12]

In 1963 he returned to his *alma mater*, the Jagiellonian University, where he worked as the Head of the Department (1963-1975) and later Institute (1975-1981) of English Philology. Four years later, at the age of fifty-two, on the strength of his outstanding academic work, Mroczkowski obtained the title of professor. His quiet conflict with the communist authorities would, however, continue until the mid-1980s, particularly when he openly voiced his disapproval of the suppression of student strikes in 1968[13] and the enforcement of martial law in 1981.[14] Notwithstanding his retirement in 1985 (at the age of seventy), he did continue to work academically for a few more years, remaining an active member of the Polish Academy of Sciences (*Polska Akademia Nauk*) and the Polish Academy of Learning (*Polska Akademia Umiejętności*). He was also one of the founding members of the Neophilological Committee and the Polish Shakespeare Society. In 1985, in the year of his retirement, in recognition of his contribution to the popularisation of British literature in Poland, he was also awarded the Order of the British Empire.[15] Przemysław Mroczkowski died on 12 July 2002 at the age of eighty-seven and was buried six days later at Rakowicki Cemetery in Cracow.[16]

As may be deduced from just the titles of his theses, the actual scope of his academic interests was quite extensive, if, for the most part, revolving

[12] Three volumes of documents are kept at the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow. From my personal correspondence with Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, I learned that particularly hard were the years of Stalinist repressions (1948-1956), when the Polish scholar was often subject to all-night questioning.

[13] In 1968 several students and intellectuals held protests in some of the major academic centres in Poland (including Warsaw, Cracow, Łódź, Gdańsk, Lublin and Poznań) against the policies of the Soviet-controlled government. The demonstrations met with a strong, sometimes very brutal response from the Communist Party.

[14] On 13 December 1981, the self-proclaimed Military Council of National Salvation (*Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego*) drastically supressed any form of opposition, seriously restricting life in Poland through the introduction of martial law. Although it was lifted on 22 July 1983, the long-term effects of the military control of normal civilian life would be felt well into the second half of the 1980s.

[15] The order was accepted with much deliberation, though, as Mroczkowski, an avid reader of Joseph Conrad's prose, was rather negatively disposed towards British colonialism and everything it entailed (including the very existence of the British Empire).

[16] Przemysław Mroczkowski's family tomb may be found in sector LXXXIX, row 18, grave 2 (entrance from the side of Bishop Jan Prandota Street).

around his great affection for the colorful world of the Middle Ages, often in very close connection with his personal religious convictions. This is not to say that Mroczkowski in any way disregarded the subsequent periods in the history of British literature or that he was not knowledgeable in the works of those writers whose language was not English (or French).[17] Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that a significant amount of his academic *oeuvre* either deals directly with the authors and works of indisputably medieval provenance (Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, Saint Francis, Saint Thomas Aquinas) or, in some measure, touches upon the rich heritage of the Middle Ages (William Shakespeare, G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien).

The complete list of Przemysław Mroczkowski's publications is quite long (too long to be enumerated here) and comprises a wide range of works, from strictly academic papers to less complex (but no less interesting) works of a popular scholarly discourse. These include monographs, collections of essays, articles in scientific journals and popular magazines, book reviews, translations, introductions to books and entries in encyclopaedias.[18] Amongst the most important works to be contained within the first group of Przemysław Mroczkowski's publications is, for instance, his highly influential (at the time) monograph on Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales—Opowieści kanterberyjskie na tle epoki* (*The Canterbury Tales and their Age*, 1956). He is also the author of two noteworthy translations of the milestones of medieval English literature, William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (1983) and Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* (1988).[19] Mroczkowski's 1957 collection of essays entitled *Znaki na głębiach* (*The Signs in the Depths*) focuses upon the mystery and celebration of the Catholic liturgy, with its profound indebtedness to medieval culture. Published five years later, *Katedry, łyki i minstrele* (*Cathedrals, Burghers and Minstrels*) is often thought to be one of the best syntheses of the medieval mentality ever penned in the Polish language.[20] Last but not least, the oft-reissued one-volume *Historia*

[17] He did, for instance, publish on such diverse modern writers as Joseph Conrad, Sigrid Undset, and Eugene O'Neill.

[18] Most of them were written in Polish, and, as such, are of little immediate interest and value to the international scholarship. Some of his strictly academic publications, however, are in English and French.

[19] With only little more than 5,000 copies, the former had a rather limited readership. The latter, however, with a print run of over 20,000 was not only highly praised for its language merits and academic value, but also provided a fitting complement to the excellent, though incomplete, translation of *The Canterbury Tales* by Helena Pręczkowska (1963).

[20] It is also sometimes compared with *The Discarded Image*, C.S. Lewis's brilliant introduction to the medieval world view, which first came out two years later (Wicher, "Koncepcje mediewistyczne Przemysława Mroczkowskiego" 180-182).

literatury angielskiej (*The History of English Literature*, 1986)[21] is still considered by many to be unsurpassed in its concise (but not in the least superficial) treatment of British fiction, from earliest times to the second half of the twentieth century.[22]

Given the scope of Przemysław Mroczkowski's scholarly interests as well as his great commitment to the academic profession and, no less importantly, his own spiritual life, it seems quite natural that his path should cross that of Tolkien's. Indeed, the first opportunity came only two years after the war, when the Polish scholar was still working on his doctorate thesis. At some point during the summer of 1946, Mroczkowski wrote to Tolkien (as a university employee rather than an individual) in connection with his intention to pursue a course of study at Oxford. According to the second, two-page typewritten letter signed in ink by Tolkien, sold along with seven other letters at an auction and reproduced in *Christie's Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts 1 June 2009*,[23] the author of *The Lord of the Rings* apologised for the lack of action on his part (apart from discussing the matter with C.S. Lewis and attempting to get in touch with the Censor of St. Catherine's College) and, on account of the mounting complications, suggested that the University of Notre Dame, which was not only Mroczkowski's alternative but also, in the end, the ultimate choice of the young Polish scholar, should "prove to be a better place [to study] than present-day Oxford."[24] Nothing is known of any further correspondence upon the matter. The following fourteen months Przemysław Mroczkowski spent in Indiana.

It is hard to tell whether in 1946 the name of J.R.R. Tolkien was already known to him (either on account of the sender's academic reputation or his promising literary career).[25] The fact that at least one of the two letters was

[21] In its first edition, however, the book was published in two volumes as *Zarys historii literatury angielskiej* (*An Outline of English Literature*, 1978).

[22] In it, Mroczkowski mentions Tolkien a few times, both as a writer (587-590) and as a graphic point of reference for further investigation into the Old English riddles (22) and the hobbit-like ways of the English people in the seventeenth century (225).

[23] The lot of eight letters was ultimately sold for the price of £9,375 ("Christies Online Catalogue").

[24] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (2 August 1946)." Tolkien's unfavourable opinion of the academic community at Oxford may sometimes be detected in the correspondence he had with other people, most notably in the letters to his son Michael (*Letters* 336-337, #250) and grandson Michael George (370, #290).

[25] By that time, Tolkien has published three major works of fiction: *The Hobbit* (1937), *Leaf by Niggle,* and *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun* (both 1945), as well as a number of poems in various collections and periodicals. In the mid-1940s, his academic publications were far more numerous. Of particular interest to Mroczkowski would have been perhaps his scholarly edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1925, together with E.V. Gordon), the

preserved does not necessarily mean that, at that time, Mroczkowski considered him a great writer and/or scholar (although such a possibility cannot be ruled out). It may well be that he simply wished to keep the address for further correspondence, perhaps in case he should need some assistance with his academic research in England.

One way or another, it was not until ten years later, in the autumn of 1957, that the two scholars finally came to meet in person.[26] According to the interview that Tomasz Fiałkowski conducted with Przemysław Mroczkowski in 1973, for the Polish Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (published in the first week of October, a month after Tolkien's death), the meeting took place at the British Council office in Oxford, at that time located in Blackhall, at 20 St. Giles' Street, literally a stone's throw from The Eagle and Child pub. The Polish scholar,[27] now in his early forties, certainly knowing (and adoring) both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, approached Tolkien, quite famously exclaiming, "I come from Mordor" (Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12; Petry-Mroczkowska 31), in this way naturally referring to the dramatic political situation in his home country.[28] Mroczkowski had only just arrived in Oxford (together with his family),[29] having obtained a scholarship from the British Council to spend a year in one of the local colleges,[30] but he was already fascinated by the academic atmosphere at England's oldest university and, not improbably, sought the acquaintance of some of its best known scholars/writers.

article "Chaucer as a Philologist: The Reeve's Tale," (1934), or the essay "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" (1937).

[26] It is hard to locate the said meeting at a time with any greater precision. Scull and Hammond are unfortunately silent upon this matter. The most likely dating appears to be just before the beginning of the Michaelmas term (13 October), following Tolkien's short trip to Belgium in mid-September, when he visited his friend Simonne d'Ardenne (Scull and Hammond, *Chronology* [C] 540 [2017]).

[27] Contrary to what Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond seem to claim in the second (2017) edition of their *Chronology*, in 1957 he was not yet a professor (543, 595). As has been outlined above, he would be promoted to a full professorship ten years later.

[28] Tolkien was surprised, yet, notwithstanding his dislike of such interpretative practices, he appears to have understood the intended meaning of Mroczkowski's humorous salutation. In some of his letters—not only those addressed to the Polish scholar, but also his son Christopher (*Letters* 67-68, #55)—he would sometimes express his deep concerns about Poland and its tragic history in the twentieth century.

[29] He was accompanied by his wife Janina (1915-2008) and their three children: daughters Maria Anuncjata (b. 1945) and Katarzyna (1950), as well as son Tomasz (1949).

[30] He was aided in this by Graham Greene with whom he corresponded for a few months, following the writer's visit (early in the same year) at the Catholic University of Lublin (Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12; Petry-Mroczkowska 31).

THE "POLISH INKLING" IN OXFORD

It is on account of his renowned Oxford acquaintances that Przemysław Mroczkowski is sometimes referred to in his home country as the "Polish Inkling."[31] This is, of course, not quite correct in the strict sense of the meaning. The long list of names provided in the first volume of Scull and Hammond's *Reader's Guide* features a great number of scholars, including regular members, such as J.R.R. Tolkien and his son Christopher, the Lewis brothers, Hugo Dyson, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, and Nevill Coghill, as well as the less frequent participants of their weekly meetings in C.S. Lewis's college rooms at Magdalen College, The Eagle and Child or The Lamb and Flag, people like Gervase Mathew OP, C.L. Wrenn, C.E. Stevens, and John Wain (569-576). The name of the Polish scholar is not to be found there, yet it is not improbable, given the scope of Mroczkowski's academic interests—so consistent (despite inevitable differences) with those of Tolkien and his fellow academics—that he may have, in fact, attended some of their smaller, less formal assemblies in late 1957 and/or the first half of 1958, particularly as he claimed a number of times to have been acquainted with at least a few of them, most notably C.S. Lewis (Mroczkowski and Fijałkowski 12; Mroczkowski, "Uczoność a wyobraźnia w Oxfordzie" 4),[32] Gervase Matthew OP (Mroczkowski, "Uczoność" 4), and Nevill Coghill (4).[33] During his stay in England, the Polish academic may have therefore been treated as a more or less official guest, much as, for instance, Eric Rücker Eddison or Roy Campbell, who are known to have made merely a few appearances at the Eagle and Child in the early 1940s (Carpenter, *The Inklings* 190-192). If so, as a visiting scholar at Oxford and a

[31] He is, for instance, quite regularly called *polski Inkling,* "the Polish Inkling," by Ryszard Derdziński in his series of posts written for the Tolkien-dedicated website Elendilion (e.g. Galadhorn, 8 March 2019 and 11 March 2019).

[32] As has been observed, Lewis would have already heard of Mroczkowski in 1947, when the latter corresponded with Tolkien in connection with his prospective studies in England. It seems unlikely, though, that in 1957-8 he would have remembered the inquiries made by the then 32-year-old scholar from Cracow.

[33] It is rather unlikely that he should take part in any of their weekly meetings at The Eagle and Child (or, less frequently, The Lamb and Flag), as, at that time, Tolkien himself was no longer a regular participant (nor was C.S. Lewis who, having taken a new post at Cambridge in 1954, had to divide his time between Cambridge and Oxford). In fact, the author of *The Lord of the Rings* may have altogether stopped attending these gatherings a year or two before Mroczkowski even came to Oxford, his last recorded presence at the "Bird and Baby" being 9 November 1954 (Scull and Hammond C467 [2017]; *Reader's Guide* [RG] I.575 [2017]). Besides, the Polish scholar is also uncertain as to when exactly the Inklings actually used to meet, erroneously (but also hesitantly) claiming that the day of their habitual gatherings was Monday ("Uczoność" 4; *Dżentelmeni i poeci* 281).

friend of Tolkien, Mroczkowski could also, perhaps, with a little bit of semantic stretching, be referred to as a "visiting Inkling".

Notwithstanding his informal contacts with the Inklings, it should be borne in mind that Mroczkowski's priority in Oxford was to carry out his postdoctoral research. During his one-year stay there, he must have attended a number of lectures, including those conducted by Professor Tolkien. Of these, Mroczkowski said,

> Tolkien's lectures had a keen following, but they weren't, in my opinion, especially popular—at least, not popular in the sense that Nevill Coghill's were. He didn't specialize in his subject, but would occasionally speak extemporaneously on whatever interested him at the moment. Sometimes he would spend the entire lecture period reading a translation of a Norse saga or a Middle English poem instead of concentrating on the work at hand. Like his conversation, his lectures were very often difficult to understand. (qtd. in Grotta 78)

Part of the difficulty was, without a doubt, Tolkien's notorious "quick speech and indistinct articulation" (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 179). According to his Polish friend,

> Tolkien's speech was extremely difficult to follow, since it was all but inarticulate. I personally believe that the supreme test of a foreign English scholar was trying to understand Tolkien. If he did, perhaps he deserved an extra Ph.D. or the like. Tolkien didn't care to articulate; he simply expected and assumed that you could follow him with ease. (qtd. in Grotta 78)[34]

It is, unfortunately, not known which of Tolkien's lectures were attended by Mroczkowski. Nor is it in any way certain whether he attended them as a regular student or not. One way or another, these could only have taken place during the Michaelmas term of 1957 (i.e. from 13 October until 7 December), as, following that, Tolkien was on sabbatical leave for the duration of the subsequent two terms, Hilary and Trinity (Scull and Hammond, *C*541ff

[34] The accounts of Tolkien's lectures, particularly with regard to his reportedly poor articulation, are, however, not unanimous. According to professor John McKinnell from the University of Durham, a former student of Tolkien in 1962, when Tolkien was standing in for C.L. Wrenn, who was then on a sabbatical leave (Scull and Hammond, C630, 636 [2017]), his speech was perfectly comprehensible, both while he was lecturing and when he was reciting passages from various Old English texts (private conversation).

[2017]).[35] This means that, unless the author of *The Lord of the Rings* had given any uncredited lectures, Mroczkowski would have attended either his classes on the thirteenth-century English text *Sawles Warde* (Wednesdays at 11:00 at Merton College) or the ones in which Tolkien would provide a survey of Middle English dialects (Fridays at 11:00, also at Merton College; Scull and Hammond, *C*540 [2017]). Alternatively, he could have attended both. Neither became the major foci of his academic research, although certain possible traces of both could be found in some of his later writings. One of them might be his book of essays *Dżentelmeni i poeci* (*Gentlemen and Poets*) and the aforementioned *History of English Literature*, in each of which he devotes an entire paragraph to *Sawles Warde* as one of the most illustrious instances of Middle English *exempla* (*Dżentelmeni i poeci* 31-32; *Historia literatury angielskiej* 68).[36] Another one is the fact that, as has been mentioned, in the 1980s, he translated two major works of medieval poetry written in two different dialects of Middle English: first, in 1983, William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (West Midlands),[37] and then, in 1988, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* (London).[38]

Two Catholic Scholars and Their Long-Distance Friendship

Strange as it may seem today, in the Europe of open borders, Tolkien and his Polish friend would only be able to see one another, more or less regularly, in the period of less than a year, from the autumn of 1957 until the summer of 1958, and it is not reported anywhere that they should ever meet again after Mroczkowski had returned to his home country.[39] If only for this

[35] Tolkien requested a leave of absence in a letter to the Secretary of Faculties on 26 July 1957 (Scull and Hammond, C537 [2017]), arguing that he wished "to accept a number of invitations to lecture and visit scholars abroad, in particular in Sweden and the United States." He would, however, never go to any of these countries. Instead, he would visit the Netherlands, being the Guest of Honour at a "Hobbit Meal" in Rotterdam (van Rossenberg).

[36] *Sawles Warde* may be an important text in its own right, a thirteen-century treatise bearing evidence of anchoritic spirituality in medieval England, but it is seldom found in single- or even multiple-volume histories of English literature.

[37] Besides, in the mid-1960s, Mroczkowski also published two major texts dealing with William Langland's poem, "*Piers Plowman*: The Allegory in Motion" (1965) and "*Piers Plowman* and His Pardon, A Dynamic Analysis" (1966). The first of them is dedicated to the Inkling Nevill Coghill.

[38] The works of Geoffrey Chaucer and, in particular, *The Canterbury Tales*, are, nonetheless, a major area in Mroczkowski's academic research since the early 1950s.

[39] For one thing, Tolkien never went to Poland, although he was, in a sense, "expected" to do so in 1963 in order to collect the royalties for the Polish translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, the equivalent of £76 (more than £1,600 in today's value; Scull and Hammond, C644

reason, their friendship was of a somewhat different character than, say, the one that, for more than three decades[40] flourished between Tolkien and Lewis (regardless of its numerous frictions with regard to the two writers' views upon literature, religion, politics etc.). The other obstacles, soon to be overcome, though, were the age difference between Tolkien and Mroczkowski (the Oxonian, born in 1892, was more than twenty-three years older)[41] and the fact that the former was already a prominent scholar and writer, whose numerous publications, both academic and literary, were quite well known in the English-speaking world, while the latter, despite his already extensive knowledge of languages and literature, at that point, was still at the threshold of his academic career.[42]

Notwithstanding this, however, the acquaintance gradually developed into a friendship, one in which the undeniable distance that existed between them with regard to their age and academic status did not seem to be a problem. What connected them was evidently their Catholic faith and passion for medieval literature and culture. This is not to say, though, that they were of the same mind when it comes to their attitude to the post-Conciliar changes in liturgy,[43] or views upon certain literary works, their interpretative frameworks and relationship to matters of Faith.[44] Indeed, despite Tolkien's usual reluctance to provide too many explanations of his works, they would sometimes deliberate upon certain interpretative ambiguities in *The Lord of the Rings*, with the younger scholar speculating about the Eucharistic properties of lembas,

[2017]). As for Mroczkowski, he would travel abroad at least a few times before Tolkien's death in 1973, but not to England.

[40] Tolkien and Lewis are believed to have first met on 11 May 1926 at a meeting of the English Faculty at Merton College (Scull and Hammond, *C*145 [2017]; Lewis, *All My Road Before Me* 523-524).

[41] In fact, Mroczkowski was only two years older than Tolkien's eldest son John (b. 1917).

[42] Besides, Mroczkowski lived and worked in a country which, for many years, was separated from the Western world by the Iron Curtain, thus giving him little opportunity to make his name known outside Poland.

[43] Both Tolkien and Mroczkowski may be described as liturgical traditionalists. The latter's book of essays *Znaki na głębiach* (*The Signs in the Depths*), for instance, exposes his very conservative attitude to the celebration of the Holy Mass. Nevertheless, unlike Tolkien, who often voiced his displeasure with the changes brought by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965; Birzer 86; Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12), Mroczkowski seems to have embraced the reforms, although, at the same time, he was well aware of the wave of secularisation that might as well undercut their very foundations (Borkowicz 25).

[44] One such example might be Mroczkowski's deep fascination with the books of C.S. Lewis, including *The Chronicles of Narnia*, in which he particularly admired the Christ-figure of Aslan (Mroczkowska-Brand 123). Tolkien's attitude to the very same series was, on numerous grounds, considerably less enthusiastic (Christopher 37-45).

Marian features in Lady Galadriel, or Christ-like attributes in the character of Frodo (Grotta 96).[45] It may therefore be argued that, at least with regard to some such topics as, in particular, Roman Catholicism, its rites and practices as well as its claim to possess the universal Truth, there were evidently more things that Tolkien had in common with Mroczkowski than he had with, say, C.S. Lewis or Charles Williams.

It is also interesting to note that, despite being more than twenty-three years Mroczkowski's senior (not to mention the fact that, by 1957, he was, at least in England, both a renowned academic and a successful writer), Tolkien did not seem to have any reservations about addressing him and, evidently, being addressed solely by surname. This may sound very formal today, but sixty years ago it was a rather conventional way of referring to the people with whom one was on familiar or even friendly terms. Hence, apart from the letter which Tolkien sent to the Polish scholar in 1946, where, understandably, he addresses the recipient as "My dear Mr. Mroczkowski,"[46] all the subsequent correspondence between them would begin with either "Dear Mroczkowski" (9-10 and 17 November 1957),[47] or "My dear Mroczkowski" (20-26 January 1964).[48] In an analogous manner, the author of *The Lord of the Rings* would normally address such close and long-term acquaintances as C.S. Lewis ("My dear L."; *Letters* 60, #49),[49] Sir Stanley Unwin ("Dear Unwin"; 112, #98, and ff.)[50] or W.H. Auden ("Dear Auden"; 211, #163, and ff.). Most of the other correspondents are usually addressed as "Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss X".[51] Moreover, as the intimacy of their friendship evolved, so would also the way he signed his letters, from "Yours sincerely, J.R.R. Tolkien" (in, understandably, 1946[52] and

[45] According to Grotta (not a particularly reliable biographer on the whole, but one who did actually contact Mroczkowski about his acquaintance with Tolkien), it was the Oxonian who told his Polish friend that lembas "was really the Eucharist" (96). As for the other two assumptions, Tolkien "declined to confirm Mroczkowski's conclusion[s]" (96), although, as Grotta claims, he did not actually deny them (96).

[46] "Christies Online Catalogue."

[47] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (9/10 November 1957)" and "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (17 November 1957)."

[48] "Christies Online Catalogue."

[49] He does, however, also call him by the name that he was known to his family and friends ("My dear Jack"; *Letters* 59, #48; 125, #113).

[50] Prior to 1945, at least as far as the published letters are concerned, he did, however, address his publisher as "Dear Mr Unwin" (*Letters* 23, #17, and ff.)

[51] Understandably, this does not apply to the members of his immediate family: his wife ("My Edith darling"; *Letters* 7, #1) or children ("My dearest Mick/Christopher/Prisca" etc.; 47, #42, and ff).

[52] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (2 August 1946)."

just after they had met in 1957[53]) to "Yours sincerely Ronald Tolkien" (e.g. in the last known letter to Mroczkowski dated 20-26 January 1964,[54] more than six years after Mroczkowski had returned to Poland[55]).

It was indeed Tolkien who—in response to Mroczkowski's deep concerns not to offend the sixty-four-year-old professor[56]—actually encouraged the younger scholar to consider him a colleague,

> I do not understand your use of 'bold'! It is extraordinarily kind of you both to bother about us [i.e. Tolkien and his wife]. We are quite unimportant people. And I do hope that as I have been bold enough to address you as a colleague without title you will please do the same to me. ("Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (17 November 1957).")

It was also quite unusual (not just for the Oxford standards in the second half of the 1950s) that, only a few weeks after they had first met at the British Council office, Mroczkowski would invite both Tolkien and his wife Edith to lunch.[57] This would not, in all likelihood, have happened if the two men had not instantly (or otherwise quickly) established some common ground for their inquisitive minds, be it their shared Catholic faith or interest in literature, languages and philosophy (Mroczkowska-Brand 118, 121). Moreover, in view of Mroczkowski's other daughter, Maria Anuncjata Mroczkowska-Gardziel, what ultimately connected her father with Tolkien was a comparable type of imaginative thinking and deep interest in broadly understood cultural heritage.[58]

There must have been enough common ground between the two scholars already in the first few weeks of their acquaintance, when Tolkien

[53] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (9/10 November 1957)" and "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (17 November 1957)."

[54] It is not, however, certainly not the last letter that was sent to his family. On 10 April 1969, for instance, Tolkien is known to have written a letter to Mroczkowski's wife, who was at that time in England.

[55] "Christies Online Catalogue." The name of Ronald—rather infrequently used in his published correspondence—was the one by which he came to be addressed mainly by his parents, relatives and wife (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 26; Duriez 8).

[56] According to his daughter, Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand (and, in fact, everyone who has come in contact with the Polish scholar), Mroczkowski was every inch a pre-war gentleman, always courteous and well-mannered towards other people (Mroczkowska-Brand 119).

[57] In the said letter, though, Tolkien apologises and, on account of his wife's health concerns, kindly declines Mroczkowski's invitation "to have lunch chez vous" ("Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (17 November 1957)").

[58] Galadhorn, "Tolkien spod Wawelu."

agreed to take a look at the paper on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that Mroczkowski was working on at that time.[59] In a letter written around midnight on 9-10 November, the Oxonian offers his comments concerning the younger scholar's work. While he admits that he does not agree "on many points" with his Polish friend, he tries not to discourage him from further work upon the subject. In his opinion, however, Mroczkowski "uses too many abstract nouns [...] and avoids saying in direct language what [he supposes] is meant."[60] Tolkien thus makes some corrections in red ink "concerned with style and tone"[61] of the text. Finally, he apologises "for much neglect" on his part,[62] and expresses his hopes that "[he has] helped in it, and not in fact made it more difficult."[63]

It is unfortunately not known whether the above-mentioned paper was the only one that Tolkien agreed to read or whether, from time to time, the Oxford scholar continued to offer Mroczkowski his feedback, stylistic as well as substantive. It may be that, afterwards, his Polish friend—perhaps somewhat reluctant to further trouble the man he considered to be some sort of a mentor (Mroczkowska-Brand 119)—would only seek occasional verbal comments with regard to certain more difficult passages he was investigating at the time. It seems unlikely, on the basis of the available correspondence, that Tolkien would continue to offer his assistance once Mroczkowski had returned to his home country. However, the case of his oldest daughter, Maria Anuncjata, who, in or around 1969, sought the Professor's advice with regard to her master's thesis on *The Hobbit*, demonstrates that at least some, perhaps sporadic and rather general, assistance on Tolkien's side was not utterly implausible (Mroczkowski, "Uczoność" 7).

Tolkien's altruistic disposition towards his friend could also be seen in other, more mundane, matters. At an regrettably unspecified time in 1958 (but certainly in the first half of that year, at least some weeks before Mroczkowski's departure), he sends two letters (presumably in quick succession) to his Polish friend in which he raises the subject of a delicate matter. Seeing that Mroczkowski and his family are living on a very tight budget, he offers them financial support in the amount of £30 (some £650 in today's value), expressing his great pleasure when the money is finally accepted by the naturally much

[59] The paper in question was Mroczkowski's review of F.N. Robinson's edition of Chaucer's *Works* (second edition) for *The Times Literary Supplement* titled "A Lusty, Plain, Habundant of Vitaille," ultimately published in June 1958 (Bursiak 14), around the time of his going back to Poland.

[60] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (9/10 November 1957)."

[61] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (9/10 November 1957)."

[62] This seems to suggest that the idea of his correcting Mroczkowski's paper may have been hatched either around the time of their first meeting or very soon after that.

[63] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (9/10 November 1957)."

distressed scholar from Poland (Scull and Hammond C547 [2017]).[64] It is, Tolkien says, "a little of the proceeds of *The Lord of the Rings*,"[65] which he hopes will "be an answer to prayer, for on the way from church on Sunday [he] had a sudden clear intuition that [his friend was] worried and in difficulties."[66] It was an intuition (if "intuition" we may call it . . .) which certainly did not fail him, a much-needed addition to Mroczkowski's meagre scholarship[67] that helped him to stand again on his own two feet.

Mroczkowski's gratitude was, we may assume, truly profound. It was, therefore, perhaps partly on account of Tolkien's unexpected munificence in 1958 (and partly as a token of friendship) that the Polish scholar sent his English friend a bibliophile edition of *Pan Tadeusz* (Petry-Mroczkowska 31),[68] the national epic of Poland written by the nineteenth-century Romantic poet and scholar, Adam Mickiewicz.[69] In response, the writer sends (or, at least, intends to do so) a copy of the *Festschrift* he was presented with at a small dinner party at Merton College on 5 December 1962 (Scull and Hammond C633-34 [2017]).[70]

[64] This was an enormous amount of money for anyone living in Poland in the late 1950s, where an average monthly salary, depending on the qualifications, would oscillate between 10 and 20 pounds.

[65] For a detailed examination of Tolkien's financial arrangements concerning the sales of his books—*The Hobbit* (1937), *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955)—see Humphrey Carpenter's *Tolkien: A Biography*, in particular chapter "Cash or Kudos" (292-309).

[66] This means that, at least on some Sundays, the two families (excluding, however, Mroczkowski's children, who were, at that time, staying in a boarding school) might have been present at the same Holy Mass, perhaps in the Oratory Church of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, the same that Tolkien is known to have regularly attended. Since the Catholic community in Oxford was not, at that time, particularly big, the ties between the individual members of the congregation (or their families) must have been quite strong.

[67] It should not be forgotten that he came to Oxford accompanied by his wife Janina and their three children, the latter of whom, nonetheless, spent much of their time in a boarding school. Being himself a married man and father of four, Tolkien was, no doubt, perfectly aware of the financial difficulties that the one-year stay in England could place upon the head of the family.

[68] It may have been the hardback illustrated edition (with a dust-jacket and a slipcase) published in 1959 by Arkady.

[69] In his response to Mroczkowski's unexpected gift, Tolkien modestly replies that his knowledge of Polish is unfortunately insufficient to fully appreciate the literary and linguistic merits of the book (Petry-Mroczkowska 31).

[70] Published in 1962 by George Allen and Unwin and edited by Norman Davis and C.L Wrenn, *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J.R.R. Tolkien on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* is a collection of fourteen essays written by some of the professor's colleagues (C.S. Lewis, A.J. Bliss, Simonne d'Ardenne, Nevill Coghill *et al.*) and a dedicatory poem by Tolkien's former student, W.H. Auden.

Many years later, Mroczkowski would perhaps have also sent him a copy of his own *liber amicorum*, published in 1984 by the Polish Academy of Sciences under the title *Litterae et Lingua. In honorem Premislai Mroczkowski*. By that time, however, Tolkien had already left the shores of Middle-earth . . .

It is very difficult to tell how many letters were exchanged between the two scholars during the sixteen years of their mostly long-distance friendship. Although some of them came to be preserved, many may have been irretrievably lost. According to Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, one should not rule out the possibility that, having been posted in what the communist authorities would regard as "an imperialist country," some portion of Tolkien's correspondence was simply confiscated by the postal services in Poland (117). Moreover, of those letters that Mroczkowski did receive, many came opened, packed in a plastic bag with an annotation informing the addressee that this was the condition in which they arrived (117). Contrary to the fears of the communist-controlled security services, though, there was nothing suspicious in them. Apart from the usual courtesies, Tolkien would, for instance, write about the death of C.S. Lewis and the marital problems of his youngest son Christopher, both of which naturally caused him much sorrow.[71] Already in the late 1950s and early 1960s, shortly after Mroczkowski's return to his home country, Tolkien would also express his growing anxieties about old age, retirement from academic life, and insufficiency of pension benefits.[72]

Back in 1958, Tolkien would have certainly been concerned about his friend going back to Poland, the country which, over the period of the past twenty years, had not only fallen prey to two totalitarian regimes—first German National Socialism, and then Soviet Communism—but whose puppet government was also actively involved in a silent war against the Roman Catholic Church. Unlike many people in Western Europe, in whose eyes Stalin would regularly appear behind the mask of a friendly "Uncle Joe" and a key ally in the war against Hitler,[73] Tolkien—perhaps also on account of his old acquaintance, a Polish officer by the name of Popławski, who, in late 1943 or early 1944, sought his assistance "in devising a new technical vocabulary" (*Letters* 68, #55)[74]—knew all too well that the geopolitical situation that Poland

[71] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (20-26 January 1964)" and "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (unknown date)."

[72] "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (December 1959)" and "Letter to Przemysław Mroczkowski (unknown date)."

[73] For an insightful look into the manipulative techniques of the media in Britain during the Second World War and in the aftermath of the global conflict, see Jenks.

[74] Beginning in 1981, with the first edition of Tolkien's *Letters*, his name is consequently misspelt as "Poptawski".

found herself in was certainly not one to be envied.[75] Not allowing himself to succumb to despair, however, a quarter of a century later Tolkien does assure his friend behind the Iron Curtain (or, to be more specific, his wife Janina, who, in 1969, appears to have been visiting England) that "Poland for its own sake, but especially since it is your country, is ever in my mind."[76]

THE FIRST TRANSLATIONS OF TOLKIEN'S WORKS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

The indebtedness of Tolkien readers and scholars to the work of Przemysław Mroczkowski is understandably difficult to measure in objective terms. It appears, however, that the Polish scholar played an essential role in popularising the works of his Oxford friend behind the Iron Curtain, first by being actively involved in making possible the translations of his novels, and then, by directing the critical discourse in Poland towards a more positive appreciation of the new genre, so much alike (in the sense of its imaginative spectrum) the books of Lewis Carroll, Kenneth Grahame, or Edith Nesbit, yet so much different (in its cultural, linguistic, mythological, ethical, and ontological dimensions) than *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *Five Children and It*, all of which had already been regarded there as classics.

Mroczkowski's very first thoughts of translating Tolkien's novels into Polish may have dawned upon him even a year or two before his coming to Oxford in the autumn of 1957.[77] In his 1961 review of the recently published first

[75] That Tolkien and Popławski discussed the geopolitical situation in Central Europe is at least plausible. Following the mysterious death of the Polish Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski (4 July 1943) and the Teheran Conference (18 November—1 December 1943), which saw considerable alterations to the borders of pre-war Poland, the spirits amongst the thousands of Polish soldiers still stationed in Britain in 1944 are known to have been rather low. It should come as no surprise, then, that the letter Tolkien wrote to his son Christopher on 18 January 1944 (mentioning "poor old Pop[ł]awski") should conclude with the ominous words "if there are any Poles and Poland left . . ." (68, #55).

[76] "Christies Online Catalogue." As for the first part of the above sentence ("Poland for its own sake"), it seems doubtful that what Tolkien had in mind was the fact that he believed to actually have some Polish (as well as Saxon) blood running through his veins. After all, as the Oxonian declares in his essay "English and Welsh," after two centuries, it has probably come to be no more than "a negligible physical ingredient" (170). It is, apparently, far more likely that the reasons why Tolkien felt such a strong bond with Poland were her widespread Catholicism and fierce resistance to the totalitarian regimes of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia (Petry-Mroczkowska 31).

[77] Much, of course, depends on when he first came in contact with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Mroczkowski himself claims to have read both novels before he met Tolkien (Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12). Unfortunately, though, he does not specify the dates, and so the *termini post* and *ante quem* for the latter book should be placed within the period

volume of *The Lord of the Rings* [Polish title: *Władca Pierścieni*] for the weekly magazine *Przegląd Kulturalny*, he declares that the fact that it has come out in print in Poland is felt by him to be a personal success, as it was he himself who not only encouraged his kith and kin to read it in English, but had also come up with the idea of having it rendered into his mother tongue (4). The idea of translating *The Lord of the Rings* into Polish may seem rather obvious today, now that it has been published in more than fifty languages (some of them more than once; "Translations"), but it was not necessarily a foregone conclusion back in the late 1950s.[78] Mroczkowski claims that he first consulted it with Tolkien in 1958, perhaps at some point towards the end of his one-year stay in Oxford (Scull and Hammond C557 [2017]). Later that year, on 17 September, the Polish publishing house Czytelnik was already in contact with Allen & Unwin (Olszański 15), and in 1959, Tolkien is reported to have been corresponding with the translator Maria Skibniewska (Scull and Hammond C573 [2017]; *Letters* 299, #217). By that time, Max Schuchart's world-pioneering *In de Ban van de Ring* (1957) had only just been published in the Netherlands and, in all likelihood, Åke Ohlmarks's *Härskarringen* (1959-61) was still being translated into Swedish.[79] In other words, notwithstanding the promising sales results in the United Kingdom, a few years after its publication, *The Lord of the Rings* was certainly not yet a world classic and the cult status that it ultimately came to acquire in the second half of the 1960s was still a few years off.

How Mroczkowski managed to persuade two Polish publishers, Iskry and Czytelnik respectively, to release both *The Hobbit* (1960) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1961-3), two relatively unknown books of an obscure Oxford don, is anyone's guess.[80] Nonetheless, when they came out, Poland was very much in the vanguard of translating the books of Tolkien, the Polish edition of *The Hobbit*,

between 1954-1955 (i.e. when it first came out) and 1957-1958 (when the Polish scholar became acquainted with Tolkien).

[78] According to Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, her father correctly predicted that, regardless of the then current literary trends and reading sensibilities, Tolkien's works—with all their richness of humanistic thought, beauty and wisdom—would one day enter the canon of European literature (125).

[79] It is known from the letter that, upon his return from Scandinavia, Rayner Unwin sent to Tolkien on 30 September 1957 that, by that time, "the Swedish translation of *The Fellowship of the Ring* [was] nearly complete" (Scull and Hammond C540 [2017]).

[80] While it is true that various works of contemporary writers from behind the Iron Curtain were quite regularly published in communist Poland, even in the late 1940s and 1950s, it should come as no surprise that a novel in which the antagonist is a powerful Dark Lord from the east could be viewed with utmost suspicion by the wary censors. To illustrate the point, it could be sufficient to note that George Orwell's two most famous novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) were not officially published there until 1988, when the communist regime was already in decline.

namely *Hobbit, czyli tam i z powrotem* being only the fourth such translation in the world (after Swedish, German and Dutch) and *Władca Pierścieni* the third (after Dutch and Swedish). Both, however, were the world's first translations of Tolkien's novels into non-Germanic languages, the former two years before the Portuguese *O Gnomo* (1962) and the latter seven years before Italian *Il Signore degli Anelli* (1967-70).

Despite the fact that the idea of translating the books first came from Mroczkowski and that Tolkien may have initially given him his blessing, the Polish scholar was not, in the end, the one to translate it into the language of Sienkiewicz. According to Scull and Hammond, on 2 June 1958, the writer informed his younger colleague that, notwithstanding Mroczkowski's excellent command of English, he had absolutely "no idea of his skill with Polish" (Scull and Hammond C557 [2017]),[81] and so he would rather leave it to his publisher, Allen & Unwin, "to arrange contracts for translation" (557). In effect, both novels ended up being translated by Maria Skibniewska (except for the poetic insertions, which were rendered into Polish by Włodzimierz Lewik and Andrzej Nowicki), whose translatorial work is still considered canonical by a significant number of Tolkien readers in Poland.[82] Before she passed away in 1984, Skibniewska, a prolific translator from English and French,[83] would have also completed her vibrant, if at times controversial, renditions of *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1962), *Smith of Wootton Major* (1982), and *The Silmarillion* (1985).

Although he did not personally translate *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, it appears that Mroczkowski would continue to play a noteworthy role in the process of bringing them to the Polish reader. Having received a printed copy of the Polish *Hobbit*, Tolkien writes a letter (dated 23 November 1960) to Alina Dadlez, a Polish-born employee of George Allen & Unwin and member of the Polish Social and Cultural Association in London, with whom he is known to have quite often corresponded in connection with the translations of his writings into other languages (mainly Dutch, Polish and German). In it, he

[81] What Tolkien meant by this was not Mroczkowski's general command of Polish, of course, but solely his skills as a translator of literary works. Having already had some experience with the Dutch translation of *The Lord of the Rings* (*Letters* 249-251, #190), he certainly wished to play it safe.

[82] To date, there have been three translations of *The Lord of the Rings* into Polish. Following the aforesaid work of Maria Skibniewska, there was a highly controversial one (mainly on account of the characters' names) by Jerzy Łoziński (1997-1997) and the collective effort (2001) of Maria Fronc, Cezary Fronc, Aleksandra Januszewska, Aleksandra Jagiełowicz (prose), Tadeusz Olszański (poetry) and Ryszard Derdziński (appendices).

[83] She is credited with the translation of more than a hundred novels, including the works of Gilbert Keith Chesterton, William Golding, Graham Greene, Herbert George Wells, Henry James, Maurice Druon, Guy de Maupassant, and Haldór Laxness (from English).

thanks her for the book and expresses his hopes that he will "get some comments on the translation from his Polish acquaintance Professor Mroczkowski" (Scull and Hammond C594-595 [2017]). Whether Tolkien was ultimately informed upon the matter or not cannot unfortunately be confirmed by the surviving body of correspondence. However, within the following three years, Tolkien must have been notified about the fidelity of the Polish translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, since he claims in a letter to Dudlez (1 November 1963) that he has been assured by Mroczkowski that the treatment of the text is not in the least akin to the books' covers (Scull and Hammond C643-4 [2017]; Petry-Mroczkowska 31), particularly with regard to *The Return of the King*, which the writer forthrightly describes as a "Mordor hideousness" (643).[84]

MROCZKOWSKI'S REVIEWS OF *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* IN THE POPULAR PRESS

Mroczkowski's contribution to the popularisation of Tolkien's work in Poland is naturally far more tangible than the handful of private observations upon the quality of Skibniewska's translations in his unpublished correspondence with the writer. Following the publication of each of the three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings*, the Polish scholar would write his book reviews for the widely circulated press (rather than the academic journals with a limited accessibility to the non-specialist readers). Neither the weekly newspaper *Przegląd Kulturalny*, specialising in such fields of cultural creativity as literature, philosophy, music, film, and fine arts (where the first two volumes were given highly enthusiastic reviews in 1961 and 1962), nor the monthly periodical *Więź*, with its overtly Catholic profile (where the third book came to be reviewed in 1964), could ever hope to successfully compete with the bulk of Marxist-orientated press titles, publicly supporting the official line of the Party, ideological, cultural or otherwise.[85] Nevertheless, with some degree of thematic independence and a regular circulation of several thousand copies (not to mention nationwide distribution), they could reach a substantial percentage of

[84] The cover art of each of the three volumes was conceived by the Polish graphic designer and illustrator Jan Samuel Miklaszewski. The dust cover of *The Return of the Kings*, which features a sinister-looking figure of an unidentified monarch (whether it was meant to depict Aragorn, Sauron or the Witch-king of Angmar is not in the least clear), or, in particular, his crowned head, may easily bring to mind Tolkien's own depictions of the towers Orthanc and Barad-dûr reproduced, for instance in Scull and Hammond's book *The Art of The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien* (110, 113, 221, 222).

[85] The first two reviews are titled, respectively, *Wielka baśń o prawdach* "A Great Fairy-tale about Truths" (*Przegląd Kulturalny* 49/1961) and *Dalsza baśń o prawdach* "A Further Fairy-tale about Truths" (*Przegląd Kulturalny* 51&52/1962). The third one, published in *Więź* (2/1964), simply bears the title of the novel's final volume: *Powrót króla* "The Return of the King."

the more culturally-conscious readers for whom the fairy-tale-like narratives of the hobbits, dwarves, elves, wizards and magical rings of power may, at first sight, have seemed to be unworthy of any serious consideration.

Although he was actually not the first in Poland to provide some sort of critical insight into the works of Tolkien,[86] it is Mroczkowski who could now be thought of as the one who sparked genuine interest—popular as well as academic—in *The Lord of the Rings*. There are, naturally, good reasons for this. As has been observed, it was the then Lublin-based scholar who first came out with the then eccentric idea of translating the books of Tolkien into Polish (Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12). Furthermore, it was not only the first truly reliable, if somewhat sketchy, piece of critical assessment of Tolkien's works in Polish,[87] but also the earliest review of *The Lord of the Rings* to have been published in Poland,[88] the country in which the entire first print of little more than 10,000 copies sold out in a matter of weeks, often in the way which exposed some of the principal shortcomings of centrally-planned economy.[89] Finally, one must not ignore the fact that, being a good friend of Tolkien, Mroczkowski would naturally make a rather well-informed, and thus more reliable reviewer of his books than Janusz Stawiński, Zofia Jaremko-Pytowska, or even Krystyna Kuliczkowska (see the footnotes above), books which, by the time the three

[86] Here, the victor's laurels should be awarded to Krystyna Kuliczkowska, whose review of *The Hobbit* was published in 1960, in the monthly magazine *Nowe Książki* (1476-1477).

[87] Krystyna Kuliczkowska's review of *The Hobbit* is not devoid of certain cognitive values (she does, for instance, point to its deeply humanistic merits). However, some of the observations she makes (such as, in her opinion, the novel's near-allegorical quality) together with a number of truly irritating factual and nomenclatural errors make her critical evaluation little more than just a Tolkien-related curiosity, interesting mainly for its historical character.

[88] Early in 1962, a sceptical—and, for the most part, thoroughly erroneous—review by Janusz Stawiński, titled "Swift redivivus", was published in *Nowe Książki* (74-75). In it, the author argues that *The Lord of the Rings* was almost certainly meant to be some sort of an allegory on the modern world (75). Likewise, in her article "Bajki dla dzieci i dorosłych" ("Fables for children and adults"), Zofia Jaremko-Pytowska maintains that in his greatest work, Tolkien attempts to "bring back to life old Scottish and Icelandic legends, so that in this allegorical form he could express his views of the modern world" (979).

[89] In a communist-orientated economy (such as the one that was enforced in post-war Poland), the law of supply and demand did not operate freely in, for instance, determining the number of books to be launched on the market. Consequently, a genuine financial success (as was certainly the case with *The Lord of the Rings*) would not automatically result in the publisher's decision to print more copies. Indeed, the second edition would not come out until 1981, nearly two decades after the first, thus making *Władca pierścieni* not only a cult classic, but also a true *rara avis*, sold second hand for several times the price it would have had if the principles of free market economy had been upheld.

reviews were published, he had almost certainly read more than once.[90] Besides, as the Polish scholar repeatedly declared in his later publications, at least some of what he came to know about the overall style, subject matter and numerous underlying themes of *The Lord of the Rings* he may have actually heard from Tolkien himself (Mroczkowski "Wielka baśń o prawdach" 4; "Uczoność" 4-5, 7; Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12).

As may be deduced from the titles of the first two texts, the central arguments of Mroczkowski's reviews are that, first of all, *The Lord of the Rings* is a fairy-tale (or something in its generic vicinity) and that, secondly, there exists some underlying union between the work of Tolkien and what the Polish scholar refers to as the "truths." The strength of the first of his claims evidently rests upon Mroczkowski's reading of Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-stories." In fact, he does quote his friend from Oxford as saying that "fairy-stories should not be specially associated with children" ("On Fairy-stories" 56; Mroczkowski "Wielka baśń o prawdach" 4), a somewhat cutting-edge statement in his native Poland, where the fairy-tale genre was and, indeed, still is usually looked down upon and where, for the vast majority of non-academics, any distinction between a fable, a folktale and a fairy-tale appears to be practically non-existent. As for the "truths" he writes about, Mroczkowski's argument may seem to be even more intriguing, particularly when one keeps in mind the rather distinctive dismissal of universal values and truths in the works of some postmodernist writers of the mid-twentieth century, i.e. at the time when *The Lord of the Rings* was written and published. It appears, however, that by adhering to these "truths" the Polish scholar tries to accentuate the fact that, regardless of its outward appearance of a medieval-like tale of adventure, magic and wonder (which, of course, in some ways, it is), Tolkien's novel in fact adheres to some primal stock of universal values which are not only objective, but also interminable, unconditional and not based upon any man-made criteria.[91]

[90] Mroczkowski had certainly read both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by the time he first met Tolkien in the autumn of 1957 (Mroczkowski and Fiałkowski 12). His daughter Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand also maintains that he would read both novels to his children in English (122-123). She does not specify the time, but claims that it must have been after the family's return from Oxford, where they would attend an English school (123). Finally, it seems rather unlikely that Mroczkowski would have reviewed the Polish translation of *The Lord of the Rings* without reading it first, if only for the sake of Tolkien, particularly that the writer had already expressed his hopes to get some comments from him on the Polish *Hobbit* (in a 1960 letter to Alina Dudlez; Scull and Hammond C594-595 [2017]). Indeed, he does actually praise Skibniewska's translation in his review of *The Return of the King* ("Powrót króla" 98).

[91] If such indeed be Mroczkowski's line of reasoning, his eponymous reference to the "truths" would clearly echo what, in "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien claims to be the hub of the inherently imitative character of subcreation, namely that "we make in our measure

Another vital issue of Tolkien's sub-created world which Mroczkowski's reviews brought into discussion is the writer's extensive knowledge of languages and, in particular, early medieval literature with its numerous mythological references and allusions.[92] This knowledge, the Polish scholar argues, allows the writer to have a better understanding of the cultural heritage of our civilisation and, in this way, successfully adhere to the universal archetypes that underly the bulk of our literary cannon, be it epic fiction, romance or fairy tale ("Powrót króla" 98). Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, therefore, only processes (albeit in a highly creative way) the ancient treasure trove of concepts and images that was once common to half of Europe (98). It was this trove, Mroczkowski continues, that used to provide people with a set of roughly corresponding ethical norms and rules, the norms and rules that, unfortunately, seem to have lost much of their colour in our modern world (98). Tolkien's novel thus, according to Mroczkowski, constitutes an all-embracing catalogue of various human attitudes whose roots reach back to the Middle Ages and beyond, a truly magnificent gift to the people of our era (98).

Notwithstanding its quasi-medieval aura and fairy-tale-like form, which, Mroczkowski argues, can frustrate and, in effect, discourage many a serious-minded reader ("Wielka baśń o prawdach" 4; "Dalsza baśń o prawdach" 9; "Powrót króla" 98), *The Lord of the Rings* is, in fact, a highly realistic novel which, as has been mentioned, successfully tackles some of the big issues of our present time. Its mimetic qualities are, therefore, best discerned when Tolkien's book is approached without the reservations that all too often spring from the mind of an adult reader. Somewhat disputatiously, however, the Polish scholar argues that, odd as it may seem, one needs to be adult enough in order to realise that not all the knowledge and experience we appear to gain over the long years of our earthly sojourn are of any greater value and that not everything which comes to be reflected in the wide-open eyes of a young person should automatically be rejected as some irrelevant childish nonsense ("Wielka baśń o prawdach" 4). Being "adult enough" is, therefore, not some derogatory epithet to be directed at a person who seems to be entirely devoid of any spark of imagination (like the rational-minded narrator in William Wordsworth's *We Are Seven*),[93] but a genuine compliment, much as in C.S. Lewis's oft-quoted words in his dedication from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*: "some day you will

and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of a Maker" (66).

[92] He also points it out in the interview (Mroczkowski and Fijałkowski 12).

[93] In this Romantic poem, the narrator keeps on interrogating an eight-year-old village girl, for whom the fact that two of her six siblings are no longer amongst the living is no obstacle in claiming that there are, indeed, seven children in her immediate family.

be old enough to start reading fairy tales again" (7),[94] or, better still, Christ's admonition from the Gospel of Mark, "unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven" (18:3).

Consequently, Mroczkowski appears to be saying that to read *The Lord of the Rings* is to immerse oneself into a world of universal truths and values whose foundations are to be found in what constitutes the very cornerstone of our civilisation: the old tales and myths of, particularly, but not exclusively, north-western Europe and, most importantly (although in this case the Polish scholar evidently has to resort to some fairly transparent understatements),[95] Christian ethics with its central concepts of truth, faith and hope. These, he says, clearly evince the affirmation of human (in a broad sense of the word) endurance and solidarity, particularly in the face of seemingly imminent, if not always expressly personified, evil ("Wielka baśń o prawdach" 4). Given this, it should come as no surprise that Tolkien's masterpiece would grow to such epic proportions, both in terms of its physical dimensions and thematic scope, and so become, in the words of Mroczkowski, "A Great Fairy-tale about Truths" ("Wielka baśń o prawdach" 4). After all, when asked by his Polish friend about the actual reason(s) why he decided to write *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien replied, with disarming honesty that all he wanted to do was "to tell a long story" ("Uczoność" 5); one in which, one may add, not only his numerous peoples could speak the languages he so painstakingly worked on, but also, perhaps most importantly, one in which the aforesaid truths and values of essentially Christian humanism could be found in plenty.

It would be a bit of an overstatement to claim that the three reviews of *The Lord of the Rings* that Mroczkowski published in the popular press in the early 1960s ought to be considered as some sort of a foundation of Tolkien studies in Poland. Indeed, they were probably never meant to be anything more than a mere introduction to the work that, particularly at that time, more than half a century ago, seemed to escape any rigid classification in the fields of literary history and theory. It is, however, in this role of a populariser that Mroczkowski appears to have fulfilled himself best, igniting (or, at least, helping to ignite) the enormous interest that Tolkien's books garnered in Poland in, particularly, the second half of the twentieth century.[96] It was then but a natural

[94] C.S. Lewis dedicated the book, the first to be written in the series (but chronologically the second), to Lucy Barfield, the daughter of his close friend Owen Barfield, his own godchild and the namesake of one of the novel's protagonists Lucy Pevensie.

[95] While not exactly illegal, explicit references to the Christian faith in the state-controlled popular media were, on the whole, not welcome.

[96] Naturally, their popularity continued well into the twenty-first century, but it is difficult to tell to what extent the book sales in the first two decades of the new millennium should

consequence that so many Polish scholars—mainly, but not exclusively, in the field of English philology—would try to leave their own imprints on the ever-expanding universe of Tolkien studies. They may not necessarily invoke in their publications the name of Przemysław Mroczkowski,[97] but it is not unlikely that, at least in some measure, the observations which are to be found in his reviews of *The Lord of the Rings* came to be reflected in the academic publications of some of the leading Polish Tolkienists in the 1970s and 1980s, people like Andrzej Zgorzelski (52-78), Andrzej Wicher ("The Disturbed Utopia" 76-87), or Adam Ziółkowski (1479-1490). The more tangible impact that the three reviews might have had upon their works is, however, yet to be examined.

LOOKING OUT UPON THE SEA

Tolkien's acquaintance with Przemysław Mroczkowski is, unfortunately, not yet common knowledge in the world of academic research whose central figure is the author of *The Lord of the Rings*. The Polish scholar is, of course, mentioned a number of times in the biographical works of Daniel Grotta (1992) and Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond (2017). Very often, though, his presence there is no more than that of a person who either says something about Tolkien (as in the former book) or is in some way involved in a correspondence with the famous Oxonian (the latter). On the other side of the coin, the numerous, if, for the most part, disappointedly sketchy, portraits of Mroczkowski in the academic press and in the media (traditional, as well as electronic) usually deal with only a selection of episodes from the life of the Polish scholar, as a result of which most of those who have heard of him only think of Professor Przemysław Mroczkowski as "the man who knew Tolkien," which is, to say the least, a serious understatement, both on account of his work as a scholar and the role he played in the translation and popularisation of *The Lord of the Rings* in Poland. A more consistent and comprehensive biographical study of his—perhaps something like the recently published book about Tolkien's guardian Father Francis Xavier Morgan (by José Manuel Ferrández Bru)—one in which the character of the above-outlined relationship between the two scholars could be given a more in-depth treatment, is yet to be written. For the time being, though, the present publication, being, in fact, little more than just a compilation of easily accessible information (albeit mainly in Polish) about

be attributed to their ongoing fame or the fact that they were ultimately brought to the screen by Peter Jackson (2001-2003 and 2012-2014).

[97] The sheer number of various Tolkien-related publications (both academic and popular) which are now available on the market—in Polish, English or, in fact, any other major Indo-European language—is so high that for a more in-depth analysis of his works most scholars in Poland today would naturally turn the canonical (and more recent) publications of people like Tom Shippey, Verlyn Flieger, or John Garth.

Przemysław Mroczkowski, supported by the accounts of those who had the privilege of knowing him personally and a handful of reflections concerning his reviews of *The Lord of the Rings*, will have to do. Nonetheless, it may well be that from the top of this intricate tower of factual threads and fabrics we may still be able, like the man in Tolkien's famous allegory on criticism concerning *Beowulf*, "to look out upon the sea" (8).

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olkien's Lost Knights

Ben Reinhard

Tolkien is often considered a stolidly traditional and even reactionary author, and for good reason. Tolkien himself seemed almost to welcome the labels, and his debt to traditional models is obvious to all. But however reliable the Tolkien-as-traditionalist trope may be in general, it can be misleading in particulars. Taken uncritically, it can blind readers to the author's originality and willingness to depart from the traditions in which he wrote. We find one such departure in Tolkien's treatment of chivalric romance. Though Tolkien draws heavily on the medieval romantic tradition in his fiction, he displaces the knight—the archetypal hero of that tradition—from his central narrative role. Knights appear but seldom in Tolkien's larger legendarium (and never as protagonists); the knightly ethos of chivalry is routinely downplayed, criticized, and deconstructed. Tolkien's treatment of chivalry is one of his most daring breaks from tradition; it is a tribute to his creative power and the success of his world-building that few readers mark the departure. But a departure it remains, nevertheless—and one that begs for an explanation.

In this essay, I attempt to provide one by charting a middle course between those scholars who see knighthood and chivalry everywhere in Tolkien's work and those who see them nowhere at all. This essay has three goals: first, to examine the ways in which Tolkien rejected and critiqued the chivalric tradition; second, to suggest reasons why he did so; and, third, to explore the significance of that rejection for his work as a whole. Ultimately, I suggest that Tolkien replaces a defunct chivalry with a reconstructed model of heroism simultaneously more Christian and more modern than its medieval source.

Before examining precisely how and why Tolkien downplays knighthood in his fiction, it is important to establish just how unusual this decision is. Put simply, knights *should* be in Tolkien's fiction—they are all but demanded on generic, contextual, and even personal grounds. To begin with genre: with Lewis, Tolkien is recognized as one of the great heirs of the medieval romance tradition and one of its chief popularizers; indeed, Helen Cooper names the two as "the authors who kick-started the modern equivalent of the romance" (*English Romance* 4). But as Christopher Dawson points out, the historical growth of romance as a genre was essentially coterminous with the development of chivalry (*Medieval Essays* 189), to the extent that it is almost a

contradiction in terms to imagine a romance without its knight: Lancelot, Gawain, Redcross, or even Don Quixote. As Cooper has it, "Romance is inseparable from ideas of chivalry, and from the primary exponent of chivalry, the knight" (*English Romance* 41). When the 19th century romantics revived the genre, they naturally gravitated towards knighthood; Scott is, in this matter, the romantic *par excellence*. Chivalry features prominently throughout his literary career, from his very earliest works (such as the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*) to his mature novels (such as *Ivanhoe*). For all this, his most important comment on the topic came in his essay on chivalry for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Here, Scott defines chivalry as the blending of "military valour with the strongest passions which actuate the human mind, the feelings of devotion and those of love"—something never achieved before the Middle Ages ("Chivalry" 10). This new creation is, for Scott, one of the most important cultural developments of the medieval world; indeed, "[e]xcepting only the change which flowed from the introduction of the Christian religion, we know of no cause which has produced such general and permanent difference betwixt the ancients and moderns" (3).

Scott's sentiments find an echo closer to Tolkien's own day in the writings of C.S. Lewis. Like Scott, Lewis views chivalry as "the special contribution of the Middle Ages to our culture," and one of the most important differences between modernity and antiquity ("Necessity of Chivalry" 13). And, like Scott, Lewis sees chivalry as an artful combination of natural contraries: "The knight is a man of blood and iron, a man familiar with the sight of smashed faces and the ragged stumps of lopped-off limbs; he is also a demure, almost a maiden-like, guest in hall, a gentle, modest, unobtrusive man" (13). But Lewis goes a step farther than Scott. Where Scott had maintained a critical ambivalence towards the institution—roundly criticizing chivalry for perceived extravagances, abuses, and (above all) Romish superstition—Lewis presents it as necessary for the preservation of human society (see "Necessity of Chivalry," 15; a similar suggestion is made in the conclusion to his *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 137). This fascination with chivalry is borne out throughout Lewis's fiction: knights (both human and animal) dash through Narnia; the heroes of *That Hideous Strength* are presented as a kind of 20th-century Camelot, complete with Merlin and a Pendragon; John of *The Pilgrim's Regress* becomes, by the end of his story, a dragon-slaying knight. Other members of the Inklings demonstrated a similar interest in chivalry: Williams had knight-heroes for his Grail-quest in *War in Heaven* and his collection of Arthurian poetry, while Barfield experimented with Arthurian drama.[1] In many ways, Tolkien's experience in the Inklings was merely a continuation of a lifelong fascination with chivalric

[1] For substantial discussion of these and other related works, see Sørina Higgins, ed., *The Inklings and King Arthur*.

medievalism: Tolkien compared the TCBS to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (See John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*, 14). Indeed, there were times when the young Tolkien seemed almost a knight himself: he had a strong love for horses and—for a short time—served as "a *de facto* breaker-in" for King Edward's Horse (Garth 24).

Given the pervasive influence of chivalry on the post-Romantic English imagination in general and his own social circles in particular, it is no surprise to find the idea reflected in many of Tolkien's writings. The greatest English romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, was a fixture of Tolkien's career for nearly 30 years: his 1925 edition of the poem helped to secure his election to the Rawlinson and Bosworth professorship, and his translation of the same was broadcast by the BBC in 1953. He experimented with an Arthurian poem in his own alliterative verse, now edited as *The Fall of Arthur*; this poetic venture was praised by the legendary medievalist R.W. Chambers (see *Fall of Arthur* 10). Other, lesser works—his translation of *Sir Orfeo*, for instance, or his work on Chaucer—similarly suggest at least some abiding scholarly interest in the genre. Admittedly, some critics have suggested that Tolkien despised chivalric romance (see Michael D. Thomas, "Unlikely Knights," 81)—but given the vast amounts of time he devoted to preserving and transmitting the genre, this seems unlikely, to say the least.

But Tolkien did more than re-present and reimagine medieval chivalric romance: he went so far as to introduce knighthood into works where it had no proper place. In his translation of *Beowulf*, Hrothgar's Heorot is so populated by anachronistic and linguistically imprecise knights that it begins to sound very like Arthur's Camelot: Wulfgar becomes a "knight in proud array," Hrothgar sits "amid his company of knights," and Beowulf is hailed as "this good knight"—all in the span of only two pages (Tolkien, *Beowulf*, 22-3)![2] Tolkien defended his use of the chivalric register in his essay "On Translating *Beowulf*":

> There is no reason for avoiding *knights, esquires, courts,* and *princes*. The men of these legends were conceived as kings of chivalrous courts, and members of societies of noble knights, real Round Tables. […] The imagination of the author of *Beowulf* moved upon the threshold of Christian chivalry, if indeed it had not already passed within. (57)

[2] The actual Old English terms translated are, respectively, *wlonc hæleð* (*Beo.* 332, proud or splendid warrior), *eorla gedriht* (*Beo.* 356, troop of noblemen or warriors), and the simple substantive adjective *þæm godan* (*Beo.* 384 "to the good [one or man]).

Most Anglo-Saxonists would disagree with Tolkien's assertions here: Heorot is not Camelot, or even on its borders. Nevertheless, the gravitational pull of chivalry on Tolkien's imagination was so powerful that even his *Beowulf* was unable to escape it.

From all of this, the impact of chivalry on Tolkien is clear. But when we turn from Tolkien's social circles and scholarship to his imaginative world, we are in for a shock: the knights that loom so large in the former are almost completely absent in the latter. In *The Hobbit*, knights are absent, full stop. The main character is, as Tom Shippey has pointed out, an upper-middle class Victorian traipsing through the world of medieval romance (see *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, 5-7 and 36-45). This is true as far as it goes. But it is worth noting that none of the *supporting* heroic characters—Gandalf, Thorin, Bard, or Beorn—have anything of chivalry about them, either; nor do any of the minor characters. If the heroes of *The Hobbit* belong to any medieval genre, it is—as Lewis noted in his "On Stories" (104)—the saga. When Azog is finally slain, it is by a literary descendant of Bothvar Bjarki; Smaug, of course, falls to Bard the Bowman, and not to any knight in shining armor. Knights are similarly absent from most of the short stories (*Smith of Wootton Major*, *Leaf by Niggle*, and so on) and from the great bulk of *The Lord of the Rings*.

So successfully does Tolkien downplay the role of knights in his works that some scholars have been led to significantly overstate the case: Thomas claims that "the word 'knight' never appears in *Lord of the Rings*" ("Unlikely Knights" 82). This is simply not true: Éowyn tells her brother to make Merry "a knight of the Riddermark" (*The Lord of the Rings* [*LotR*] V.8.868) in the Houses of Healing, and Merry and Pippen are eager to be recognized as "knights of the City and of the Mark" (VI.4.955) at the Field of Cormallen. Indeed, knights occur (with limited frequency) throughout the whole of *The Return of the King*. The knights of Dol Amroth man the walls of Minas Tirith, ride out on sorties, and quite literally wear shining armor: they appear as "knights in full harness" as they arrive in Minas Tirith (V.1.771); later, Imrahil uses his "bright-burnished vambrace" to detect Éowyn's breath on the Pelennor Fields (V.6.845). Similarly, the Riders of Rohan are described in terms strongly redolent of traditional chivalry: *Rider* is of course directly cognate with German *Ritter*, and the cavalry of Rohan are explicitly called "knights" at several points in the narrative. Indeed, the clash of the Rohirrim with the scimitar-wielding Southrons reads like something from a romance of the Crusades: "Great was the clash of their meeting. But the white fury of the Northmen burned the hotter, and more skilled was their knighthood with long spears and bitter" (V.6.839).

Knights are, then, undeniably present. Thomas is right, however, that chivalry is downplayed—and it is worth noting in this context just how far the "knights" of Rohan are from the medieval knight of the popular imagination.

Tolkien asserted that the Rohan is a 'heroic'—not chivalric—civilization (see *Letters* 275-76, #210); partially for this reason, their language, poetry, and culture are all modelled on that of Anglo-Saxon England.[3] In many ways, the Anglo-Saxon heritage is reflected in their manner of warfare as well: though the Riders charge into battle on horseback, they—like Harold at Hastings and Beorhtnoth at Maldon—dismount to form a shield-wall in the face of overwhelming odds (see *LotR* V.6.847). Moreover, as Michael Drout has noted, the primary models for the Riders of Rohan were not the knights of medieval romance but the much older *equitatus Gothorum*—the barbarian cavalry of Goths and Alans (see Drout, "A Mythology," 239). Finally, while knights are present in *Return of the King*, it is important to note the precise manner in which they are presented. Both the knights of Rohan and Dol Amroth are presented *en masse* and in collective action, never as the isolated knight-hero of medieval romance. Knights there may be, but they are never allowed to become the main focus; instead, they provide the backdrop against which other, non-chivalric characters act.

The issue comes into particularly clear focus when we consider two of the most naturally chivalric characters in the romance, Faramir and Aragorn. Though Aragorn is the greater hero, Faramir is arguably more central to Tolkien's thought—and so we begin with him. The vocabulary and imagery of chivalry hang thick about the young hero. He is courteous, pious, grave, wise, gentle, and merciful; able, as Beregond says in *Return of the King*, to "master both beasts and men" (V.4.809). Moreover, like a proper Lewisian knight, he unites the warring qualities of ferocity and gentleness in his person. He is both courageous and courteous, skilled in battle and gentle in court; "wise and learned in the scrolls of lore and song […] and yet a man of hardihood and swift judgement in the field" (V.1.766).[4] Indeed, Faramir himself explicitly criticizes other models of heroic action, in terms Lewis himself would have approved of,[5] giving what Tolkien describes as "very sound reflections […] on martial glory and true glory" (*Letters* 79, #66). He rejects the seductive temptation of the battlefield glory as an end in itself—"I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love

[3] To cite only a few of the abundant available examples: "Where now the horse and the Rider" (*LotR* III.6.508) is a reworking of the Old English *Wanderer*, lines 91-6; Tolkien notes in *Letters* 381, #297 that all the names in Rohan are drawn from Old English; and the ascent to Meduseld in *Two Towers* (III.6.506-509) is drawn almost point for point from Beowulf's ascent to Heorot in *Beowulf* 300 *ff.*

[4] Tolkien's description of Faramir in *Letters* 323, #244, could almost have been lifted from Lewis's "Necessity of Chivalry": he is "personally courageous and decisive, but also modest, fair-minded and scrupulously just, and very merciful."

[5] Indeed, the chapter "Faramir" was read to Lewis and Williams in May 1944, and "rec'd fullest approbation" (*Letters* 79, #67).

only that which they defend" (*LotR* IV.5.672)—though he notes that Gondor has largely departed from this high ideal. "We now love war and valor," he laments, "as things good in themselves" (IV.5.679). The importance of the principle articulated here cannot be overstated. Faramir is, after all, the closest thing we have to Tolkien's own mouthpiece in his work,[6] and he gives what seems to be the fullest expression of Tolkien's theory of heroism. In his rejection of martial glory for its own sake, Faramir transcends the Northern heroic ethos described in "*Beowulf*: the Monsters and the Critics" and embodied in fiction by the Rohirrim and Boromir ("More like to the swift sons of Eorl than to the grave Men of Gondor," as Éomer says [*LotR* III.2.436]),[7] adopting instead the Christian understanding of warfare articulated by Augustine and Aquinas. For Lewis, this combination of old heroic courage with civilizing Christianity was almost the definition of chivalry, and there are hints that Tolkien agreed, at least in part.[8] Based on his theory of heroism, then, Faramir seems to be not merely a knight, but something like the ideal of knighthood itself.

Other aspects of his character support this conclusion. Faramir is nearly as scrupulous about his sworn word as the hero of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: he "would not snare even an orc with a falsehood" (IV.5.664), he treats his casually spoken word as seriously as a vow (IV.5.681), and he realizes that Frodo cannot break his troth with Gollum, whatever prudence might seem to dictate (IV.5.676-7). At times it seems almost as though his character were drawn as an illustration Gawain's Pentangle: he is pious (as seen in the pre-meal blessing in Henneth Annûn, IV.5.676), generous (his gifts to Frodo and Sam, IV.7.694), and friendly and courteous throughout. He is moreover meek and humble, willing to stand aside and allow the higher-born Aragorn to ascend to the throne of Gondor. Finally, like Aragorn, Faramir's story ends with a happy marriage to a royal lady and the foundation of a new dynasty. The conclusion is inescapable: Faramir, Captain of Gondor, is a knight.

Or at least he should be. Tolkien, however, deliberately closes this option off for the reader. Faramir is no knight in shining armor: he is the captain of the rangers of Ithilien, "clad in green and brown of varied hues" (IV.4.657). He and his men fight on foot with bow and spear, and they attack the men of

[6] See *Letters* 232fn, #180: "As far as any character is 'like me' it is Faramir." The same letter explicitly states that, in some matters, at least, Faramir speaks for the author.

[7] Tolkien identifies "naked will and courage" as the essence of Northern heroism; in the case of godless Vikings, this became the exaltation of "martial heroism as its own end" (26). While he retains the will and courage, Faramir follows the classical and Christian just war tradition in uniting it to a higher end. By a curious turn, his rejection has been interpreted as a particularly *modern* innovation (see Croft 43, 101).

[8] See especially "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" 20 and n. 16: Tolkien notes that the pagan heroic Beowulf has been infused with elements of the Christian imagination.

Harad in a thoroughly unchivalric guerilla ambuscade (we will see below that Tolkien regarded "sporting" battles as one of the characteristic excesses of a degenerate chivalry). Having defeated the enemy, he and his men melt back into the forest "flitting in and out of the shadows" on their way back to their refuge of Henneth Annûn, hidden in a cave behind the waterfall; later, they vanish "almost in the twinkling of an eye" (IV.7.695). This close connection to the natural world of Ithilien was, indeed, a defining characteristic of Faramir from the beginning: the character came to Tolkien's mind unbidden, simply "walking into the woods of Ithilien" (*Letters* 79, #66). In all of this—clothing, weaponry, tactics, and refuge, Faramir and his rangers participate in a medieval archetype distinct from (and in many ways opposed to) the courtly knight.[9] They belong to the Greenwood of the medieval outlaw: Hereward the Wake, Adam Bell, and Robin Hood are their natural companions. In Faramir, Lewis's ideal knight has become an outlaw.

If not Faramir, what of Aragorn? More than any other character in *Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn participates in the great tradition of medieval chivalric romance: he is the lost heir to a kingdom and the 'fair unknown'; he falls in love with an unattainably superior beloved guarded by a protective father whose approval he must win before being permitted to wed; he proves his worth through "great journeys and errantries" (*LotR* App.B.1090). He is aided by his invincible and magical sword (paired, like Excalibur in Malory, with an equally wonderful scabbard), and simultaneously wins both his bride and his ancestral kingdom. His friends are then installed as client kings around him, and he rules to the end of his days in peace and prosperity. In all of this, Aragorn is the direct descendant of the great chivalric heroes of medieval romance: Arthur, Gareth, Horn, and Perceval—to name only a few. Scholars have been quick to pick up on this fact: Verlyn Flieger calls Aragorn "a traditional epic/romance hero" and claims that his romantic and chivalric attributes are essential to his character ("Frodo and Aragon," 142 and 148, respectively); to Michael Thomas, Aragorn is a parallel to "the ideal knights of ancient lore" ("Unlikely Knights" 85); to Helen Armstrong, he is a "paladin" ("Aragorn" 23). Here, at least, Tolkien has given us a knight.

Upon closer examination, however, it is clear that Aragorn has received precisely the same treatment as Faramir. In the first place, despite the clear chivalric overtones of the Aragorn-Arwen story—or indeed, as we will see, *because* of them—the story is largely suppressed in the main body of *The Lord of*

[9] For a discussion of the outlaw archetype and its fundamental opposition to chivalry, see Maurice Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, especially pp. 2-3. Carter interprets these same elements (green clothing, longbows, and guerilla warfare) as reflective of World War I-era soldiery (89-93); for a variety of reasons, I believe my reading strikes closer to the mark.

the Rings: the great bulk of it is exiled to Appendix A.I.v, and what remains is seen through the eyes of the decidedly non-knightly (and occasionally uncomprehending) hobbits. So successfully does Tolkien downplay the story that the marriage of Aragorn and Arwen appears (to the careless and casual reader, at least) to come as a complete surprise. Aragorn-as-knight is pushed aside; Strider the ranger dominates the main action. As a ranger, he is as far from a knight as he can possibly be: like Faramir, we first meet him clad in the green of the medieval outlaw (*LotR* I.9.156); he has "rather a rascally look" (I.10.164), and his reputation in Bree matches. However fair he may feel, he certainly *looks* foul. And even when his nobility is finally revealed, Tolkien makes sure that the vagabond Strider is never far from the reader's mind. The effect is heightened by the fact that the hobbits persist in addressing him as Strider—much to the consternation of more properly chivalric characters like Imrahil (V.8.863). But the hobbits' perspective dominates the narrative, and even in Aragorn's great triumph at Cormallen the reader is forcibly returned to his disreputable appearance in the Prancing Pony (VI.6.953-4). The whole effect is summed up neatly in a scene in *The Two Towers*:

> He wrapped his grey cloak about him, hiding his mail shirt, and stretched out his long legs. Then he lay back and sent from his lips a thin stream of smoke.
>
> 'Look!' said Pippin. 'Strider the Ranger has come back!'
>
> 'He has never been away,' said Aragorn. (III.9.563)

Because of this, Aragorn can never be, fully and finally, a knight: the Ranger never leaves.

But Tolkien does more than diminish the natural knightliness of certain characters: he directly critiques the institution of chivalry through others. Of all the members of the Fellowship, it is Boromir who most clearly embodies the chivalric ideal. He certainly bears the most traditional knightly gear: long sword, great shield, and war-horn (III.3.279). This ancestral horn, cloven in two at his death, is obviously drawn from the literature of chivalry; indeed, it connects him directly with Roland, the greatest knight of the matter of France. Lest we should miss the point, Boromir's model of heroism is repeatedly contrasted with that of Aragorn and the rangers. He defiantly blows his great horn as the company sets out from Rivendell, claiming he "will not go forth as a thief in the night" (III.3.279)—that is, as Aragorn would have. This contrast is made even more explicit in the Council of Elrond: Boromir speaks of Gondor, "bulwark of the West" (II.2.245); Aragorn responds by noting the less exalted and more thankless role played by the rangers of the North:

> Lonely men are we, Rangers of the Wild, hunters—but hunters ever of the servants of the Enemy […]. Travellers scowl at us, and countrymen give us scornful names. "Strider" I am to one fat man who lives within a day's march of foes that would freeze his heart, or lay his little town in ruin, if he were not guarded ceaselessly. (II.2.248)

And it is the humble and scorned Ranger who passes the test, while Boromir's obsession with the strength of his people is closely connected to his temptation and eventual fall. Nor is this an isolated instance in Tolkien's fiction: the same tension between the "honorable" and self-glorifying hero against the "ambush and stealth and secret arrow" of Nargothrond is played out, with even more horrible results, in the story of Túrin (see *Silmarillion*, 211 ff.)

Even greater moral problems occur when we consider Eärnur, the last king of Gondor and perhaps the most unambiguously knightly character in the larger mythos. Unlike the great majority of Tolkien's heroes, who tend to fight on foot, Eärnur is described as leading the *cavalry* of Gondor in battle.[10] Moreover, he attempts to face the Witch King, on horse, in single combat (*LotR* App.A.iv.1051), and throughout his reign, the king's "only pleasure was in fighting, or in the exercise of arms" (1052). His chivalric pride also leads to his doom: the Witch King challenges him repeatedly to single combat, taunting him and questioning his courage. When finally Eärnur accepts, he rides "with a small escort of *knights*" (1052, emphasis mine) to do single combat with the Lord of Minas Morgul—where he is betrayed and dies, and the line of kings in Gondor comes to an end. To modify "The Monsters and the Critics," it is clear that the wages of chivalry—in *Lord of the Rings*, at least—is death.

So far, we have been speaking of knights merely as they appear (or fail to appear) in Tolkien's major fiction. But when we turn from Middle-earth to Tolkien's lesser fiction, the picture changes considerably as silence and implicit criticism give way to full-blown satire. Nowhere is this more clear than in *Farmer Giles of Ham*. The knights in *Farmer Giles* cut a frankly ridiculous figure: vain, silly, and utterly ineffectual. When the dragon arises and devastates the countryside, they repeatedly refuse to do anything about the matter, and offer instead an increasingly absurd series of excuses—including fear of offending the royal cook (*Farmer Giles* 143)! When they finally *do* hunt the dragon, they proceed with minstrels, squires, and a baggage train. In all this, they are repeatedly contrasted with the good sense and practicality of the plain farmer Giles.

[10] In a similar stroke, all the Gondothlim fight on foot with the sole exception of the fat and cowardly Salgant, who fawns on the traitor Meglin. See J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fall of Gondolin*, 75.

Nowhere is the contrast clearer than in the farmer's meetings with the dragon. In their first meeting, Chrysophylax attempts to shame the farmer by reminding him that a *proper* knight would "issue a challenge in such cases, after a proper exchange of titles and credentials" (43). And indeed the knights do attempt to do so when they come to the dragon's lair—but Chrysophylax charges before they finish, killing several "before they could even issue their formal challenge to battle" (59). For all this, perhaps the most cutting comment on chivalry comes during the king's first visit to Ham: he gives a long speech praising "the ancient courage" of his people, but the knights fail to notice: they "were talking among themselves about the new fashion in hats" (50). Not for nothing does Jane Chance describe *Farmer Giles* as a satire on "an effete and selfish chivalry" (*Tolkien's Art* 130).

Amidst all these criticisms, however, one deserves special notice. When Giles defeats Chrysophylax for the second time, he demands that the dragon hand over his treasure, but allows him to retain a small portion for himself. By contrast, the narrator notes, "a knight would have stood out for the whole hoard and got a curse laid upon it" (64). Taken on the surface, this seems to be just another of the story's cheap shots against chivalry: the shrewd but merciful farmer triumphing over the fecklessly haughty knight. But something is off here. Wringing every last penny from a defeated foe is *not* a characteristically knightly behavior, and I struggle to think of any parallel for this scene in the world of medieval romance. What is unprecedented in romance, however, does find a notable model in saga literature: in both the *Skaldskaparmal* and the *Volsunga Saga*, Loki captures the dwarf Andvari and extorts from him every ring he owns; as a result, Andvari curses his whole treasure—exactly as Chrysophylax would have done. But the Norse trickster god Loki—the inspiration for the knights in this scene—is about as far from chivalric as any character could possibly be. Put simply, in Tolkien's fiction, knights are held responsible even for the sins they did not commit.

And so it is that the most prominent medievalist of the 20th century excludes "the special contribution of the Middle Ages to our culture" from his imaginary world, and the great modern popularizer of Romance separates the "inseparable" element from it. He avoids, downplays, and criticizes knightly and chivalric ideals consistently throughout his published fiction: we are clearly in the presence of one those oppositions and contradictions that, as Verlyn Flieger argues, give Tolkien's works their power and imaginative unity ("Arch" 18). But while Flieger encourages us to simply take Tolkien's contradictions as they are, I cannot resist at least an attempt at an explanation. Tolkien's later academic writings—and especially his essay "Ofermod"—offer at least some guidance here. In this essay, Tolkien examines what are arguably the most hotly debated lines in the Old English poetic canon:

> Ða se eorl ongan for his ofermode
> alyfan landes to fela laþere ðeode. (*Maldon* 89-90)[11]

The lines refer to the 10th-century *eorl* Beorhtnoth who, when challenged by invading Vikings to a "fair fight," allowed the enemy to establish a foothold on account of his *ofermod*. But what does the word *ofermod* mean? Explanations have ranged widely, but for Tolkien, the answer is clear: *ofermod* is nothing other than pride. But not just any pride: it is specifically *chivalric* pride. As Tolkien has it, "this element of pride, in the form of the desire for honour and glory, in life and after death, tends to grow, to become a chief motive, driving a man beyond the bleak heroic necessity to excess—to chivalry" ("Ofermod" 20). That is, chivalry is a pride and desire for glory grown to excessive proportions; this chivalry leads Beorthnoth to his death. As Tolkien has it, such chivalry is Beowulf's downfall, too: it is chivalry that motivates him to face the dragon alone, and chivalry that leads to his kingdom's ultimate ruin (23). By the parameters Tolkien establishes here, chivalry is defined as *at least* an excess and probably a vice—the prideful extension of "Northern courage" he had praised in "*Beowulf:* The Monsters and the Critics" (20). On this definition, most of Tolkien's fallen characters (certainly Boromir, and to a degree Denethor or even Saruman) can be said to have fallen through chivalry.[12] We have come far indeed from the idealized masculine perfection of Scott and Lewis.

Of course, there is a danger to make too much of this: Tolkien is not wholly consistent in his treatment of chivalry. In his essay on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for instance, Tolkien speaks favorably of the chivalric ideals of courtesy and of the "gentle courtly knight" at the poem's center ("Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" 99); in his translation of the same, he inaccurately (and inexplicably) includes 'chivalry' as one of the virtues represented on the hero's shield.[13] Moreover, Tolkien's negative attitudes towards chivalry are almost certainly linked to his own natural pessimism. Where Lewis had imagined the young R.A.F. pilots of the second world war as modern-day knights ("Necessity of Chivalry," 16); Tolkien compared them to "Hobbits learning to ride Nazgûl-birds 'for the liberation of the Shire'" (*Letters* 115, #100). But however we may

[11] "Then the earl began, on account of his *ofermod*, to allow the hateful people too much land." Translation mine.

[12] For a helpful survey of the impact of chivalric *ofermod* in Tolkien's thought, see Colin J. Cutler, "Turning Back the Tides: The Anglo-Saxon Vice of *Ofermod* in Tolkien's *Fall of Arthur*."

[13] At line 653 of the poem, the poet speaks of the hero's idealized *cortaysye*—courtesy. It is an important word, as courtesy is explicitly held up as a major factor in Gawain's temptation in the third fitt. Tolkien translates the word as *chivalry*, even though under no metrical or alliterative compulsion to do so.

try to soften it, Tolkien's scathing criticism of the institution of chivalry in "Ofermod"—in an age when everyone from Lewis to General MacArthur admired it—cannot be ignored.

What are we to make of this? Several scholars have argued that Tolkien's treatment of heroism is rooted in his own experiences in the Great War: the War destroyed European notions of chivalry—so the argument goes—and so new models of heroism were necessary.[14] Steven Brett Carter gives a representative example of such argument: Tolkien provides "a new definition of the heroic model for the twentieth century in contrast to the ancient heroic ideals which are dissolved in World War I" (90). There may be some truth to this: Tolkien's general hatred for "the utter stupid waste of war" (*Letters* 75, #64) is repeatedly attested in his letters. And it is entirely possible that his particular hatred of excessive heroism was informed by the shattering realities of the War—though Tolkien himself downplayed the influence of the war on his fiction (*Letters* 303, #226), Lewis suggested that we may detect echoes of the Great War on the War of the Ring (see "Dethronement of Power" 14). But arguments such as this must be approached with caution. In the first place, the assumption that World War I destroyed the European ideal of chivalry is—as Allen Frantzen has conclusively demonstrated—simply not true. "Chivalry did not die with World War I," Frantzen argues—it endured through the 1920s to the present day (8). And it endured in Tolkien: John Garth notes that Tolkien stood solidly *against* the "disenchanted view" presented by Wilfrid Owens and the other war poets (302-3). Because of this, such arguments run the risk of misrepresenting Tolkien's complex thought on the subject of chivalry. Tolkien rejects the *term* 'chivalry,' identifying it with the worst excesses of the heroic tradition, and he rejects some of its characteristic trappings. However (as our examination of Faramir and Aragorn has shown)—he does not reject the *substance* of chivalry in its entirety. Or, to put it another way, if Tolkien does provide a new model of heroism, it is a new model firmly rooted in—not divorced from—the old chivalric precedent. This stubborn adherence to traditional models is essential to the success of his artistic project and, in Croft's formulation, "an integral part of the task of sub-creation" (23).

But if Tolkien does rely on chivalric precedent, why does he use the term "chivalry" as a catch-all for everything he dislikes in the heroic tradition, and why is he so careful to avoid unequivocal, positive depictions of chivalry in his books? We can find some sense if we turn to Tolkien's personal biases.

[14] See Janet Brennan Croft, *War in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*; Steven Brett Carter, "Faramir and the Heroic Ideal of the Twentieth Century"; and (to an extent) Rebekah Long, "Fantastic Medievalism and the Great War in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*." See also Cutler, 6 and 11.

Though Tolkien occasionally uses a very broad definition of chivalry—he sees the institution arising as early as the 8th century (see, for instance, "Ofermod" 22 and "On Translating Beowulf" 57), where most scholars would place it in the 12th or (at earliest) the 11th—he can hardly have been unaware of the ordinary usage of the word. And, in ordinary usage, the term is inevitably entangled with the high medieval chivalric ethos: the armored warrior on horseback and courtly love and the French culture that brought them both about.

But this common definition of chivalry would obviously have conflicted with Tolkien's scholarly and patriotic preferences—and, indeed, prejudices. Humphrey Carpenter's biography attests to Tolkien's lifelong aversion to things French (food, language, and culture)—an aversion that began in early childhood and grew throughout his life (see *Tolkien*, 22, 67). When combined with Tolkien's career as a student of Anglo-Saxon—that is, the language of England from before the Norman Conquest—this natural distaste became grounds for an enduring hostility; as Carpenter has it, the Conquest "pained [Tolkien] as much as if had happened in his lifetime" (129; see also Shippey, *Road* 30-2). Tolkien himself admitted to his dislike of French in a 1958 letter, and even acknowledged that his distaste for the language had "some relation" to his fiction (*Letters* 288, # 213).

We may never know the full nature of that relationship, but it is possible to identify a few of its salient features. As Tom Shippey has pointed out, the history of the Shire "correspond[s] point for point with the history of early England" (*Author* 9). This claim has merit: the Fallohide brothers cross the Brandywine with their followers in the waning days of the North Kingdom, just as Hengest and Horsa crossed the Channel during the last days of the Western Empire. But if Hobbits are the Anglo-Saxons to the Shire's England, they differ in one crucial respect: the Shire is never conquered, and those who attempt it (Golfimbul at the Battle of Greenfields, or Sharkey's men at Bywater) are decisively repulsed. Tolkien's hobbits are therefore allowed to develop organically and without outside interference—to become, in a sense, more English than the English themselves. This fits closely with Tolkien's intention to build up his mythology for England. As he says in his much-quoted letter to Milton Waldman:

> I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story […] which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. It should possess the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, be redolent of our 'air' […]. (*Letters* 144, #131)

In an imaginative world rooted in "Britain and the hither parts of Europe" (144), the culture of chivalry—precisely insofar as it is a French import—can find precious little place.

The vacuum left by the chivalric knight, however, had to be filled: Tolkien wrote romances, after all, and the romance genre demands a questing hero. Tolkien's displacement of the knight required the substitution of a new kind of hero—or, better yet, *two* kinds of hero: the halfling and the ranger. In place of the powerful and noble knight errant, we have (on the one hand) the modern, bourgeois, and above all *small* hobbits or (on the other) the half-wild, mistrusted rangers. The creation of these archetypes is one of the chief triumphs of Tolkien's imagination, and an essential part of the artistic—and, indeed, commercial—success of his works.

How are we to understand these creations? We could do worse than to begin with Tolkien's own words on the subject. In a letter to W.H. Auden, Tolkien admitted that he chose hobbits as his primary protagonists *precisely because* they diverge from the standard pattern of the romantic hero. The passage is worth quoting in full:

> I myself saw the value of Hobbits, in putting earth under the feet of 'romance', and in providing such subjects for 'ennoblement' and heroes more praiseworthy than professionals: *nolo heroizari* is of course as good a start for a hero, as *nolo episcopari* for a bishop. Not that I am a 'democrat' in any of its current uses; except that I suppose, to speak in literary terms, that we are all equal before the Great Author, *qui deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*. (*Letters* 215, #163)

The last line of this quote, drawn from Mary's *Magnificat*, is of special importance, pointing as it does to the exaltation of the humble—identified by Tolkien as a central theme of his work (see *Letters* 237, #181). This theme is not absolutely incompatible with the ideal of chivalry (some romantic heroes like Malory's Gareth embody the idea closely enough), but it is a poor fit. The ideal chivalric knight—Galahad, Lancelot, Gawain—was never particularly lowly to begin with, and therefore cannot be truly ennobled. The half-wise, home-loving hobbit can.

The hobbits are of course the Tolkienian heroes *par excellence*. But we find the same general logic operative in Tolkien's creation of the rangers. As discussed above, rangers like Faramir and Aragorn are at their core Lewisian knights—stern in battle, gentle in hall—stripped of all the material and social benefits ordinarily attendant on their class. This allows the ranger, paradoxically, to be in a sense more knightly than Lewis's archetypal knights: more warlike, because he fights without the benefit of castle or armor or stable social organization; more gentle, because meek in the face of universal,

unmerited scorn. To borrow Christina Heckman's term, Tolkien's rangers (and, indeed, all of his successfully heroic men) are characterized by "ascetic lifestyle[s]" ("Asceticism" 39); this asceticism allows them to fit organically with the larger themes of the work. The central importance of humility forced the highly romantic and chivalric tale of Arwen and Aragorn—though Tolkien regarded it as "part of the essential story"—to the appendices: "it could not be worked into the narrative without destroying its structure: which is planned to be 'hobbito-centric', that is, primarily a study of the ennoblement (or sancitification) of the humble" (*Letters* 237, #181). That is to say: the tale of a scorned ranger becoming king "with a crown and all and a golden cup" (*LotR* VI.7.994) neatly fits the theme of the exaltation of the humble; the story of a long-lost emperor winning a semi-divine princess bride—however important to the narrative as a whole—does not.

In all of this, Tolkien's faith looms large; as George Clark writes, "Tolkien sought a true hero motivated by a heroic ideal consistent with his own religious and moral ideals" (Clark 39). The great themes of *Lord of the Rings* were heavily determined by Tolkien's faith. Because of these, to bring a character in line with his themes was to bring it in line with his creed; the Tolkienian hero must be consistent with the author's metaphysics and morals. But though Tolkien insists on the moral superiority of the good, he is adamant in denying the good any promise or expectation of worldly success: "I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat'—though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpse of final victory" (*Letters* 255, #195). But even in legend these glimpses of 'final victory' must be of the right sort. The literature of chivalry was the product of an established and relatively secure Christendom; the knight was the embodiment of that culture's perfections. Consequently, the audience never really doubts the ultimate triumph of a Lancelot or a Galahad: the perfections united in his person coupled with the unquestioned advantages he enjoys make his victory a foregone conclusion. He succeeds because of his martial and personal superiority; victory seems to be no more than his just deserts. Because of this, the romantic knight is ill-suited as a vehicle for the eucatastrophic joy from "beyond the walls of the world" ("On Fairy-stories" 75) that lies at the heart of Tolkien's fiction—and he fails as a credible symbol of Christian heroism in the bloody and secularizing 20th century. Tolkien's hobbits and rangers, characterized by sacrifice, suffering, and vulnerability, offer a different—and, perhaps, more excellent—way.

The ranger and the hobbit do more than provide Tolkien an aesthetically and intellectually consistent model of heroism, however. They also stand as one of Tolkien's most enduring contributions to modern fantasy; both Aragorn and Frodo have dozens of literary descendants. But here we come to a

paradox. A major reason for the widespread appeal of *The Lord of the Rings* is, as Shippey has noted, the work's ability to mediate "between Christian belief and the post-Christian world in which Tolkien thought himself increasingly to be living" (Shippey, *Author* 213). This is true as far as it goes—but in this case, Tolkien does something even more surprising. Tolkien does not simply mediate between the old Christian chivalry and the post-Christian world here; his heroes are not a happy mean between the medieval knight and the modern hero. They are, as argued above, a new model of heroism—more radically Christian than the medieval knight, not less. And they succeed in Tolkien's post-Christian age anyway. It is clear that at least part of this success is rooted in Tolkien's rejection of chivalric vices and transformation of its virtues. After all, modern authors had, from the beginning of the medieval revival, struggled mightily with the idea of knighthood: how could the avatar of medieval Christian culture be translated to a secular, pluralistic modernity? The romances of Scott give some indication (think here of Rebecca's critique of chivalry in *Ivanhoe* or the authorial condescension in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*); the savage satire of Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* gives another. One need only consider the continued deconstruction of chivalry in works like *A Song of Ice and Fire* or *A Wheel of Time* to see that such uneasiness is not merely a 19th-century phenomenon. Tolkien's heroic creations have proven significantly more appealing. A full exploration of subsequent authors' adoption of Tolkienian archetypes is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper. For now, it is sufficient to note that, once again, the hobbit has succeeded where greater folk have failed.

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UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN THEMES IN TOLKIEN'S LEGENDARIUM. Mark Doyle. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020. 204 pp. ISBN 978-1-4985-9867-5. $90 (hardcover).

Tom Shippey is undoubtedly correct in observing that "[t]he dominant literary mode of the twentieth century has been the fantastic" (vii), and he might have added that the dominant subgenre within this mode has been dystopia. Shippey's comments arose in part from a now famous reader's poll conducted by British bookseller Waterstone's and BBC Channel Four's *Book Choice* program in 1996 that resulted in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* being named the "greatest" book of the century. Equally noteworthy, perhaps, is that George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* finished second, and his *Animal Farm* third; the former has become perhaps the classic dystopian novel, whereas the latter serves as a fable of a betrayed utopia. Although these genres have normally been studied in isolation from one another, owing in large part to the specious schism between fantasy and science fiction, the thematic resonances among Tolkienesque fantasy, utopian visions, and dystopian narratives in our time are especially salient, as popular culture as well as literature is dominated by works of the fantastic, from *Game of Thrones* or *Westworld* to such "literary" novels as Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*. Just as works of utopia or dystopia engage in varying degrees with the fantastic, so works of fantasy engender utopian and dystopian ideas. In his straightforwardly titled *Utopian and Dystopian Themes in Tolkien's Legendarium*, Mark Doyle explores how this operates in Tolkien's work.

Doyle is quick to note that Tolkien did not create utopias or dystopias, but rather he "uses utopian and dystopian themes to intensify his audience's longings and fears," and that these become "effective means of inspiring idealism for a better society or concern for where our current society is headed" (2). In Doyle's view, this is the strength of Tolkien's work, in that it presents "good" and "bad" societies that are not perfect or ideal, on the one hand, or totally and insuperably repressive on the other. As Doyle puts it, "[h]is positive societies contain many good things our societies lack, and his negative societies incorporate many evil practices that our societies condone"; this in turn

"reinvigorates the formulas for utopian and dystopian literature, so that they speak more clearly to his readers' hopes and misgivings about their current culture" (3). In this manner, Doyle connects such themes with Tolkien's widespread and continuing popularity.

Utopian and Dystopian Themes in Tolkien's Legendarium is divided into five chapters, plus an Introduction and an Epilogue. In Chapter 1, Doyle defines his terms, and discusses the key differences between Tolkien's exploration of utopian and dystopian themes and the literature featuring actual utopias or dystopias. Doyle argues that Tolkien's presentation is more effective precisely because he is not writing in those specific genres; thus, he is not interested in either pedagogy or polemic, that is, in showing us an ideal or in castigating an evil enemy. For example, "Tolkien's good societies seem real because they occupy a middle position between our quotidian reality and paradise" (39). Chapter 2 delves into the medieval, Victorian, and modernist sources of Tolkien's attitudes toward utopia and dystopia; not surprisingly, Doyle finds Tolkien's utopianism to lie mainly with his medieval sources and dystopianism to be associated with modernism, which leaves a somewhat Hobbitic middle ground for the Victorian elements to emerge. Interestingly, this is also Doyle's most "literary critical" chapter, in the sense that he focuses attention on form and genre, rather than merely on ideas, when noting that Tolkien mobilizes forms of the epic, the romance, and the novel to create his own hybrid genre (here simply called *fantasy*).

In Chapter 3, Doyle takes up Tolkien's environmental views in relation to both earlier and today's environmentalist movements. Doyle argues that the connection between man and nature in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* discloses Tolkien's Catholic worldview, which also distinguishes Tolkien's environmentalism from that of many in the Green movement today, for instance. Rather than depicting man *versus* the natural world, Tolkien would have people serve as custodians of Creation, and they only become evil insofar as they exceed the bounds of acceptable exploitation of natural resources. Chapter 4 focuses on myth, drawing upon Tolkien's discussion of "sub-creation" and a "secondary world" in his influential essay "On Fairy-stories," to show how Tolkien uses myths to construct his utopian or dystopian societies. The mythic atmosphere with which Tolkien's world is imbued gives his landscapes and social formations greater vividness, and ironically, perhaps, make them seem all the more real (127). In Chapter 5, Doyle addresses more directly Tolkien's politics, looking at such political philosophies as anarchism, "distributionism," and Toryism. Doyle finds that, as with Tolkien's views with respect to nature, Tolkien's primary concern is with desire for control and respect for proper limits. Doyle argues that Tolkien is an anarchist, but one who respects the wisdom of beneficent authority, which Doyle ties again to Tolkien's

Catholicism; notwithstanding its vast hierarchical structures, the Church—especially in its medieval form—tended to be local in its administration and, ideally, non-coercive with respect to its followers (170). Tolkien's "bad" governments, much like man's "bad" relationship with the natural world, aim for control, order, and efficiency, whereas the "good" governments act as public servants, allowing maximal independence on the part of the people.

In the Epilogue, titled "The Struggle for Tolkien's Utopian and Dystopian Legacy," Doyle moves beyond the *Legendarium* to look at film and video game adaptations of Tolkien's work. Doyle, in the main, objects to the ways that these adaptations or extrapolations of Tolkien's work have altered the moral vision of the original materials. For example, in Peter Jackson's film trilogy, Aragorn is filled with doubt, Faramir covets the Ring, and Sam is jealous of Gollum's relationship with Frodo. Doyle concludes that these changes reflect "many moderns' discomfort with heroes. […] The need to make heroes more flawed, and therefore more vulnerable, is a predictable effect of many contemporary people's desire to have heroes who don't morally challenge them too much" (178). Worse, Doyle finds in Tolkien-inspired video games a reversal of Tolkien's moral positions, as when they "often 'humanize' evil characters in such a way as to make them more appealing. […] Approaches like this are part of the general contemporary tendency to glamorize evil" (181). With this, Doyle reveals the real antagonism animating his study as a whole: Tolkien's mythic, medieval, Catholic worldview as gleaned from his own writings stands athwart "our increasingly spiritually desiccated postmodern world" (183). While it is consistent with Doyle's reading throughout, this view is disconcertingly simplistic coming from one who had quite properly defended Tolkien from accusations of simplicity earlier.

Indeed, I find this to be one of the flaws in this otherwise interesting and well written study. Doyle cannot seem to imagine utopian or dystopian themes in Tolkien's work outside of the most simple, good-versus-evil binary oppositions, something that comes through especially in his uncritical assumption of which societies in Middle-earth are good or evil. Tolkien's utopias include The Shire, Lothlorien, and Gondolin, with Mordor and Thangorodrim as archetypical dystopian societies. No mention is made of Galadriel's motivation for leaving Valinor in the first place: "she yearned to see the wild unguarded lands and to rule there a realm at her own will" (Tolkien, *Silmarillion*, 90). Yet her wisdom and aptitude for leadership is not questioned, so her Sauron-like motivations are readily forgiven. (To deny this is to deny the seriousness with she "passed the test" in refusing Frodo's gift of the Ring; had she no desire for power, there would have been no temptation at all, as with Tom Bombadil earlier.) Such nuances are what makes Tolkien's moral universe far more interesting and, indeed, realistic, so it is disappointing to see such

complexities oversimplified. Doyle does discuss key scenes in which Orcs are depicted as utterly human, complaining about their superiors and speculating about motives and outcomes, but Doyle sees these as examples of Mordor's dystopian political organization and of the Orcs' inherently evil character (156–159). Tolkien's depiction of Orcs is somewhat vexed, but his moral imagination is far more complicated than is typically granted or emphasized in *Utopian and Dystopian Themes in Tolkien's Legendarium*.

Still, *Utopian and Dystopian Themes in Tolkien's Legendarium* is an interesting study of Tolkien's world in relation to these political and cultural discourses. By bringing together studies of Tolkien's sources and genres, his environmental views, his uses of myth, and his political theory, combined with detailed readings of key scenes and passages from *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*, Mark Doyle has made a significant contribution to Tolkien studies and to our understanding of the ways that fantasy literature connects us to social, political, and philosophical concerns that are very much part of our real world.

—Robert T. Tally Jr.

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MUSIC IN TOLKIEN'S WORK AND BEYOND. Julian Eilmann and Friedhelm Schneidewind, eds. Zürich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2019. 474 p. ISBN 9783905703399. $32.00.

Music is a foundational aspect of J.R.R. Tolkien's *legendarium*. It was there from the beginning, when *The Hobbit* first launched itself to an unsuspecting world, and then again when *The Lord of the Rings* took the simple world of Bilbo Baggins and reimagined it as part of the epic culture of Middle-earth, full of life and terror and song. The posthumous publication of *The Silmarillion* only reaffirmed the centrality of music to Middle-earth, as readers sat breathless before the procreative songs of the Ainur as if under some spell. But even before this, Tolkien had been telling stories in song; indeed, many of the earliest tales from Arda are written as songs or poetry, and he continued writing and rewriting them his entire life.

It's no wonder, then, that critics and scholars of Tolkien have been fascinated by and drawn to his investment in music and poetry. They have written of Tolkien's music and the similarly procreative music of Väinämöinen, the singing sorcerer of the Finnish *Kalevala*. They explore the interplay between song and words of power, both of which are capable of introducing physical and spiritual changes into the very fabric of the world. They interrogate the role of the Music of Ilúvatar: its potency, its mercy, and its omnipotence. Music, in Middle-earth, is power. Who can forget Lúthien razing the haunted isle of Sauron with song, or singing the great Enemy Morgoth into forgetful sleep? Who is unmoved when Sam, bowed down by grief and despair in the tower of Cirith Ungol, pours out the torments of his soul in a song of defiance and hope?

So scholars write and debate and exclaim in awe as they—or we—contemplate Tolkien's music, and never seem to come to the end of all there is to say. *Music in Tolkien's Work and Beyond* carries forward that tradition. According to the editors, Julian Eilmann and Friedhelm Schneidewind, the collection envisions itself as a "follow-up volume" to "the well-received 2010 volume *Music in Middle-earth*" (ii). It aims to "simultaneously [follow] the path of analyzing the use and significance of music and musical elements in Tolkien's literary texts while also considering the broader context, such as adaptations and other authors and composers" (ii). The editors do not attempt to narrow the focus of such broad ambitions; the volume contains no unifying concept or goal apart from the general investigation of music that is (sometimes only speculatively or tangentially) related to Tolkien and his work.

The introduction also does not attempt to suggest what contributions the volume will make to current scholarship, which is unfortunate, as it leaves the contents arranged round each other in a nebulous and ill-determined cloud. Since there is no conclusion to tie together these loose threads, they remain loose, unconnected.

So the introduction occasionally fails in its purpose. Several of the essay summaries provided are entirely unhelpful, and usually no different from the abstracts included as the headings to each chapter. Take, for instance, this short one: "Patrick Schmitz compares the function of music in Patrick Rothfuss's *Kingkiller Chronicles* with *The Lord of the Rings*. In doing so, similarities and differences between Tolkien's seminal work and the well-regarded piece of new fantasy literature are revealed" (vi). This is just the sort of vague statement of purpose that would receive low marks in most composition courses. It is, granted, the worst offender, but the reader may find the disparities between the attention given to some essays over others curious.

In what follows, I will offer a few examples from the volume that I believe are representative of the whole. *Music in Tolkien's Work and Beyond* is a mixed bag. Its worst offenses, both as a whole and in the internal workings of

some individual essays, are a lack of direction and organization; recurring errors of grammar and typography; and a strikingly oblivious attitude towards current Tolkien scholarship. (One essay in particular deigns to cite no one other than Tolkien and its own author.) Another failing that is less ubiquitous but just as egregious is the tendency of a number of authors to reduce, in the last analysis, their own complex and generative arguments down to little more than evidence for a symbolic interpretation of Tolkien's work within the paradigm of Christianity—a common turn in Tolkien Studies, to be sure.

I mentioned above the grammatical and typographical errors. These were particularly shocking because they suggest a lack of attention and care on the part of the editors: in one case I casually counted five typographical errors on a single page (including the misspelling of Eärendil as "Aerendil"). In another place, the grammatical mistakes were so frequent that they severely detracted from the clarity of the argument. Now, the editors do mention in their introduction that "there are some articles which have been originally published in German or English and had to be translated into the respective language for the publication," and that "the great number of papers presented here is also responsible for the fact that the editing and translating process took us much longer than intended" (viii). While I am sympathetic to the efforts that undoubtedly went into publishing such a volume, I cannot see even this as a valid excuse for releasing into print a volume so riddled with errors. Besides, in the English version, only one essay makes any mention of being translated—it is undoubtedly the worst offender, but by no means the only, so difficulties in translation do not seem to be the root of the problem.

For all this, the volume has its triumphs, which is why I do not want to immediately dismiss it. A number of the essays are well-structured, reveal at least an adequate knowledge of current scholarship, and offer thoughtful and interesting claims that will do much for Tolkien Studies. Take the following handful as an example.

Two essays in particular stand out as offering useful political readings of Tolkien and his work. Jörg Fündling's "'Go forth, for it is there!': An Imperialist Battle Cry behind the Lament for Boromir" recognizes in said lament a subtle resistance to imperialism, which brings into question the imperialist projects of both Gondor and England. This interpretation not only steps away from traditional readings of the poem as a modified heroic elegy; it also offers an incisive critique of the price of war in which some may find echoes of Sam's momentary sympathy for the fallen warrior in Ithilien. Similarly, Lynn Forest-Hill's "Tolkien's Minstrelsy: The Performance of History and Authority" discovers in the poetry and songs of *The Lord of the Rings* an implicit critique of oppressive systems of power/knowledge. Together, these papers suggest that

readers might reconsider some of the political movements of Middle-earth, finding in them motivation for equitable and just change.

In his essay, Fündling explores the structural and thematic resemblance between Tolkien's "Lament for Boromir" and Rudyard Kipling's "The English Flag." Fündling first offers a detailed reading of the Tolkien poem's structure and rhythm, pointing out in particular its relation to the English ballad form and its "fill-in-the-blank" content. "Aragorn's first stanza […] predetermines both the shape and the contents of the other two," Fündling points out. "Consequently, he and Legolas are able to 'fill up' about half of each stanza while only six of ten lines demand (or allow) additions of their own free choice" (113). These "additions" are, for Fündling, the meat of the lament: the "actual lament is written between the lines" (115). He also addresses the fact that Tolkien's original conception of the poem included a stanza for the later-ignored East Wind, and was far more irregular than its final state, which suggests to Fündling the Tolkien—Kipling parallel. Kipling's poem also asks the Four Winds for answers (120), is written with a similar rhythm, contains "markers of climate and local colour" (121), and is obsessed with death and the number of English lives lost for the sake of the Empire. Fündling's comparison is not unfounded: he directs the reader to a number of scholarly defenses of Kipling's influence on Tolkien, and then proceeds to reveal that a sort of catalogue of the Empire's gradual defeat was jotted down by Tolkien in the margins of the "Lament for Boromir" manuscript (126-7). The difference between the two, Fündling suggests, is that Tolkien was less certain than Kipling that the imperialist cause was worth the number of lives lost. "Kipling," he writes, "whose son had not yet been declared missing in Belgium, had offhandedly approved of such a price if his vision of the Empire demanded it" (128). Tolkien, on the other hand, had lost nearly all his close friends in the first war, and was agonizing over the safety of his sons in the second. Rather than support the cause, he questions it in the voice of a grieving father (the "Lament" was originally written to be spoken by Denethor) who cannot measure the worth of a nation over the price of his own son. The "Lament for Boromir," Fündling asserts, "spun the older poem round one of its axes—namely, the question [of] how high the cost of human lives may be" (128). Fündling's essay is a priceless contribution for those scholars interested especially in the imperialist mission of Gondor (see Elendil's words upon arriving in Middle-earth), for it reads the poem in a new way: not simply as a modified heroic elegy for a fallen warrior, but as a troubled interrogation of the contemporary political drama unfolding across both primary and secondary worlds.

Forest-Hill begins her paper by pointing out that *The Lord of the Rings* doesn't offer readers many examples of proper medieval minstrelsy (176): professional (i.e., paid or commissioned) minstrels are few, rarely named, and

soon forgotten. Rather, non-professional minstrelsy, which is characterized by an improvisational approach to song and poetry, is far more common: and more importantly, it pushes against the boundaries of race, class, and status (177). This latter idea is Forest-Hill's most important contribution here. History in Middle-earth is often considered an affair for learned and high-class individuals. It is primarily written in elvish, and is often secreted away to become either hoarded (Rivendell) or forgotten (Minas Tirith). Song-writers like Bilbo, she argues, make history more accessible by translating it into songs in the vernacular (180). Thus, for Forest-Hill, translation in Middle-earth becomes a political act, resembling the struggles between scholarly and vernacular languages, and between print and oral cultures, in the Middle Ages and beyond (181). It is furthermore a power-act, a position of authority that is capable of putting elvish nostalgia in the mouth of a hobbit (188). Forest-Hill uses this idea to argue that translations and "versions," therefore, should more accurately be thought of as "variations on a theme" (196); if we wish to honor the politically-charged *mouvance* of poetry, song, and history in Middle-earth, we must consider all versions as being equal—none should be preferred over any other, nor should the "original" be considered more correct (197). Finally, in an exciting turn, Forest-Hill posits that we should see Tolkien's "translation" acts in the same way. When Tolkien halts the narrative to regale the reader with tales of long ago, it is in fact a "powerful assertion of [authorial] authority" (199): he is "smuggling" the supposedly "unpublishable" *Silmarillion* content into print (198), thereby making it more accessible. Critics who are concerned with Tolkien as Author have much to unpack here, as do those who are interested in adaptation studies, translation, and the socio-political landscape of Middle-earth.

For the reader interested in the interplay of sound, silence, and music, two papers come to mind. The first, Petra Zimmerman's "'A deep silence fell': Silence and the Presentation of 'Voices' in Tolkien" explores the measured silences of (primarily) *The Lord of the Rings*. She argues that silence is a predecessor to mindful listening, and that it signals to both characters and readers that something important is about to take place. Maureen F. Mann picks up the topics of silence and sound in her essay, "Musicality in Tolkien's Prose." Though dense in places, Mann uses Tolkien's obscure "Essay on Phonetic Symbolism" to expertly reveal the astounding care that Tolkien exercised in his prose writing.

Zimmerman launches her critique by pointing out that in *The Lord of the Rings*, silence is very often cast as negative, especially when it appears in forests (236). It "creates an almost unbearable tension" (236) and "cannot be dominated, because it seems to embrace its own will" (237). However, Zimmerman resists this reductive reading. More and more often, "silence is 'animated' by images from within," she insists (237). Characters consistently fill

silences with daydreams and healing rest: it is a space of emptiness that allows the sounds that follow to take full effect and the sounds that have just ceased to be contemplated. In other words, silence is "the precondition of listening closely" (239). But, significantly, "the fictional characters' process of listening is also spread to the reader who imagines mentally what the characters hear" (241). In fact, "our brain is able to simulate sounds set into writing and indicated as sounds (here by inverted commas) as real aural impressions—the reader hears inwardly what is written on paper" (241). For Zimmerman, this groundbreaking neurological discovery means that both readers and characters participate in the soundscapes of Middle-earth. The songs interspersed within the text only intensify this phenomenon, Zimmerman argues, because they "interrupt the chronological-linear narrative flow" (243) and characters usually experience the silence after a song as "fill[ed] with images that transcend" (247). Her point is that the people of Middle-earth, by participating in creating imaginative visions in the silences, actually "show [readers] how to succeed in filling 'space' and imagining a secondary world" (248). Thus, Zimmerman's argument has significant implications for ethics (in that she insists that respectful silence is the prerequisite of ethical relating), but for worldbuilding theories and practices as well.

Mann's essay takes the concept of sound and dissects it, arguing that sound in Tolkien carries the weight of meaning and leads to a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the world of Arda. There is a powerful "relationship between sound and meaning," Mann argues (208), in that even if the words themselves mean nothing to us, the *sound* of the words will impart knowledge. To support her claim, she investigates a number of significant scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* in which sound plays an important role. For example, in "The Flight to the Ford," "alliteration, adverbial inversion, and rhyme increase with the arrival of Glorfindel" (220). As the reader walks with Frodo and Sam into Shelob's lair, the complexity of the syntax increases radically, and the long sentences and stretched phrases extend the reader's sense of time (223-224). Bombadil, for Mann, is noteworthy because he "bring[s] into prominence the significance of sound," rhythm, and rhyme (222). In *The Hobbit*, alliteration marks heroic action (227). According to Mann, these kinds of stylistic contrivances invite the reader into deeper participation with the story that is being told. The musical, stylistic tendencies of Tolkien's prose, she suggests, "enhance or help formulate the comprehension of meaning" (207). When placed into conversation with Zimmerman's insistence that silence and sound in Tolkien's work facilitates readers' immersion in the secondary world, Mann's ideas are even more exciting. There are certainly many opportunities here to carry forward the discussion, bringing new complexities to readers' understanding of Tolkien's language.

The four essays presented above are representative, I think, of the best the collection has to offer. They are, on the whole, well-organized, thought-provoking, and suggest exciting directions yet to be explored in Tolkien studies. Other essays are certainly worth considering: some, like those of Łukasz Neubauer, Angela P. Nicholas, and Bradford Lee Eden would have been considerably improved had they not been so focused on description and summary—almost cataloguing—instead of analysis, and, by extension, been more invested in the current scholarship. Other essays tended to wander too far into speculation to be truly useful to the academic reader, or else were too invested in finding origin points for Tolkien's ideas (Nancy Martsch and Rainer Groß fall into this category), another common temptation in Tolkien scholarship. Yet others, like those of Allan Turner and Patrick Schmitz, simply needed more development.

A smaller number contained more serious problems. Chiara Bertoglio's "Polyphony, Collective Improvisation, and the Gift of Creation," which opens the collection, often failed to make necessary connections between sections; it attempted to tackle far too many ideas; and perhaps worst of all, it referred repeatedly to its own "sketchy references" and the fact that it "cannot establish with any certainty whether Tolkien was familiar with any individual possible source of influence" (6). Indeed, at times it regrettably seemed as if the author was more invested in displaying her own "omnivorous reading" than accounting for Tolkien's (6). It does, however, offer some interesting speculations about the nature of the Music of the Ainur that will encourage more scholarship on the texts' practical musical aspects.

"Laments and Mercy: Tolkien and Liturgical Music," from Michaël Devaux and Guglielmo Spirito, suffered a similar crisis of identity in that it seemed unable to decide whether it was a sermon, a devotional, or an academic article. It evidenced a critical lack of audience awareness, at one moment involving readers in melodramatic and flowery descriptions of the heights that "we" experience in prayer (29), and a mere page later condescendingly suggesting that if "you" are not particularly religious, or perhaps are misfortunate enough not to have had "elementary religious instruction," you "might assume that what would be fun around a campfire for young scouts […] deserves to take place in the church during Mass" (30-31). Only a few pages later, however, readers are called to think of all the many, many places ("everywhere," in fact) "we" hear and encounter the *Kyrie eleison"* (36). While the authors do make some interesting points, and clearly invested time and effort into their research (the charts laying out the Masses in the churches Tolkien attended during the years he was there are fascinating), the particulars of their argument are often lost in the melodrama of religious fervor and the unfounded assumptions that are made about their readers.

Finally, before offering some more generalized conclusions, I want to address Tobias Escher's long essay, "Of Home Keys and Music Style Guides: Orchestral Scores for Tolkien-based Video Games," which left me particularly disappointed because, as the author notes, there is still so much to consider in the world of Tolkien-inspired gaming. Unfortunately, it contained numerous grammatical and typographical errors, and failures of style, too, that made it difficult to read. It also frequently wandered down rabbit holes; like Bertoglio's piece, it was simply trying to cover too much ground. Most unfortunate, however, was the fact that one of Escher's most important sources, Chance Thomas's *Music Style Guide* for video games inspired by Tolkien, "is not publicly available for legal reasons," meaning that its "whole content remains inaccessible save for some information disclosed by Thomas in a magazine article" (458). While I admire Escher's ambition in trying to "draw a number of conclusions about its content" through snippets in an interview (458), it seems to me a slippery slope to walk down, and not exactly a credible basis for an argument. What is clear, however, is that Escher has done some useful groundwork in preparing the way for future scholarship, and I personally hope we will see more of it. Maybe one day we'll even get to see that *Music Style Guide*.

I have not, of course, mentioned each of the 21 essays contained in *Music in Tolkien's Work and Beyond*. Rather, I have pointed to what seem to me to be the high and low points of the collection, as well as indicated its more general disappointments. The impression I am left with, after having pored over this volume for quite some time, is that a majority of its failures are editorial in nature. Disregarding the proliferation of copyediting mistakes that went (apparently) unnoticed, I would have to question even the volume's organization and composition. For example, Heidi Steimel's "An Orchestra in Middle-earth" is included in the "Instruments in Middle-earth" section, as the title might suggest—but in actuality, the essay is about primary world music that has been inspired by Tolkien's work (and not all of it is orchestral), and belongs rather in the "Music Beyond Tolkien" section, along with the paper on "Orchestral Scores in Tolkien-based Video Games."

Furthermore, it is unclear to me whether *Music in Tolkien's Work and Beyond* is meant to be a work of academic scholarship. The book refers to itself, in a roundabout way, as "Tolkien scholarship," and it even suggests that it contains "a multitude of different academic approaches" (ii). But some of the papers are hardly academic at all—I have already mentioned the number of essays which are merely summative or wildly speculative. For example, Groß's piece, while it does open with an overview of the history of organ building, does so for no discernable purpose outside of mere intrigue, and closes with speculative drawings of what the portatives of a few races of Middle-earth

might have looked like, had they had them. Though interesting and diverting in its own right, it adds little to scholarly discussions of Tolkien's work.

My sense of the deficiency in editorial oversight is further heightened by the fact that contributors were ostensibly not given (or if they were, for some unfathomable reason did not take) the chance to review the scholarship of their peers before the collection went to print. There is no internal conversation within the volume—a hard disappointment, as many of the papers would have benefited from the knowledge of another that, sometimes, is its immediate neighbor. Some essays take for granted what another in the volume has decisively shown to be incorrect. Some others are simply shallow and inconclusive in areas that another contributor has explored in great depth. Connections are thus dropped, opportunities lost, and the reader is left to groan in frustration as she considers what might have been.

It would be ungenerous (not to mention untrue) to suggest that *Music in Tolkien's Work and Beyond* has little worth. I hope I've accurately illustrated in the foregoing that the volume carries forward many important discussions in Tolkien Studies, and that it offers new ideas for exploration and interrogation. But even besides that, it is certainly worth pointing out that even the most flawed of this volume's offerings might be the seed that produces a great tree. One has only to soldier through its imperfections to reach the goal. Read it with this in mind.

—Megan N. Fontenot

HOBBIT VIRTUES: REDISCOVERING VIRTUE ETHICS THROUGH J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S *THE HOBBIT* AND *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*. Christopher A. Snyder. New York NY: Pegasus Books, 2020. 254 p. ISBN 9781643134109. $27.95.

Christopher Snyder begins his work *Hobbit Virtues: Rediscovering Virtue Ethics through J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings* by discussing the careful tending of a garden. Tolkien and his Hobbits were particularly fond of gardens, but this serves as his introductory image for a more profound reason. He suggests, "Cultivating one's garden can also be seen as tending to our individual souls, cultivating virtues through reason and discipline" (4). Harkening back to Socrates, Snyder suggests that a well-ordered soul leads to the growth of virtue, but that leads the reader to a question that defines the remainder of this work. What types of virtues might Tolkien be presenting through his legendarium? Snyder points to what he terms a Hobbit philosophy drawn from the final words of Thorin Oakenshield, "There is more

in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage, and some wisdom, blended in good measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, XVIII.312). Snyder recognizes that these specific virtues that Bilbo Baggins possessed seem to transcend Middle-earth. "Consider Thorin's choice of words: *good*, *kindly*, *courage*, *wisdom*, *valued*. These are terms one can find in the ethics of Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, and many other philosophers and religious teachers" (7). In short, "these are Hobbit virtues, and we humans should recognize them as well" (9). This approach characterizes the remainder of Snyder's work. He identifies a specific virtue, considers how it has been understood in several different moral systems, and then provides examples of where Tolkien displays characters who exhibit that virtue. Snyder's ultimate hope is to see a return to these virtues as he says, "Let us return to these virtues—seeing ourselves at our best and happiest—to make the world a merrier place" (9).

The first virtue Snyder decides to explore is humility. Several different belief systems including Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Greek mythology, Buddhism, and Taoism considered humility to be virtuous, so after pointing to the relevant texts from each belief system, Snyder points to multiple examples of specifically Hobbits who are humble. Bilbo Baggins "is a meek or humble creature who, when pressed, acts with bravery and cunning to defend his friends" (17). Samwise Gamgee "exemplifies the medieval theological principle of being worthy of heroic virtue *because* he does not seek to be a hero in the first place" (18). Examples such as these bring Snyder to his conclusion that, "We should return to upholding the virtue of humility, but we must not mistake it for weakness. It is, on the contrary, the first step on the path to moral strength" (19).

Snyder then advances to discuss courage. Again, he explains how various belief systems have addressed courage, but this chapter takes a slightly different approach. He differentiates between different types of courage and how Hobbits are not expected to save the world. Instead, they are "small heroes who overcome their fears through unexpected demonstrations of both physical and moral courage" (23). Bilbo displays his courage multiple times as a bourgeois Hobbit who is thrown into an adventure he does not originally want to go on, and the four main hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings* become more courageous as they progress on their respective journeys. Snyder connects these developments to Tolkien's "theory of courage" which is "'the great contribution of early Northern literature,' the 'creed of unyielding will' illustrated by the attitude of Odin, Thor, and the other deities of Asgard marching to their doom and defeat at Ragnarök" (29). Even in the face of seeming doom, courage shines through, and "finding courage in unexpected places—Merry and Pippin and

Éowyn included—gives one hope that we too might be able to rise to the occasion and persevere in our struggles, even if we do not get to fully enjoy the victory" (33). Structurally, this chapter is different because it weaves the discussion of virtue with the examples from Tolkien as opposed to presenting two distinct sections. In terms of a conceptual framework though, it contains all of the same elements.

Fellowship is clearly present in *The Hobbit* as well as *The Lord of the Rings*. Missions are completed when groups of companions execute tasks that are given to them. Fellowship was also important to Tolkien personally as evidenced by his membership in and great passion for the T.C.B.S. and the Inklings as well as his study of the Knights of the Round Table. In fact, it is quite possible that we would not have been able to experience Tolkien's fiction without encouragement from his friends. Bilbo Baggins starts out as a solitary bachelor before joining the company of Dwarves. Frodo has a group of friends in the Shire before he sets out on his quest, but he develops even stronger ties with members of the Fellowship assembled in Rivendell but drawn from many regions of the world. As Snyder points out, "Hobbits … have the capacity not just to experience fellowship with other Hobbits, but to form deep friendships with Men and Dwarves and Elves. Hobbits can overcome the natural suspicion of those who look different, whose culture and ways are different" (50). Without Fellowship, Frodo as well as Middle-earth would be doomed.

A frequently forgotten, yet taken for granted, virtue is that of good cheer derived from food, drink, and laughter. Snyder directly states, "I would argue, along with Professor Tolkien, that the appreciation of food and drink and jokes shared in fellowship—in other words, 'good cheer'—are appropriate in any age" (51-52). The Epicureans and Hedonists excessively embraced this virtue while other cultures such as the Hebrews, the ancient Egyptians, some within Christianity, and the Babylonians living under Hammurabi's Code suggested that there were limits to particularly alcohol use. This balance points towards traditional virtue and a compromise between excess and ascetism. Snyder writes, "As much as Hobbits enjoy their six meals a day, ale, and pipeweed, both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are about the periods and circumstances when we must go without these creature comforts" (68). Even in these areas where virtues might not be universally agreed upon, Tolkien may have been trying to charge a reasonable compromise of moderation. He was not suggesting "cheer" to the detriment of one's self but rather "good" and appropriate "cheer."

Storytelling has been a central element of cultures around the world to preserve tradition as well as entertain. Snyder contends, "In making storytelling a Hobbit virtue, Tolkien may be suggesting that we should all indulge in this activity, on occasion, to make for a merrier world" (69). Tolkien understood

myth and fairy stories as "vehicles for carrying truth" (70). This tradition that appears in Paleolithic cave art continues to this day as people seek to convey some dimension of reality to someone else who had not experienced it firsthand. Snyder recalls how Socrates advises in *The Republic* that parents should only tell their children "myths that encourage true virtue" (72). Tolkien clearly wrote a myth, but he also has characters tell stories within his myth in various forms such as song and poetry. In fact, the story that Tolkien wrote is mythologically derived from a story written by Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam reported in *The Red Book of Westmarch*. Storytelling is an integral part of Tolkien's story and of the human experience, and, like Socrates pointed out, they can certainly convey virtue.

It is nearly impossible to read *The Lord of the Rings* without recognizing the themes of service, selflessness, and self-sacrifice in nearly every plot line. Frodo sacrifices for the salvation of the world, Sam sacrifices for the good of Frodo, and the entire Fellowship sacrifices for the freedom of Middle-earth. Cultures have recognized the value of coming together in communities and sacrificing for the common good for millennia. Snyder points out how service has often manifested itself evilly through slavery in many cultures, but he also shows how service, when done by our own individual choosing, not by abduction or compulsion, can be a beautiful thing. Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and other religions teach that people ought to help bear the burden of others. Snyder quotes, "*Agape* 'is the kind of love,' writes the philanthropist Sir John Templeton, 'in which the religions of the world may find a basis for unity'" (96). Interestingly though, Tolkien turned the notion of traditional sacrifice on its head through Frodo's quest to destroy the Ring, "Instead of sacrificing a valued object to a god, Frodo's aim is to destroy the powerful object made by an evil spirit in the very fires that created it" (106). Many make sacrifices to destroy a great evil and a great power. But sacrifice shows itself in smaller actions as well such as Sam using his gift from Galadriel to beautify the entire Shire, not just his own front yard. Large or small, Snyder shows how sacrifices are beautifully virtuous in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Mercy connects to many of the virtues already discussed, but it is central to both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Many ancient cultures such as the Greek culture that birthed Homer's *Odyssey* did not have a high view of mercy and equated it with weakness while the law of Leviticus and Deuteronomy as well as Hammurabi's Code seem to emphasize justice over mercy according to some commentators (although Snyder does point out that the remainder of the Old Testament does address mercy multiple times alongside justice). Historically, mercy became a more prominent virtue specifically through Christianity, but that tension with justice remained, and Tolkien explores that through the character of Gollum. Snyder provocatively, and most likely accurately, suggests, "Tolkien probably did not set out to write

The Hobbit to be a story about mercy. He certainly did not see that one single act of pity by a little creature would save his whole world" (122). Bilbo could have killed Gollum, but he did not, and Gollum ultimately fell with the Ring into Mount Doom after fighting with Frodo who was unable to surrender it himself. Snyder considers this the greatest virtue of the Hobbits, "The world was saved because three Hobbits took pity on a miserable, wretched, murderous creature full of malice and deceit. The little people *are* lordly, they have grown morally. There is *much* wisdom and *much* courage within them, but love and mercy sit above all their many Hobbit virtues" (129). After this climactic chapter, Snyder definitively changes tone as he begins to approach his conclusion.

Snyder takes a chapter to discuss the overall appearance of virtue and vice in Tolkien's sub-creation. He chronicles Tolkien's broad categories of people groups first and highlights some of their overarching characteristics. For example, readers can learn the virtues of "respect, empathy, and a smile" (140) from Galadriel and "magnificence, the crowning virtue of chivalry" (148) from Aragorn. Readers can also learn to avoid certain vices from different races as well. While Snyder acknowledges that some might be uncomfortable with Tolkien's usage of race and gender, he suggests that Tolkien's world demonstrates how, "Virtues, in other words, are not values, they do not change with the calendar or with geography. Different cultures can be respected—even protected—but moral relativism is to be avoided" (159). In other words, virtues are good and have always been good while vice always ought to be avoided. It is not a question of valuing one culture or race of beings more than another but rather a question of adherence to the good, which every character in Middle-earth struggles with at one time or another.

Lastly, Snyder queries what it means to be small in a large world. Simple things like taking long walks and remembering tradition can be virtuous. Keeping one's promise might seem elementary, but it is a step in the direction of virtue which is good. Being virtuous is not impossible for anyone, but Snyder recognizes that even if all of these virtues are good, "The criticism does beg the question, however, about the good toward which these virtues all point. It is, and has been, a controversial topic among philosophers since the days of Socrates" (175). Snyder concludes the body of his work with a conciliatory answer to that question, very close to where he started this book, "Ancient virtues may lay for many years dormant. It does not mean that they are dead. We Hobbits need merely discover them, plant them in new soil, tend our little garden with care, and wait with sunlit hope for them to spring leaf and flower again in a new age" (180). He has sought to prove that virtue theory is relevant for all, no matter what religion one subscribes to, and is invariably present in the world that Tolkien discovered. That is the good, cultivated garden.

Snyder's work is compelling. He provides a comprehensive defense of virtue theory in the work of J.R.R. Tolkien. While much has been written about the Pagan or Christian roots of Middle-earth, Snyder reaches beyond that question and suggests that, much in the style of C.S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man*, these virtues are simply human and are universally applicable across time and culture. Snyder actually includes multiple appendices that track different virtues across culture. One of them is specifically dedicated to Lewis and his *Tao*. This allows him to hopefully unite his readers on common ground and explore the most important themes of Tolkien's work together.

Naturally, readers who are sympathetic to virtue theory are going to find Snyder's argument more appealing than those who are skeptical of the entire enterprise. He does not spend a great deal of time defending virtue theory as a philosophical approach and rather discusses how Tolkien's work demonstrates virtue theory. While Snyder does spend some time defending the contention that Tolkien would have embraced virtue theory (as he did not explicitly affirm it in any of his writings), it should be noted that this work explores virtue theory by using Tolkien as an example rather than providing a defense of the claim that Tolkien knowingly embraced virtue theory. This is not meant to be a criticism necessarily but just a note for the reader to understand the purpose of Snyder's work more clearly.

One potential shortcoming of this work is that Snyder does not spend a great deal of time defining what virtue theory is. While one certainly could assume that many readers of this book will be familiar with virtue theory, some additional discussion would have been helpful. His preface seeks to do that, and it is concise and useful summary. Nevertheless, some depth could have been added to that definition in order to more explicitly lay out the development of virtue ethics beyond what was given. That may help address the concern that this argument is going to resonate most powerfully with those who already believe in the viability of virtue theory.

That being said, the collection of virtues that Snyder highlights is commendable. Some themes always come up when talking about Tolkien: mercy, fellowship, and service come to mind. Emphasizing storytelling and the goodness of food and drink were enjoyable inclusions. Snyder is a fine writer, and this book reads extraordinarily easily. Snyder's is a valuable work that is approachable for the casual Tolkien reader yet delves deep enough into the finer points of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* to satisfy more serious students of Middle-earth.

— Zachary D. Schmoll

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MICHAEL MOORCOCK: FICTION, FANTASY AND THE WORLD'S PAIN. Mark Scroggins. McFarland, 2016. 200 pp. ISBN 978-1-4766-6307-4. $29.95.

THE LAW OF CHAOS: THE MULTIVERSE OF MICHAEL MOORCOCK. Jeff Gardiner. Headpress (www.worldheadpress.com), 2014. 170pp. ISBN 978-1-909394-19-3. $19.95 US, £13.99 UK.

Despite the large number of fantasy and science fiction works (many of them highly mythopoeic) created by Michael Moorcock, there has been relatively little academic attention paid to his work. Other than reviews, bibliographies, and interviews, the few academic articles about Moorcock seem to be limited to journals like *Extrapolation* and *Science Fiction Studies*, and even then are frequently focused only on a single work. These two books, offering overviews of Moorcock's entire *oeuvre* up to 2016, provide a couple of much-needed entry points for academic study of this author.

The volume from popular publisher McFarland, as a part of their "Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy" series, is more academic, with an author who is a professor of English at Florida Atlantic University. The smaller book is from an independent publisher, and written by a fiction writer who has personal contact with Moorcock, so it has a somewhat different focus but covers much of the same ground and is in some ways more detailed in its approach.

Mark Scroggins has organized his McFarland book to follow Moorcock's career roughly chronologically, which fortuitously allows for grouping his works thematically as well. This approach demonstrates the growth of Moorcock's skill and sophistication as a writer over time, showing how his attention during various phases of his life turned to different themes, genres, and characters.

As possibly Moorcock's most well-known character is Elric of Melnibone, Scroggins wisely begins his examination of Moorcock's themes and characters with the concept of the Eternal Champion, of whom Elric is but one manifestation. This concept expands to include other key Moorcock motifs such as the Multiverse and the Cosmic Balance, which return again and again throughout his works. This chapter also sets Elric and the Champion within the context of Moorcock's early writing career, and delineates the influences of such prototypical sword-and-sorcery heroes such as Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian and Edgar Rice Burroughs's John Carter of Mars (and less obviously, Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions* and *The Broken Sword*), while also demonstrating the anti-influence of Tolkien.

The second chapter shifts gears and focusses instead on Moorcock's participation in the British avant-garde "New Wave" of SF, and his creation of

the psychedelic Jerry Cornelius stories. Scroggins thinks highly of the original Cornelius tetralogy, comparing the writing to Proust and Joyce; he also notes its influence on later works, such as stories by other SF writers, and graphic novels by Mobius and Bryan Talbot. He shows that despite the vast difference of style, genre, characterization, setting, and time period, Cornelius can also be considered yet another aspect of the Eternal Champion.

Scroggins continues by returning to Moorcock's fantasy works and multiverse novels, discussing the Corum and Runestaff series; the steampunk fantasies featuring Oswald Bastable, which Scroggins points out were influenced by E. Nesbitt and H.G. Wells; the far-future Dancers at the End of Time series, which he compares to the novels of Terry Pratchett and Douglas Adams; and *Gloriana*, an homage to Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* and Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast*.

The next phase of Moorcock's literary output sees him turning to real-world matters, and Scroggins examines works like *Breakfast in the Ruins*, *The Brothel in Rosenstrasse*, *Mother London*, and the Colonel Pyat novels. He shows Moorcock in the 1980s and 90s turning to more realistic fiction, although many of these novels feature walk-ons by characters from various of his fantasy series, which tie them to his multiverse, albeit tenuously.

After that phase, Moorcock returned to fantasy and expanded the mythos of the Eternal Champion with novels longer and more complex than his early pulp-era-inspired Elric books. He also developed more separate milieus within his multiverse, especially one centered around the Von Bek family and their relationship to the Holy Grail, and one rather strange one centered in a place between worlds, called the Second Ether. During the chapter "Consolidating the Multiverse," Scroggins not only describes Moorcock's new writings in this area, but also goes into the publishing history of various attempts to collect all the multiverse stories and novels, most notably by Millennium Books in the U.K. and White Wolf in the U.S. He also looks at how the many different variants of Moorcock characters relate to each other (sometimes well, sometimes poorly), and shows how the author's revisions to some of his very early works made adjustments to character names in order to place them within the multiverse framework.

Rounding out the book are relatively brief comments about Moorcock's ventures into other media: specifically, rock music, with his own band The Deep Fix and his collaborations with Hawkwind and others; and graphic novels, in collaboration with artists like Walter Simonson. There is also mention of writers and artists who have publicly acknowledged the influence of Moorcock on their work.

Jeff Gardiner's *The Law of Chaos* is likely to be less well known, and possibly unknown to anyone not engaged in serious Moorcock research; but it contains a wealth of information valuable to anyone interested in Moorcock's life and work. In fact, Scroggins's acknowledgments include gratitude to previous works on Moorcock, including that of Gardiner, so it is no surprise that the two books have similar structures and scopes.

Gardiner organizes his material by characters and series, in order to facilitate one of his aims for this book, to help an unfamiliar reader make sense of the vast array of Moorcock's fictional worlds, and to point out entry points into this multiverse. Within that framework he progresses chronologically, beginning with Elric and the Eternal Champion cycle and continuing through the years as Moorcock's interests and characters evolve. Whether Scroggins consciously emulated this approach, or merely reasoned that it was a logical way to present the material, the result is a pleasing similarity between the two books.

Other similarities include identifying Moorcock's influences, both literary antecedents and cultural milieus, and the use of external sources to illuminate historical contexts. Both books also include fairly complete lists of Moorcock's novels, organized by series or character.

The differences, however, are noticeable. Where Scroggins is academic, with an index and 22 pages of endnotes and bibliography, Gardiner is more informal, with no index, only a short list of suggested references, and a distinct lack of citations for many of the quotes he uses in the body of the text. Gardiner makes up for this with a lot of other supplementary material, including three pieces by Moorcock himself (an introduction, a personal letter, and responses to interview questions), an art gallery (mostly book covers, and most of the artists uncredited) and an appendix discussing Moorcock's lyrics to a few Hawkwind songs.

Oddly enough for a shorter book (137 pages of primary material, as opposed to 169 for Scroggins), Gardiner supplies a lot more biographical detail, especially about Moorcock's early life, and about his involvement with *New Worlds*. Gardiner's discussions of various books and characters go into a lot more detail about plot and symbolism, providing possibilities for further research and analysis. Gardiner also takes more opportunity to demonstrate connections between all of Moorcock's different series, mentioning crossover characters, common themes, and other points of intersection.

Gardiner also includes a lot of direct quotes from Moorcock himself, which sometimes shed light and sometimes (like many of his works) just seem cryptic and allusive. Similarly, Moorcock's answers to the interview questions (presumably posed by Gardiner, but that is not explicitly stated) are sometimes direct and sometimes diverted to irrelevant comments. But no matter what one

makes of these comments, the presence of Moorcock's own thoughts and words adds considerable weight to this volume.

On the whole, these two books are welcome additions to the study of mythopoeic fantasy. They both function well as introductions to Moorcock's life and works, as well as his predecessors and successors. For those who are already fans of this author, there will be plenty of details and insights that would be valuable even to experienced readers. A great benefit to researchers for further study of Moorcock are the frequent mentions of the various sources and influences on many of the works discussed (and the extensive citations in Scroggins), as well as historical perspective of what was going on in the fantasy field, the publishing industry, and the world in general in all the phases of Moorcock's writing career.

—David L. Emerson

MYTH-BUILDING IN MODERN MEDIA: THE ROLE OF THE MYTHARC IN IMAGINED WORLDS. A.J. Black. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2020, 213 p. ISBN: 978-1476675633. $39.95.

From the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) to the recent influx of new *Star Wars* content, some of the most visible texts in contemporary popular culture reveal a certain feature in common—an overarching narrative arc that, across various installments, both connects and informs a wide variety of characters, events, and settings through some organizing mythos. In his new book *Myth-Building in Modern Media: The Role of the Mytharc in Imagined Worlds*, author A.J. Black calls this phenomenon the "mytharc," taking up a term popularized (and possibly even introduced) by fans of the television show *The X-Files* during the 1990s. The mytharc, Black maintains, is distinct both from the chronological progression of prequel to sequel, and also from stories that just so happen to be set in a shared secondary world. Unlike simply following the same characters into new situations or revisiting a particular secondary world to see the changes time has wrought there, an arc "directly continues narrative beats and character points" (Black 4), providing an overarching mythos for the television show, film franchise, or series in question. To Black, this difference is important because arcs enable us to tell, recognize, and enjoy stories that provide a form of escapism while simultaneously inviting us to ask questions about who we are as human beings. And, to this end, *Myth-Building in Modern Media* examines several examples of the mytharc in popular culture through a quest-like structure of its own.

Myth-Building in Modern Media is a compelling exploration of how the colloquial, fan-created term "mytharc" actually dovetails quite well with existing discourses regarding seriality, myth-making, and storytelling itself. Throughout his book, Black takes readers through a seven-part exploration of what the mytharc is and how various iterations of it function, drawing deftly from examples across twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western media, particularly American television shows with a fantastic and/or sci-fi bent. He explores the mytharc's predecessors, elaborates on specific types of mytharc—the monomytharc (22) versus the divine (56-57) and the cultural (90-91)—and speculates about possibilities that never quite materialized as well as what future iterations might look like given a fast-paced, ever-changing digital ecology that is "just the beginning of a media renaissance which looks set to propel jointly technology and storytelling into whole new realms of possibility" (131). With such large, distinct topics to get through, *Myth-building in Modern Media* is set up to cover quite a bit of ground, but Black manages the range quite well, theorizing the term "mytharc" thoroughly while keeping such theorizations accessible to a wide variety of readers.

Black's journey begins with a preface investigating the origins of this term, first connecting it to its more well-known counterparts such as character arcs and story arcs, and ultimately rationalizing Black's interest in mytharcs given the plethora of recent—and highly popular—examples. This preface also sets the tone for the rest of *Myth-building in Modern Media*, as Black notes that his book will explore the genesis, properties, and evolution of the mytharc but also starts looking forward to the larger pay-off of this exploration, which is his idea that this phenomenon "has become central to our modern mythology as audiences in the early 21st century" (6). Following this preface, Black moves into a section on proto-forms, "Before the Mytharc," in which he discusses Lovecraft's mythos, the "layered, ongoing storytelling" (12) of comic books, and other forms of "escapist" literature that preceded the mytharc, which "[in the form] we know it today was born from television" (20). Black then delves into "The Monomytharc," a type that follows "a protagonist whose journey […] is internalized through external forces" (22): Black's examples here include Mulder of *The X-Files*, Jack Shephard from *Lost*, and Frank Black from *Millennium*. From here, Black continues with a section on "The Divine Mytharc," which is predicated on the idea that, despite differing creeds, "We all have faith in something" (56) and so our stories remain fascinated with the nature of and search for the divine: of the many examples here, Black's reading of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* is far and away the most fascinating. Next up is a segment on "The Cultural Mytharc," which builds from a well-theorized point—that popular media reflects the cultural zeitgeist—in order to discuss how the addition of mythology to such media accesses even deeper cultural touchpoints:

here Black looks to some of his most contemporary examples yet, with *Game of Thrones* and *Star Trek: Discovery* alongside another revisitation of *The X-Files* for context. A very short "Mytharcs That Never Were" section is quickly followed by a more substantial "Future of the Mytharc," in which Black digs into the technological, cultural, and generic shifts that will likely influence future mytharcs. And finally, *Myth-building in Modern Media* concludes with another short section on "Finding the Mytharc" in an increasingly complex and fast-paced media ecology that seems to be uncovering new cinematic possibilities, changing viewer expectations, and even reinventing elements of television itself.

As previously mentioned, Black sets himself an ambitious theoretical project with this book, but several features help him meet this project successfully. His own writing style, for instance, remains accessible even as he detours into more obscure shows and their minutiae, while the book's overall structure is clear and easy to follow even as it also feels a bit on the nose at times. Taken together, though, these features make *Myth-building in Modern Media* feel like an accessible read, even for those who might be less familiar with many of the texts it discusses.

Particular moments also stood out to me throughout. One of the first occurs in the section on proto-mytharcs, as Black confronts the often deeply racist and anti-Semitic elements of H.P. Lovecraft's work. Given this book's dependence on mythologist Joseph Campbell—whose racist, sexist, and homophobic comments have become widely known and should, along with its assumption of cisginder white male heroes, further inform any future reference of the Hero's Journey—I was concerned that Lovecraft would get a similar treatment: that his admittedly foundational work might be simply built upon, without any examination of its own troubling foundation. Black, however, confronts Lovecraft in ways he doesn't with Campbell, acknowledging Lovecraft's unmistakable and virulent racism and tracing how it affected his Cthulhian mythos to create a legacy that later creators continue to grapple with even as they adapt features of Lovecraft's Old Ones. (Does 2020's own *Lovecraft Country* come to mind as I write this? Why yes, in fact, it does . . .)

Another powerful moment, this one provoking more a slow nod of dawning comprehension than an exhale of relief, can be found in the "Future of the Mytharc" section. Here Black maintains that, by all rights, it should have been DC rather than Marvel that first managed to create a successful cinematic universe: after all, he points out, the MCU "was created with characters that mainstream audiences outside of the United States simply did not know in the way they knew the DC headliners (Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, etc.)" (143). As Black intimates here, Marvel happened to luck out, with savvy leadership, charismatic star power, and strong writing talent coinciding to make the first few MCU films shine, thus setting the stage for the rest of this cinematic

universe in ways that DC simply hasn't been able to seriously compete with yet (142-144). The second I read this, it seemed like such a simple and important insight, but I have not encountered anyone save Black putting it in these terms, which is commendable. In addition, too, Black's insight here also gestures toward the ways in which a popular culture mytharc—and its success—are now inescapably influenced by the technology, timing, and talent available with which to tell it.

Overall, Black's *Myth-building in Modern Media* is well worth the read, whether its audience is looking for an interesting personal journey into ways of thinking about popular culture or else seeking scholarly ways of analyzing pop culture's structures and narratives.

—Maria Alberto

THE NIBELUNGENLIED: WITH THE KLAGE. William T. Whobrey. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2018. 308 p. 978-1624666759. $16.00.

This work is a welcome addition to *Nibelungenlied* studies. There are several reasons for this, related below. First though, for those who may not be familiar the lay retells the story of Sigfried and Kriemhelt (known from Norse as Sigurd and Gudrun), how Sigfried won his wife, how he lost his life through treachery, and how Kriemhelt gets her revenge. Wrapped up in this tale are other heroic characters such as Ditrich of Bern (also known in other tales and history as Theodric the Great), Hildebrand, Attila the Hun (rendered as Etzel in Middle High German and Atli in Old Norse). The tales of Sigfried/Sigurd were well known in twelfth century NW Europe: long before the *Nibelungenlied* was composed circa 1200 CE Sigfried/Sigurd appears in art work in Scandinavia bearing witness to his popularity there already. The second part of this edition contains the first-ever in English translation of *The Klage*, a poem that takes the task of completing the tale of *Nibelungenlied*, the latter ending abruptly and without telling the audience what has happened to the characters. *The Klage* is rarely included in editions or translations of the *Nibelungenlied*, deemed by many as of less literary value. Certainly to modern readers' tastes an extended poem of lament is not desirable reading. *The Klage,* however, is included with the *Nibelungenlied* in most of the major manuscripts indicating that for the medieval audience, the poem was of interest and a necessary part of *Nibelungenlied*. In my view, modern audiences lose something by not reading these texts together.

The *Nibelungenlied* and *The Klage* originate at cultural crossroads and give us a glimpse into a world of changing tastes. The transformation of heroic epic to Romance is evident in these poems especially at points where an element that fits perfectly well in a heroic epic is ill at ease in the anachronistic chivalric culture. One example of this is a regular change in Siegfried from member of a court, first his father and then Gunther, and then in other circumstances he is presented (or claims for himself) the status of the lone warrior. The latter category seems derived from the heroic ethos of the early Germanic Middle Ages in which the lone warrior, sometimes in exile, who "adventures" like Beowulf, Grettir, or even Walter of Aquitaine to name a few examples. But the chivalric warrior is a member of a court and is expected to conduct himself not as a lone adventurer but according to the manners of the court. The love "affair" conducted between Siegfried and Kriemhild is very much a product of the chivalric court. So, the cultural crossroads are evident in the text as in the 12th century

Whobry presents his readers with a prose text rather than poetic. This is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, such an approach makes for an easily accessible work that students and others not having access to the original language will welcome. On the other hand, there are translation choices that, well, lose something in translation. One such example is when journeying to King Etzel, the Burgundians stop for the night; the text of Whobry's prose has merely "the moonlight was partly visible through the clouds" which is not inaccurate but is certainly a prosaic rendering (Adventure 26, Para. 1620). This may be compared with Daniel Shumway's 1909 effort: "Through the clouds there partly broke the gleam of the shining moon." Another earlier twentieth century translation by George Henry Needler renders the line "From out the clouds of heaven / a space the bright moon shone." Slightly earlier is Alice Horton's "metrical translation" of 1898: "Just then a gleam of moonlight between the clouds did break." Hatto's Penguin translation from the early 1960s renders the line, "Then as a gleam of the bright moon peeped above the clouds." Finally, Cyril Edwards's translation for the Oxford Classics edition has "Part of the bright moon broke out of the clouds." Picking on such a line that is not overly important to the episode simply illustrates the difficulty of combining approachability and accuracy. Nonetheless, the translation offered by Whobry, in spite of occasional prosaic moments, captures the beauty, excitement, and sorrow of the original for the most part.

As a final note, Whobry offers a very useful introduction that informs the reader on historical and literary backgrounds for the poem but also includes information on genre, meter, form and related matters. He also discusses his translation style and choices for a prose rendering. The explanatory notes are very useful; and Whobry offers translations of variants in the manuscript

tradition giving readers insight into the transmission history of the text. In addition, Whobry provides indices of personal and place names as well as an inventory of the manuscripts and versions, and a brief bibliography of key scholarship. This is a very readable translation of a vitally important medieval text with valuable helps and information for student and scholar alike.

—Larry J. Swain

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The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien: The Places That Inspired Middle-Earth. John Garth. Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford. 2020. 208 pages. ISBN 978-0-691-19694-7. Hardcover $29.95

John Garth's masterful study belongs on every Middle-earth scholar's shelf. Encyclopedic in its scope, it melds Tolkien's biography with his imagined worlds. From Morgoth to the Mewlips, no sub-created stone is left unturned. Lavishly illustrated with photographs, maps of both real and imagined lands, and art and illustrations by Tolkien and others, many hitherto unpublished, Garth's guidebook to the geography and history of Middle-earth is boggling in its breadth and depth. Its command of scholarship enhances it immeasurably. Each page illuminates with insights and dazzles with details. Time and again, the reader will marvel at how much knowledge Garth fits into 208 pages. The large (eight by ten inches) format amplifies the impact of the illustrations, whose reproductions here are of the highest quality. The two-column layout enhances readability. A weighty tome at two and three-quarters pounds, *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien* does not skimp on words or pictures.

One virtue is stand-alone passages that those of us who share a newspaper background with Garth would call sidebars. "Tales That Grew in the Telling" traces the evolution of Tolkien's Middle-earth maps. "A Hostile World" shows his debt to Anglo-Saxon cosmology. "Where On Earth Is Dorwinion?" "Forest Of Thunder," "Elvish And Welsh," "A Mythology For England," "Forests And Cathedrals," "The Marsh Of Tode," "What's In A Name? Luthien And Leithian," "Hollin And The Doors Of Durin," "Radagast And Medwed," "The Curse Of Porlock," "Doom Rings," "A Battlefield Both Ancient And

Modern," "From Great Yarmouth To Belfalas," "In A Cave By The Sea Lived A…," "Tanks At Gondolin," and "River Names," to cite but a few, enrich the text without distracting from it. Garth employed such sidebars in his earlier work, *Tolkien at Exeter College* (2014), but since this book has a far grander scope, the passages here are even more valuable.

England's green and pleasant land is where *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien* begins. The West Midlands was the true Shire, where Tolkien, his brother Hilary, and their mother Mabel came to live in April, 1895, after the harsh heat of Bloemfontein, South Africa, proved too hard for them. Tolkien's father Arthur stayed behind. Five miles southeast of industrial Birmingham, Sarehole, where Mabel and her sons lived,

> stood in a country that was still little altered by the modern age. The horse ruled the roads. On a clear night, the stars ruled the sky. It was a world that had more in common with 'the lands and hills of the primitive and wildest stories', Tolkien recalled. 'I loved it with an intensity of love that was a kind of nostalgia reversed'—an aching love for a new-found home. (13)

"Looking from the Shire into the dim distance—present and past—it is clearer still that we are standing in a kind of England," Garth writes.

> Both the Shire and England are reportedly founded by brothers whose names mean 'horse' and 'horse'—Marcho and Blanco for the hobbits and Hengest and Horsa for the Germanic peoples. Both settlements involved three peoples—the hobbit Fallohides, Harfoots and Stoors and the Germanic Angles, Saxons and Jutes. It all happened fourteen centuries ago from the perspective of the War of the Ring or Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. (22)

The Shire and the realms of *Farmer Giles of Ham* and *Smith of Wootton Major* derive many of their place names from Tolkien's Oxford and its environs, Garth points out. Many Middle-earth pub names, such as The Green Dragon, The Golden Perch, and The Ivy Bush, have Oxford antecedents. Bree's Prancing Pony was originally The White Horse, an occasional Inklings haunt.

In his second chapter, "Four Winds," Garth begins by tracing the North as Tolkien's first linguistic love, in both its languages and its lore, "a primary inspiration":

> It has gradually become clear how much he owed to the West, too—to Celtic traditions of Faërie. The influence of the classical South, Greece and Rome, is still almost unexplored, even though it dominated his own

> cultural era. Then there is the East, which reached him primarily through Anglo-Saxon wonder-tales. All this is so superbly fused in his invented world that it feels both unique and original. (25)

The North inspired Tolkien's first Elvish language. Its source was the Finnish *Kalevala*. "Reading it was like crossing a gulf into a new world, Tolkien enthused. […] [In his *Story of Kullervo*] for the first time he was giving one of his invented languages a home inside a story" (28). Turning his compass ninety degrees left, Garth states that "Tolkien's debt to the Celtic West has long been severely underrated—mostly thanks to his own comments. He once said that 'Celtic things' were 'like a broken stained glass window reassembled without design . . . in fact, 'mad.'" A note for *The Book of Lost Tales* says the Irish and Welsh knew only 'garbled things' about the Elves" (33).

Moving to the myths of the other West, America, Garth asserts that

> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* helped Tolkien towards Middle-earth in autumn 1914. He surely noted Hiawatha's departure by canoe into 'the portals of the Sunset', so much like the westward flight of his own Éarendel. […] The natural worlds of Longfellow and Tolkien are alike in their animism—their rivers imbued with spirit, and their trees with speech. (35-36)

Throughout this book, Garth animates his text with illustrative art by Tolkien and others. Here, he includes N.C. Wyeth's 1911 painting of Hiawatha paddling toward the sunset.

The South of classical Greek and Roman myth and the Africa of Tolkien's earliest boyhood both contributed to his legendarium. "Simultaneously, the story sticks to his overarching method—portraying remote people and places as medieval Europeans believed them to be, rather than as they actually were" (39).

The historic East was the seed of "multiple flags of biblical portent in his story of Númenor. Its kings are as long-lived as biblical patriarchs, yet give more thought to their tombs than their palaces, like Egyptian pharaohs" (41).

Garth's third chapter includes Tolkien's first map for *The Lord of the Rings*, which expanded as the tale grew in its telling (45). The chapter also chronicles the geography of Tolkien's courtship and wedding to Edith Bratt melded with the history of the island of Britain.

> It seems doubtful whether he actively imagined an island Britain emerging from Lindon [an enchanted west beside the Great Sea] and the Shire. Although he said that Hobbiton was about the latitude of Oxford,

> and implied that it was around that longitude too, he admitted it was tricky fitting his invented lands to past European geology. (58)

Leaving land for ocean, Garth's fourth and, at 22 pages, longest chapter, "The Shore and The Sea," states "The entire mythology sprang into life in 1914 with the image of a ship sailing into the sky, and *The Lord of the Rings* ends the same way" (61). Tolkien's painting of the Cornwall coast done on Aug. 12, 1914, *Cave near The Lizard* (63), and his letter to Edith show that the call of the sea was strong. *Roverandom* and *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* are cited for their aquatic elements. Tolkien's recurrent nightmare of being swept away by giant wave reminiscent of the drowning of Atlantis is noted. Furthermore, Garth links the ocean to both the mythologies of King Arthur and Middle-earth.

> Tolkien probably imagined his Lonely Isle of Tol Eressëa as the true source of all later legendary 'fortunate isles' that are home to faëry folk […]. In writings from the mid-1930s, Tolkien actually made *Avallon* a byname for the Lonely Isle. This means that in *The Lord of the Rings*, the wounded Frodo ends up sailing to Avallon—truly 'an Arthurian ending,' as Tolkien once described it. When Sam Gamgee eventually sails there in Frodo's wake, in effect he does something that Tolkien meant Arthur's Lancelot to do in his unfinished poem *The Fall of Arthur*. (66)

Beginning with Tolkien's 1911 hiking trip to the Swiss Alps when he was 19, "Roots Of The Mountains," the fifth chapter, asserts that "[a] single trip to Switzerland laid the foundation for almost every mountain scene Tolkien wrote. His account of it, though neither comprehensive nor orderly, is his frankest statement of his debt to real places" (83). The valley of Lauterbrunnen, shown in a full-page photograph here, inspired Rivendell. The mountains of Wengen, Silberhorn, Eiger, and Jungfrau that frame the valley were reborn in Tolkien's fiction.

Beneath the mountains are caves, the dwelling places of Gollum, Shelob, and the dwarves. Garth details Tolkien's fascination in both fictional and real caverns: "One extraordinary piece of description comes directly from [an English] experience--Gimli's description of the Glittering Caves of Aglarond behind Helm's Deep. Tolkien told a reader, 'the passage was based on the caves in Cheddar Gorge and was written after I had revisited these in 1940" (98). A photograph illustrates the similarity.

"Rivers, Lakes and Waterfalls," at twelve pages the shortest of the book's eleven chapters, catalogs Middle-earth's inland waters. "For the inspirations behind Tolkien's writings, rivers are a rich but cautionary symbol. Our word *influence* comes from the Latin for 'flowing in', and one influence is likely to mingle with others to make something both new and protean" (101).

This fifth chapter wends through *Lay of the Children of Húrin, The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, The Book of Lost Tales,* and *The Fall of Gondolin,* linking their waters to ones in Tolkien's experience: the Rhine, River Cole, the Cherwell in Oxford, the Thames, Avon, and the confluence of the Sow and Trent. Garth also studies Tolkien's still waters. "The pool at the West-gate of Moria certainly bears comparison with Grendel's mere, a gloomy place among 'highlands wolfhaunted'" (109).

"A deep feeling for trees is Tolkien's most distinctive response to the national world," Garth writes at the beginning of "Tree-Woven Lands," the sixth chapter. "As a child, he drew them and he liked to be among, beside or up them" (113). The 'tree-woven lands' of Tolkien's own imagination are places of liberty and enchantment, refuge and terror," he continues.

> They can renew the spirit or weigh it with autumnal cares. Increasingly, they stand for nature itself, and against the axe and furnace. Tolkien seeded them from the forests of adventure yarn, fairy-story and philology, the woods of childhood play and adult rambles, and the potent myth of a world once blanketed in green. (113)

Garth roots Tolkien's love of woods to "Bumble Dell," perhaps Moseley Bog, where he and his younger brother Hilary rambled during their Sarehole boyhood.

"In English culture, the epitome of greenwood liberty is Nottinghamshire's Sherwood Forest, where the noble outlaw Robin Hood and his 'merry men' resist the tyranny of King John" (116). Tolkien reincarnates Robin Hood in Faramir of *The Lord of the Rings*, the character the author once said he most strongly identified with, and Beren's father Barahir in *The Silmarillion*.

Lothlórien and Mirkwood also earn mention as fictional forests from the roots of real woods:

> Lothlórien is a land of mallorn-trees, a species of Tolkien's own invention. He compared the mallorn to the beech—upright grey bole and perpendicular branches upswept at the tips—but he gave it the same massive majesty he praised in the elm. In a punning piece of early language-invention, he made *elm!* the Elvish expression for 'marvellous!' (118)

But the mallorn's longevity differentiates it from the elm. "English tradition associates the elm with transience and death. Its timber was used for coffins and ships' keels. It had a reputation for dropping branches without warning, and it was notoriously prone to disease" (118-120).

Garth continues: "The name *Mirkwood* was no invention, and it belonged to a real place of mythic stature—a forest than had haunted the European imagination two thousand years ago" (123). Tolkien had first encountered it in Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*. The name "Mirkwood" was the English name bestowed on this vast woodland by nineteenth-century authors including "William Morris, whose romance *The House of the Wolfings* [was] a favorite of Tolkien's after he bought it in 1914" (*Ibid*.) At 19, Tolkien had seen the western remnants of this great forest in Germany and Austria traveling by riverboat and train on his 1911 trip to Switzerland.

> In old age, Tolkien could no longer access the visionary feelings of his youth when (as Christopher Tolkien writes) 'for him Elvish songs "lingered yet mightily in the woods and the hills"'. But exploring the forests of *The Lord of the Rings* at his zenith as a writer, he could still recapture them. His memory was shorter than Treebeard's but no less heartfelt. (131)

"Ancient Imprints," the seventh chapter, delves into archeology, "which by now was revealing ancient earthworks across Britain using aerial photography techniques first developed for trench warfare" (133). "The legendarium texts themselves, from the Book of Lost Tales to the Red Book of Westmarch, purport to be records from our own forgotten past," Garth states. "They are meant to be relics comparable to the tablets of Nineveh […], like [H. Rider] Haggard's Sherd of Amenartas, the inscribed poetry fragment that launches the quest for the lost city in *She*" (136).

Similarly, Lake-town of *The Hobbit* is based on archeological discoveries of wooden villages constructed on pilings near Zurich that Tolkien could have seen in the Swiss National Museum in 1911. Such settlements would have been susceptible to fire, and indeed some were destroyed by flames:

> Lake-town marks a crucial point in the development of Middle-earth. It is neither a mythological settlement like Gondolin or Rivendell, nor even a parodic latter-day England like the Shire. Instead it is an historical reconstruction of a working town broadly based on what was then understood about lake-villages. That makes it a significant step toward the rich cultural backdrops that Tolkien developed from *the Lord of the Rings* onwards. (139)

The chapter revisits forgotten wars, such as the one recounted by Tom Bombadil after he saves the hobbits from the Barrow-wight:

> The hobbits, picnicking like tourists beside an old megalith, are plunged into sleep and entombed alive in the regalia of ancient burial—circlets, chains, rings, and swords. […] Part of the peculiar horror of all this is the sense of meaningless grievance. Time has made a mockery and mystery of the causes for which the old wars were fought.
>
> The same sense could not be achieved later in *The Lord of the Rings*, when ancient history has come into sharp focus. […] Tolkien creates a tremendous sense of perspective. This is vital in making us feel that Middle-earth was not invented for the story, but existed before it. (141)

Oxfordshire and the regions to the south and west of it boast many archeological sites, such as the Stonehenge, Avebury, the Rollright Stones, and the White Horse of Uffington. English archeological sites, like Avebury and Offa's Dike, certainly figured into Tolkien's fiction, especially in connection with Rohan. Garth writes: "Christopher Tolkien recalls sitting as a young boy on White Horse Hill near Uffington. 'I think even then I appreciated his intense awareness of that hill,' says Christopher, 'the archaic carving of the white horse in the chalk, the *bones* of the hill. One can see Weathertop in that" (145).

The ninth chapter, "Watch And Ward," begins "It was Tolkien's great fortune to grow up around people and places that could nurture his extraordinary his extraordinary capacity for learning" (147). His mother Mabel taught him Latin, French, botany, and drawing. His guardian Fr. Francis Morgan's priestly community at the Birmingham Oratory allowed him access to an admirable library. At Oxford, he discovered the Bodleian Library: "'an awesome and splendid place' of 'wonderful manuscripts and books without price'" (147). The library of his college Exeter introduced him to a Finnish grammar that engendered his Elvish language.

But beyond Oxford World War I loomed. Garth's award-winning 2004 biography *Tolkien And The Great War* is the seminal study of how that "colossal and mismanaged butchery," as Hemingway called it, affected the life and influenced the writing of the author: "On these foundations of war Tolkien built the towers, towns and realms of his legendarium" (148).

German troops had burned the library at Louvain in Belgium, destroying thousands of medieval manuscripts. The fate of Gondolin, chronicled in Tolkien's tale written a year after the battle of the Somme, "Not Nineveh, Babylon, Troy, or Rome 'saw such terror as fell that day,' the storyteller of *The Book of Lost Tales* declares" (150).

Garth links Númenor to Atlantis and the Tower of Babel, Minas Tirith to Rome and Dante's *Divine Comedy* vision of Limbo, and Rohan's Golden Hall of Meduseld to Hrothgar's hall in *Beowulf*. The chapter concludes with a recollection of Tolkien's allegory of the tower, used in his famous 1933 undergraduate lecture on *Beowulf*. The lecture ends "But from the top of the

tower the man had been able to look out upon the sea" (156). The allegory evokes the Shire's Tower Hills and Frodo's vision of the ship sailing for the West, occurring both in his dreams and in the finale of *The Lord of the Rings*.

In the tenth and penultimate chapter, "Places of War," Garth describes how the author created his world amid the sordid horrors of the Western Front:

> Tolkien recalled that much of the early legendarium was devised 'in grimy canteens, at lectures in cold fogs, in huts full of blasphemy and smut, or by candlelight in bell-tents, even some in dugouts under shell fire'. This was no mere escape to fairyland. Then and later he wrote to express his '*feeling* about good, evil, fair, foul in some way: to rationalize it, and prevent it from just festering'. (159)

Unlike writers like Welsh Catholic poet David Jones, whose *In Parenthesis* employed Arthurian myth to hallow the war, Tolkien was more inclined to realism: "Rather than look at remote figures in a tapestry, we seem to walk with his heroes through the world of lived experience; […] [L]andscape becomes a way to chart interior as well as exterior journeys" (160). Tolkien's many trips to the trenches between July and October 1916

> were marked by ominous symbols of the old order overturned. […] The crucified Christ presided over many road junctions; and such a calvary had once stood en route to the front line from Bouzincourt, at a tree-girt crossroads that the soldiers called Crucifix Corner. Similarly, en route to Mordor, Frodo and Sam see the old stone king at the Cross-roads in Ithilien—his head knocked off by orcs yet still whole. (162)

Thus the Somme was reborn as the most horrific geography of Middle-earth. It inspired the Dead Marshes, the Barrow-downs, and Morgul Vale. The fictional webs of Shelob are analogous to the fatal barbed wire which had entangled many doomed soldiers. "Recalling the real battlefield, Tolkien said, 'I remember miles and miles of seething, tortured earth, perhaps best described in the chapter about the approaches to Mordor. It was a searing experience'" (166).

The last chapter, "Craft And Industry," returns to the city where Tolkien grew up.

> Birmingham's most effective invention was itself. […] [It] pushed ahead of its rivals with new technologies to create fashionable novelties—pearl jewelry, enameled snuffboxes, silk-covered buttons, pearl buttons, gilt buttons.
>
> These are exactly the knick-knacks that a well-to-do hobbit appreciates. Bilbo Baggins has a clock on his mantelpiece and brass buttons on his waistcoat. […] In the end, his rise in the world is signalled

> by new buttons—of gold. Tolkien does not explain which hobbit hive of industry made them. (176-77)

Birmingham was also the cradle of the Arts and Crafts movement spearheaded by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, and "What can be said with confidence is that the Elves, representing words 'beauty and grace in life and artefact,' embody the Arts and Crafts way that Tolkien first imbibed in Birmingham" (178).

The industrialization of Birmingham was a bitter pill. Tolkien had never seen an automobile during his Sarehole childhood. "'I always knew it would go—and it did,' Tolkien recalled in old age" (181). His beloved West Midlands had been transformed by the Industrial Revolution:

> The heroes return to Hobbiton to encounter after-images of Tolkien's 1933 visit to his vanished Sarehole. Trees have been wantonly cut down. Cosy hobbit-holes and gracious old buildings have given way to 'shabby houses'. [...] 'This is worse than Mordor,' [Sam] reflects—worse because it was home and he remembers it before it was ruined. (182)

Meanwhile, Oxford had become the Detroit of Britain, the third fastest-growing city in England, with the establishment of the automobile-building Cowley motor works. The Oxford Noise Abatement Society was formed in 1931 to campaign against the traffic blight. It was a losing battle. Industrialization and mechanization had transformed England's green and pleasant land into a realm overrun with William Blake's dark, Satanic—or Sarumanic—mills.

> It is easy to mock Tolkien as reactionary, misty-eyed and impractical in his opposition to industry and the machine. Indeed, there was a time when no self-respecting opinion-maker would miss the chance to do so.
>
> Even admirers who embrace an environmental message in Tolkien's work can sometimes underestimate the strength of feeling behind it. The attack on Isengard by the Ents strikes Anne C. Petty as 'one of the most satisfying acts of retribution ever committed to paper,' yet she is at pains to defuse any power it might have had beyond mere literary pleasure. […] She seems to have overlooked a comment from Tolkien in support of far more radical action. 'There is only one bright spot and that is the growing habit of disgruntled men of dynamiting factories and power-stations,' he said. 'I hope that, encouraged as "patriotism", may become a habit! ' […]
>
> Patrick Curry has described Tolkien's mood as one of 'radical nostalgia' that sees a problem and can inspire change—'an emotionally empowering nostalgia, not a crippling one'.

> The values that Tolkien saw in old Sarehole—community, freedom, craft and intimacy with nature—speak eloquently to people worldwide when embodied in the Shire. So does his ideal of craft, not least because he put it so superbly into practice himself. (184)

Garth concludes:

> Middle-earth was created to reflect what [Tolkien] most loved and detested in his own world. It folds into itself a multitude of real landscapes and locations, wild or nurtured or despoiled. Indeed, you might say that upon the pages of Tolkien's legendarium, landscape itself has written an impassioned message. That is why this is not ultimately a mythology for England or for Britain only, but for a planet that sorely needs every inspiration to save itself. (184)

Admirers of Tolkien's art will find much to appreciate in *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien*, including many hitherto unpublished drawings, maps, and paintings. Biographical tidbits add new information. The sidebars enhance its prodigal detail.

In all, Garth's command of the life and works of the maker of Middle-earth make this book an essential work for those who wish to increase their understanding of the author. Tolkien scholarship is much the richer because of it.

—Mike Foster

Briefly Noted

A Dictionary of Symbols: Revised and Expanded. Juan Eduardo Cirlot; translated from the Spanish by Jack Sage and Valerie Mills; foreword by Herbert Read; afterword by Victoria Cirlot. New York Review of Books, 2020. pbk. 978-1-68137-197-9. 553 pp. $34.95.

Diccionario de símbolos tradicionales was first published in Spanish by the poet and critic Juan Eduardo Cirlot, active in Barcelona in the mid-1940s through early 1950s, in 1958. The first English translation was in 1962, and it went through several more editions, expansions, and translations before his death in 1973. A member of the Dau al Set artistic movement in Catalonia, Cirlot was contemporary with the Surrealists and Dadaists and influenced by Jung and

Eliade. The book is a standard reference for anyone interested in studying, using, and interpreting symbols, and therefore important to readers and scholars of mythopoeic literature. Its entries can read as somewhat dated now, though, and should be supplemented by other dictionaries of symbols for a fuller understanding. For example, I find, in dipping into various entries, that the distaste he expresses in his introduction for Freudianism also plays out in a certain fastidiousness about sexual symbolism. While his entry on LINGAM mentions that it is a representation of the phallus, his entry on YONI completely avoids any mention of the female sexual organs, and the two entries do not refer to each other.

Cirlot's introduction is a dense piece of writing about the importance of symbolic thought in human development, and sets out the limits of his project. There is a great deal of resonance here with Owen Barfield's thinking on the developmental stages of human language in *History in English Words*; as with language, the evolution of the meaning of symbols "reveals the evolution of consciousness" (Barfield 14). To Cirlot, everything has layers of symbolic meaning behind and around its actual existence: "Symbolism in no way contradicts natural or utilitarian reality, but only serves to transform it by imbuing a spiritual sense" (Cirlot 94). A useful reference source for those who like to have physical books on their shelves.

—Janet Brennan Croft

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Reality, Magic, and Other Lies: Fairy-Tale Film Truths. Pauline Greenhill. Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 2020. 265 p. ISBN 9780814342220. $32.99.

Pauline Greenhill's *Reality, Magic, and Other Lies: Fairy-Tale Film Truths* is organized into two distinct sections, movies and books, followed by an analysis of popular western fairy tales and fairy tale figures in popular media. The first section focuses on stop-motion and live action films. This is particularly interesting because of the range of media that Greenhill chooses to focus on. LAIKA's "Box Trolls," Tarsem Singh's live-action "The Fall," and Fred Pellerin's "Babine" all sit comfortably in the same section. Greenhill's pattern is a brief contextualizing summary preceding analysis of each one's place within the fairy tale telling tradition, magic versus reality, and then the interplay between the two for each title.

Whereas the first section can act as a basis or launch point for an amateur's curiosity, the second part is clearly meant for Greenhill's peers. Terms and theories from women, gender, and sexuality studies appear briefly within part one, but are much more prevalent in part two.

By Greenhill's own admission in her introduction, the goal of the book is not to create a meter by which to analyze all fairy tales or turn it into a quantitative scientific analysis. It is instead, as she clarifies nearly in the same breath, a journey through topics, themes, and works that she finds interesting. *Lies* combines criticism, analysis, and theory into an excellent source of subject readings or reference material for a modern fairy tale or folklore course or researcher. This book is part of Wayne State University's Series in Fairy Tale Studies.

—Alissa Renales

About the Reviewers

Maria Alberto is a third-year Ph.D. student in literary and cultural studies at the University of Utah, where she is pursuing research interests in fan studies, adaptation, and popular culture. Some of her recent projects have focused on fans' use of platforms, canon in tabletop roleplaying games, and mythmaking in Tolkien's work.

Janet Brennan Croft (ORCID ID 0000-0003-2692-3586) is Associate University Librarian for Content Discovery at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the author of *War in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*, has published articles on Tolkien and other topics in a variety of journals, and is editor or co-editor of numerous collections of essays. northerniowa.academia.edu/ JanetCroft.

David L. Emerson is an independent scholar living in Iowa. As a generalist, he is fond of making connections between disparate areas of fantasy, science fiction, graphic novels, and even music. He has made presentations at Tolkien conferences in years past on Michael Moorcock, Neil Gaiman, Alan Moore, Jasper Fforde, Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, and on Donald Swann's setting of "Errantry." He has been known to collaborate with Professor Mike Foster in setting Tolkien-themed lyrics to Beatles and Bob Dylan songs. He is currently investigating the mythopoeic dimensions of the Grateful Dead.

Megan N. Fontenot is currently working towards a PhD in nineteenth-century British literature at the University of Georgia. She is also a devoted Tolkien scholar

and longtime fan, has published academic articles on Tolkien in both *Mythlore* and *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review*, and currently authors the biweekly "Exploring the People of Middle-earth" public scholarship series for Tor.com. As a former music major, a choir member, and a pianist, she has always been fascinated by the beauty and complexity of Middle-earth's music culture.

MIKE FOSTER was a member of the English faculty at Illinois Central College in East Peoria from 1971 until his retirement in 2005. His specialty is English fantasy literature, especially J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, and J.M. Barrie, and he has published widely in this area. He taught courses in both fantasy literature (1974-2005) and in Special Studies, J.R.R. Tolkien (1978-2005 and continued at Bradley University in Peoria in 2006 and 2008). He is a founding member of the Far Westfarthing smial. Since 1995, he has been the Tolkien Society's North American representative.

ALISSA RENALES (they/them/theirs) is a second year Masters of Information student at Rutgers University New Brunswick. They are a School of Communication and Information Assistant at the Archibald S. Alexander Library. They are also an Academic Library Reference Chat Volunteer at the State Library of Oregon's Answerland Service.

ZACHARY D. SCHMOLL earned his Ph.D. in Humanities at Faulkner University. He currently serves as the Managing Editor of *An Unexpected Journal* and continues to research Tolkien, Chesterton, and the intersection between faith and culture.

LARRY J. SWAIN is co-editor in chief of *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Northwestern Medieval Europe* and is Assistant Professor of English at Bemidji State University and a Preceptor at Signum University.

ROBERT T. TALLY JR. is the NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities and Professor of English at Texas State University. His books include *Topophrenia: Place, Narrative, and the Spatial Imagination* (2019), *Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism* (2014), *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature* (2014), *Utopia in the Age of Globalization* (2013), *Spatiality* (2013), and *Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel* (2011).

MYTHOPOEIC PRESS VOLUME CALL FOR PAPERS

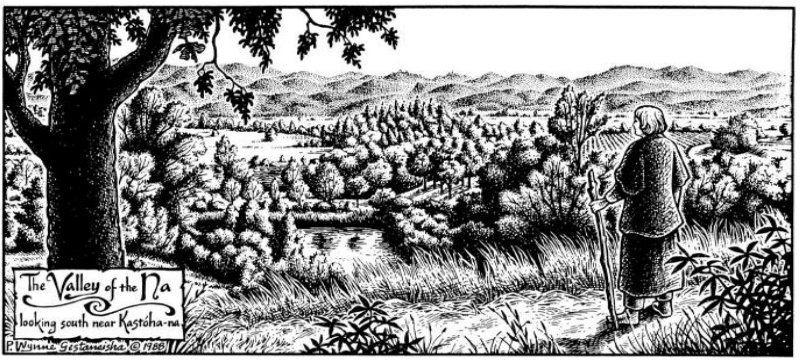
This volume seeks to develop further the conversation about the habitations of the Peoples of Middle-earth. In addition to the details concerning the natural world and its geography, Tolkien's attention to the construction, aesthetics, and strategic positioning of the strongholds and cities in each Age of his legendarium reveals how vital they are to the development of his created world and to the thematics of his tales. By examining the significance of the Peoples of Middle-earth dwelling in, altering, and developing *habitations* that form the crux of central narratives in every age of Middle-earth, the volume seeks to offer an added perspective to the significant scholarship on nature and the natural world.

Submissions may examine the cities and strongholds of any Age – and any version – of the legendarium; topics may include but are not limited to explorations of:

-- cultural geography
-- aesthetics
-- Tolkien's artistic representations
-- material culture
-- economic exchanges
-- race relations
-- geopolitical tensions
-- history, memory
-- ruins
-- magic, enchantment and construction
-- film representations
-- fan art
-- absence of cities/strongholds in cultures
-- cities/strongholds in/vs. nature
-- war, Siege
-- specific cities/strongholds, eg. Tirion, Doriath, Nargothrond, Gondolin, Nogrod, Rivendell, Moria, Osgiliath, Laketown, Isengard, Minas Tirith, Helm's Deep, Edoras, Lothlórien, etc.
-- labor, work, within cities/strongholds

Please send abstracts or completed essays for consideration to Cami Agan at cami.agan@oc.edu by January 13, 2020.

DEADLINE EXTENDED THROUGH FALL 2020



Patrick Wynne. Mythlore #56, 1988

Call for Papers for Special Issue of Mythlore, Fall 2020:
Honoring Ursula K. Le Guin: Citizen of Mondath
Guest Edited by Melanie A. Rawls

Final paper deadline December 20, 2020

Mythlore invites article submissions for a special issue focused on Ursula K. Le Guin, grandmaster of mythopoeic fantasy. We welcome essays on the following topics: Le Guin's Earthsea series, the three novels of the "Annals of the Western Shore," namely *Gifts, Voices,* and *Powers,* the young adult novel *The Beginning Place,* and her fantasy short stories.

Le Guin's masterwork *Always Coming Home* has a special place in Mythopoeic Society history, as it was the topic of a panel when she was Guest of Honor at Mythcon 19 in 1988. Though this work is not considered strictly fantasy, it clearly has mythopoeic elements, and we welcome articles on this text.

Other potential topics for articles include:

- Good and evil in Le Guin's worlds
- Gender
- Power and its uses and abuses
- Jungian and Taoist elements in Le Guin's writing

We also call for articles on her critical essays that examine mythopoeic writing and any of her poetry or non-fantasy writing that has mythopoeic themes and imagery. We welcome articles that explore Le Guin's influence on the fantasy genre as a whole and on other writers, as well as articles exploring how other writers influenced Le Guin (Le Guin claimed Philip K. Dick and Walter M. Miller as influences in an interview).

Send queries, questions, and proposals to Melanie A. Rawls,
mrawls836@gmail.com
Drafts and final papers should be submitted via
https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/

MYTHCON 51:

THE MYTHIC, THE FANTASTIC, AND THE ALIEN

Albuquerque, New Mexico

NEW DATES!

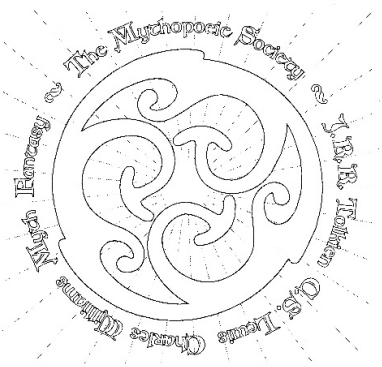
July 30th – August 2nd, 2021

Guests of Honor:

Rivera Sun

David Bratman

MORE AT MYTHCON.ORG



A Note on the Type

The main body of the text of *Mythlore* is set in *Palatino Linotype*, a balanced and graceful lyrical modernist face created in 1948 by Hermann Zapf and based on humanist Renaissance designs. It was initially cut by hand and cast as a foundry type, even though phototype machines and early computers were in use at the time. This combination of modernism and deliberate anachronism, as well as the date of the type's design, makes *Palatino* especially suitable for studies of the works of Tolkien, Lewis, Williams, and other modern fantasists. *Mythlore* first started using *Palatino* in 1988, when it switched to computer typesetting. Starting in 1989 a face called *Tolkien*, adapted from *Kelt*, was used for titling for a number of years but later phased out. We have returned to *Tolkien* for titles and other accents. Selected passages in Old English may be set in *Junicode*, which includes some necessary specialized characters and ligatures not included in the *Palatino* character set.

Mythlore Submission Guidelines

Mythlore is a refereed scholarly journal, available in print, electronic, and online open access formats. *Mythlore* welcomes submissions focusing on the works and scholarship of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams, as well as articles on other authors and creators of mythic and mythopoeic literature and media. We invite articles from all critical perspectives. All accepted submissions must be recommended by at least one referee; in the case of authors connected with the journal or on the Society's board, a minimum of two recommendations is required. A more detailed statement of editorial purpose is available at http://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore /aimsandscope.html

All submissions for publication should conform to *The MLA Handbook* 8th ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 2016), include a list of works cited, and normally should be 5,000-10,000 words. A detailed style guide can be found at http://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/ styleguide.htmland. Reviews of books should be 1,000-5,000 words. Please inquire with the editor before submitting book reviews or shorter "notes." Letters are also welcome. Submissions should be formatted as Microsoft Word or plain ASCII text files and submitted by setting up an author account at http://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/. Authors may expect a decision regarding publication within three to six months.

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