



I Palantir 3

The Official Publication of The Fellowship of the Ring, an organization of devotees of the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, insofar as they treat of the lands and peoples of Middle Earth.

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She smiled sadly "Must you depart so soon?"

"Soon?" He smiled, but grievously. "Long years ago I would have left these lands, but that I was pledged to abide the long strife in Middle Earth. Now all my tasks here are ended, and a new age begins in which I have no part. The time has come, then, for my own departure; to go where those I loved have long gone, and complete my destiny beyond the Sea. So it must be." He held her hand long without speaking and at last said "Alas! For long I thought this day would bring only rejoicing, when at the end I set forth; but it is ever so, I now see, Arwen, that no joy comes without pain. For I leave my dearest treasure behind me, and my song can be only of tears and not all of gladness. Well were you named Undómiel, my daughter." He bowed his head and wept. "Long have I foreseen this parting, but it is none the easier to bear, and it is the more bitter that it comes at the hands of those I love; so that I cannot even refuse to accept."

"You tear my heart," she said.

"No, it was so ordained. Even as Luthien the Fair, most beloved of all the children of the world, a doom was laid on you. This I knew long, and this also: that if you refused it, much worse might befall. And yet it is well that some things are hidden even from the eyes of the foresighted, my daughter, for even I, who am accounted wise, might have shrunk from such pain, whatever the need."

"And so might I." She laid her head upon his hands, and she too wept bitterly.

"Do you grieve?" he asked, and his face was wrung, "Arwen, Arwen, do you repent your choice?"

"No," she said, "my grief is for you, my father. Hard was it indeed to choose, and had I known -- had you forbidden or even counselled me otherwise --"

Slowly, he shook his head. "Wise am I said to be, but none may safely counsel another on a matter so grave. You have lived long, and you too are wise -- or wise enough to order your world as it seems best. I knew indeed that your choice would not be lightly or carelessly made, nor heedless of all consequences. And so I say, though I grieve and it is bitter to me, he who has won you is full worthy, and you are well given."

Her smile was a rainbow through tears.

"Long were the years of decision, my father, and I had none to advise me; for Galadriel too withheld her counsel when I sought it, saying only that I must consider long and well, and weigh in my heart what each course would bring, remembering that whatever my choice, it was sure to bring more both of joy and sorrow than I foresaw. And at last it seemed to me that wisdom was folly here; for it seemed to me, and it seems still, that even the Lands of the Uttermost West could never be fair to me if I must walk them alone. And then I knew what choice and what doom must be mine, my father, and from that moment the doom was appointed. Even had my lord fallen in battle and gone to the long home of the valiant, and all our hopes failed, even then would I have remained in Middle Earth. Alone if need be, to strive to the end and in the end perish. My fate lies here, for good or ill. And maybe it would have been so, even had I never met the son of Arathorn beneath the white trees of your garden; for if we were all to depart hence, why would such choice have been appointed for your children?"

"Aragorn and his knights, and the people of Lorien and Rivendell, made ready to ride; but Faramir and Imrahil remained at Edoras. And Arwen Everstar remained also, and she said farewell to her brethren. None saw her last meeting with Elrond her father, for they went up into the hills and there spoke long together, and bitter was their parting that should endure beyond the ends of the world...."

The Parting of Arwen

by Elfrida Rivers

"Fair is the Golden Hall," said Elrond, "yet is it a house of men, Arwen. And I would walk with you once again in the green woodland, ere we depart tomorrow."

Then the lady Arwen dismissed her maidens, and took a mantle of elven-grey, and they went forth unmarked, and alone, and up into the green hills; quietly, without speech. At last, deep in the forest, they found a glade, where birds were singing and green sunlight fell upon the green grass starred with white flowers of Evermind; and through a gap in the trees they could see the high white mountain peaks.

And at first they spoke of commonplaces of their journey hither, of birds and flowers and woodlands and trees, to hide what lay heavy on them both, that they walked together for the last time in the tree-woven lands of Middle Earth. And Arwen sang softly, as if the birds in the trees had raised a sweeter echo in the glades. Then they spoke long of the days that had been and the days that should be; of realms of men and elves, and kings that had been and would come.

But when the sun had fallen from morning to late in the afternoon, Elrond at last seated himself on a great rock grey with lichen, and would have drawn his daughter to sit at his side; but with a soft cry she sank down in the grass and rested her head upon his knees.

He passed his hand over her hair, netted with bright jewels, but spoke no word for a long time.

"Many ages it is since I walked in this country," he said at last.

"I have never come here before."

"No, for the shadow lay long near these hills. Now has that peril departed, but alas, I shall not see them grow fair in the sun. That will be for you and your children; I must depart also, even as the shadows."

"So it may well be," he said, "Yet, my best loved, it seems now to me that when I knew your choice, I too must renounce that grace of parting and remain here, choosing, at the last, as my brother chose long ages ago, to die at last to the world. Arwen, do you recall the day we bore your mother to the Havens?"

"Well do I remember; long were our hearts empty of song. And in the long years of peril it often came to me, when I recalled how she spoke to me in farewell, that she too had foreseen this doom."

"She foresaw it indeed; in the hour of your birth, I believe, did she know that the doom of Lúthien lay upon you," Elrond said gravely, "although I could never bear to hear it spoken. It was a grief to us. And when she was taken, I longed then to depart over Sea with all of my household, and we would have been spared this later parting. Yet I had accepted the charge you know of, and I could not then foresake it; so I must perforce accept that long parting, and I pledged then that it should not be forever. And so my doom is not mine to choose. My road lies there, and yours here."

Arwen wept still without ceasing. "Even then, it seemed that I parted from her without hope and beyond the circles of the world, while for you there was a light beyond the darkness. Although I thought that only my youth and unwisdom made me grieve."

He raised her and looked into her fair face, and it seemed that his eyes read her heart. He cried, in a voice low indeed but pierced with anguish "Arwen Undomiel, tell me you will never regret, or I shall not be able to endure it!"

She held his hands to her breast, and tears fell on them.

"Hard and cold would I be of heart, harder than the stone of the mountains," she said in a voice trembling with pain, "if I could cast away all my kindred without regret or grief, my father. Never shall I repent my choice, but never while the sun rises over my world shall I cease to regret the pain I must give to those I love. Never will I forget, nor hold you light in my heart while I laugh for my long-awaited joy. Bitter was the choice, and only when I knew that all ages of the world would be to me only an endless weariness, even in the Blessed Realm, without the one in whom my life now is bound, did I accept it; and your grief almost prevented me, even at the last."

"I would not have it so," said Elrond. "Even I, my daughter, would not have borne you away to see you wear away the years in unending memory and vain regrets. Such is our fate." He grew calm, and they sat so for long, Arwen holding his hands to her heart, his head bowed over her fair face. So still they were that birds came into the glade, and a family of tiny rabbits began to nibble the grass at her silk-shod feet. The first shadows were falling when he raised his head at last.

"Tomorrow we ride forth," he said. "Do you ride with us, Arwen?"

"No, although for a time I believed that I might; and indeed, I have leave from my lord, and if I wished, he would let me bear you company for a time, since it must end so soon. Yet he too has waited long, and now our paths are joined."

"Yet Aragorn himself rides with his knights to Orthanc," said Elrond. "You might journey so far, and return at his side."

"That too I thought on," she said. "Yet a parting delayet is no less painful, and I am no child, to cling to last moments and weep when I am torn at last from your side. No, my father, here I remain, to return to Minas Anor and there await my lord's return."

"You are wise indeed," said Elrond. "Tomorrow we must say farewell at last before many eyes, and you must bear yourself as a Queen. If there must be tears, let them fall here and in secret. I would not have it that any eyes of Men should behold your sorrow -- or mine."

She smiled gravely. "So it is that Men believe our folk think of grief only as matter for the fairest songs. Perhaps it is as well. They who know so many and such bitter griefs, it is well they should think there is ever gladness somewhere in the world. As indeed there may be, though it dwells not in the hearts of the Elf-kin. And they know not in full the comfort of memory and dream."

Elrond rose to his feet. Tall he stood, tall and beautiful, and kingly beyond all men, the sunset touching his ~~uncovered~~ head as with a crown of gold out of the West.

"So here at last, on a strange hillside, we come to the end of our ways in this world together," he said, and giving her his hand, he said, "Rise, my daughter, the day grows short and even these last moments are fleeting."

He looked into her fair face when she had risen.

"Time at last grows strange beneath this sun, and I grow old, Undómiel; long indeed you have sat at my side in Rivendell, and graced my heart and my home with your beauty and wisdom, and long have you been a great Lady of our kin. Yet now it seems only a few swift rounds of the sun since I beheld you running and singing in the gardens of Imladris, a little maiden with leaves in your flying hair, laughing because the world looked so strange through the drops of rain, or looking with wide eyes of wonder at the sharp swords of your brethren."

She smiled sadly.

"I bade them farewell at the evening. For a time I believe they too, or one of them, might well choose to remain here in Middle Earth; long they have loved it well. Yet they would not be parted one from the other; and their work here is ended, while mine is yet to begin. For them, although I shall miss their fair voices and their company, I feel no great sorrow. Nor for any, save for you alone, my father."

Then she fell upon his breast, and he clasped her fast in his arms, and they kissed for the last time. And at last he loosed her arms lovingly from his neck, and took her hand, and looked to the first bright twinkle in the sky: Eärendil's star, glowing behind her dark head in the darkling twilight.

"Well were you named, Arwen, Evenstar of the world," he said. "Evenstar in a world that grows darker. Farewell, my beloved. We part beyond the ending of the world, and even when the world is changed, and the forgotten lands are lifted up, our ways shall not meet but ever turn apart, down roads that grow ever further. Yet I say to you, child of our eldmother Lúthien, daughter of many shining kings, it was truly spoken that our line shall never die from this world but shall live on in Middle Earth forever. So that our worlds shall never be truly sundered. Farewell. Farewell, beloved, and may the stars shine ever on you and those you love."

"May the stars never fail for you," she whispered; "may the lands I shall not behold be ever more blessed and fair for your abiding there. May the light of Elbereth shine ever upon you." She knelt before him. "Bless me at the last, my father."

He laid his hand on her brow, that shone as with stars; then she rose and, hand in hand, without any word, they returned to Edoras. And that night in the great hall, she sat with her maidens beside Elrond and the King Elessar; and her songs were the most joyous, and of all she was the most fair.

HAIKU PORTRAITS

DON STUDEBAKER
TED JOHNSTONE
and others

Moon-silver beauty;
Soft song bringing ancient tears
To the elven-lords.
- - - Luthien Tinuviel

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ETHICAL PATTERNS IN

The Lord of the Rings

by

PATRICIA
MEYER
SPACKS

As a writer of fiction, J.R.R. Tolkien has often been thought of in connection with the excursions of C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams into the "serious" supernatural. Both Williams and Lewis, formerly fellow members with Tolkien of an Oxford discussion group in which portions of their fiction were read aloud for criticism, have received recent critical attention in this country as Christian "myth-makers." Tolkien, however, has been neglected ever since Edmund Wilson, in a review in The Nation (April 14, 1956), informed us that he was not to be taken seriously.¹

Yet in a fuller sense than Lewis or Williams, Tolkien is a great modern myth-maker. In The Lord of the Rings, his epic trilogy (composed of The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, The Return of the King), he virtually created a new genre: one possessing obvious affinities with folk epic and mythology, but with no true literary counterpart. The novels of Williams and Lewis gain from their Christian telology an effect of cosmic scope and depth; the novels of Tolkien possess, in addition to enormous physical scope, a mythic structure of yet more subtle complexity.

In "Oo, Those Awful Orcs!", the Nation review mentioned above, Wilson remarked (p. 313) of Tolkien's trilogy: "The hero has no serious temptations, is lured by no insidious enchantments, perplexed by few problems. What we get is a simple confrontation — in more or less the traditional terms of British melodrama — of the Forces of Evil with the Forces of Good." But the confrontation of the Forces of Evil with the Forces of Good is, after all, the basic theme also of tragedy, epic, and myth. Tolkien's presentation of this theme is by no means so simple as Wilson suggests. Indeed, as I hope to show, the force and complexity of its moral and theological scheme provides the fundamental power of The Lord of the Rings.

For this scheme, there are no explicit supernatural sanctions: The Lord of the Rings is by no means a Christian work. An anonymous early review in the Times Literary Supplement (Nov. 25, 1955) remarked on the fact that throughout the trilogy no character, good or bad, performs an act of worship. Although supernatural powers abound, no deity is evident on the side of the good or of the evil. A clear ethos rules the virtuous, but its derivation is unclear.

The principles of that ethos are simple enough; they are embodied primarily in the Hobbit-heroes, members of a Tolkien-created race essentially human in characteristics, gnome-like in appearance. The first heroic representative of the Hobbits is Bilbo Baggins, filler of the title role in The Hobbit, a children's book which was an offshoot along the way of Tolkien's trilogy. Its events immediately antedate those of The Lord of the Rings; its hero closely resembles Frodo Baggins, Bilbo's nephew, who is the central character of the trilogy. Both Hobbits possess the same morality, share the same virtues. They are unfailingly loyal, to companions and to principles. They are cheerful in the face of adversity, persistent to the point of stubbornness in pursuit of a goal, deeply honest, humble in their devotion to those they consider greater than they. And as their most vital attributes they possess "naked will and courage."

The quotation is from Tolkien in reference to quite different heroes, and its context is significant. In 1936, Tolkien published one of the most important pieces of Beowulf-criticism of the past several decades. Entitled "Beowulf:

The Monsters and the Critics" (Proc. Brit. Acad., XXII, 245-295), it was essentially a defense of the Anglo-Saxon poem's structural dependence on encounters with non-human monsters, Grendel, his dam, and the dragon. The defense could stand equally well for Tolkien's own fiction, which, even in the comparatively slight children's book, Farmen Giles of Ham, centers characteristically on encounters between human beings -- or such symbolic representatives of humanity as the Hobbits -- and inhuman monsters of various sorts. In connection with Beowulf, Tolkien points out the difference between the Christian imagination and the northern mythological imagination. The archetypal Christian fable, he observes, centers on the battle between the soul and its adversaries. (This, of course, is the battle which preoccupies Williams and Lewis.) In this struggle, the Christian is finally triumphant, in the after-life if not on earth. But northern mythology takes a darker view. Its characteristic struggle between man and monster must end ultimately, within Time, in man's defeat. Yet man continues to struggle; his weapons are the Hobbit-weapons: naked will and courage.

These are, indeed, the basic virtues of most epic heroes. Their opposites are apparent in Tolkien's representatives of evil, who are characteristically disloyal, whose courage depends on numbers, whose wills are enslaved. The conflict between good and evil appears, in this trilogy, to be largely a contest between representatives of opposed ethical systems.

In addition to their differences of conduct, the opposed forces differ in their relation to nature. Goodness is in part equated with understanding of nature, closeness to the natural world. The Rangers, who turn out to be among the most important forces on the side of Good in The Lord of the Rings, understand the languages of beasts and birds. Tom Bombadil, who rescues the Hobbits from evil in the forest, whose natural power for good is so great that he can see the wearer of the Ring which makes men invisible to all other eyes and he does not become invisible himself when wearing it, is in the most intimate communion with natural forces; he has the power of "the earth itself."² The power of the noble Elves manifests itself partly in giving to Frodo a new awareness of trees: "it was the delight of the living tree itself" (FR, 366). The most potent force in the destruction of the realm of Saruman, a corrupted sorcerer, is provided by the Ents, guardians of the forest so closely involved with its life that their form is that of giant trees. The progress toward the heart of evil, toward the Crack of Doom into which, in the trilogy's central fable, the Ring-Bearer must throw his Ring of Power, is a progress from natural fertility to the desolation of nature. The Enemy's territory, even its outskirts, is physically as well as morally a Wasteland; the implication is strong that the barrenness of nature here is a direct result of the operations of evil. "We see that Sauron can torture the very hills" (FR, 279). And, later, "What pestilence or war or evil deed of the Enemy had so blasted all that region even Aragorn could not tell" (FR, 396).

Moreover, it is characteristic of the Enemy to depend upon machinery rather than natural forces. Saruman's city has smithies, furnaces, iron wheels revolving endlessly, hammers thudding, steam rising; Treebeard, the great Ent, describes Saruman as having "a mind of metal and wheels" (TT, 76). The Dark Tower, which looms above the Crack of Doom and is the very heart of Sauron's power, is described as "that vast fortress, armoury, prison, furnace of great power" (TT, 161) -- the reversal of the natural.

It is a corollary of their different relations to nature that the representatives of Good tend to be vegetarian, to rely on the simplest of food -- bread and honey, mushrooms, compressed grain cakes -- whereas the evil powers characteristically eat corrupt flesh, drink intoxicating beverages compounded of dreadful, nameless ingredients.

On this level, then, the difference between good and evil seems rather simple. The good possess all the Boy Scout virtues; the evil are treacherous and cowardly. The good love nature, the evil destroy it. The good eat good food, the evil eat bad food. If this were all, one might almost stand with Wilson in his condemnation of Tolkien's trilogy for impotence of imagination, superficiality of conception.

But the simplicity of this ethical system is redeemed by the philosophic complexity of its context: simplicity does not equal shallowness. The pagan ethos which that of The Lord of the Rings most closely resembles is redeemed from superficiality by the magnitude of the opposition it faces. The Anglo-Saxon epic hero operates under the shadow of fate; his struggle is doomed to final failure — the dragon at last, in some encounter, will win. His courage and will are opposed alone to all the dark forces of the universe; they represent his triumphant assertion of himself as man, his insistence on human importance despite human weakness. Even the classic hero, Achilles or Odysseus, operates always in the face of motiveless malignance. His gods are arbitrary and unpredictable; they do not necessarily reward courage and loyalty. Chance and fate are almost equivalent — for the classic hero as for Beowulf.

Frodo's steadfast adherence to virtue, too, achieves importance first of all in being maintained in the face of maximum adversity, unwaveringly upheld even against the most dreadful supernatural opposition — the pursuit, for example, of the faceless Black Riders, the Ringwraiths, who are faded into physical nothingness by their devotion to evil, possessed of enormous spiritual power for evil, the bringers of unearthly cold, the cold of the deepest reaches of Dante's Hell. But Frodo's virtue is even more significant in that it operates in a context of total free will: he is not the creature of chance and fate in the same way as Beowulf.

For a theological scheme is implied though not directly stated in The Lord of the Rings, and it is of primary importance to the form and meaning of the work. The fact of freedom of the will entails a necessarily structured universe, a universe like the Christian one in that only through submission to the Good can true freedom be obtained — willing acceptance of evil involves necessary loss of freedom; a universe like the Christian one, further, in that it includes the possibility of a sort of Grace.

The repeated emphasis on the importance of free will and on Fate which is not chance is one aspect in which The Lord of the Rings differs from its far simpler predecessor, The Hobbit. In The Hobbit, freedom of the will is not an issue, and there is only one faint suggestion of pattern in the universe. That appears on the final page, after Bilbo is safely returned from his adventures, the dragon killed, although not by his hand. Gandalf, the good sorcerer, says to him then: "Surely you don't disbelieve the prophecies, because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins, and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all!" (315).

In The Lord of the Rings, on the other hand, references to these two themes — freedom of will and order in the universe, in the operations of fate — are so strongly recurrent that it is remarkable that they have not been noted before in discussions of the work. Early in The Fellowship of the Ring, after Gandalf has told Frodo the dreadful nature of his Ring (it partakes of too much power, and brings about the "fading" of its wearer into final submission to evil), the wizard comments that always after defeat the Shadow takes another shape and grows again. "I wish it need not have happened in my time," says Frodo. "'So do I,' said Gandalf, 'and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do

with the time that is given us" (FR, 60). The necessity for free decision is thus early affirmed; it is to become a central issue of the trilogy. In the same chapter, a few pages later, comes the first hint of plan in the universe. Gandalf has just finished the narrative of the Ring; he has been speaking of the Ring's attempt to get back to its master, an attempt foiled by Bilbo's picking it up. But there is no chance in Bilbo's apparently fortuitous discovery. As Gandalf explains, "there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case you also were meant to have it" (FR, 65). The italics are Tolkien's — and his point is worth emphasizing.

When Gandalf speaks of Gollum, the slinking creature from whom Bilbo first obtained the Ring, Frodo wonders why Bilbo did not kill him at once. Gandalf is even more emphatic in his reply: he praises Bilbo for his pity, and explains that it is because he began his ownership of the Ring with an act of mercy that he was able to escape its power at last. He explains that Gollum "is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many — yours not least" (FR, 69). An act of virtue has become a part of Fate; by Fate — for lack of a better word — Frodo has been chosen: "I am not made for perilous quests," he cries, and Gandalf replies, "You have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have" (FR, 70).

The theme of responsibility, so closely linked with free will, is also reiterated — by the Elves, who know that their meeting with Frodo is more than chance; by Strider, who insists that even an innkeeper must do what little he can against the Shadow in the East, who feels strongly his own responsibility to protect the simple folk; by the Lady Galadriel, who offers Frodo the chance to look into a magic mirror and observes solemnly, "For the fate of Lothlorien you are not answerable, but only for the doing of your own task" (FR, 380). Frodo himself comes to realize that he must not refuse the burden that is laid on him; this realization is his weapon against the temptations of Boromir, the member of his company who would steal the Ring for his own purposes. This is also, of course, what sustains him in his dreadful journey across the Land of Mordor toward the Crack of Doom; and what sustains his hobbit companion, Sam, when he thinks Frodo killed and knows he must go on. The responsibility involved here, and throughout the epic, is not simply to one's individual integrity; it is cosmic responsibility, justified by the existence of some vast, unnamed power for good. Gandalf's most sweeping statement of the nature of responsibility, although it makes no reference to any such power, strongly implies the existence of an ordering force in the universe: "Other evils there are that may come; for Sauron is himself but a servant or emissary. Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule" (RK, 155).

Both Gandalf and Aragorn, the great King, speak repeatedly of purpose in the operations of apparent chance; the source of that purpose is never identified. The existence of one ordering power in the universe, however, is explicitly indicated in the appendices which recount the history of all the races involved in the Quest for Ring's destruction. There we find repeated mentions of "the Valar, the Guardians of the World" (e.g., RK 314, 315, 316, 317). In a moment of cosmic crisis, we are told, "the Valar laid down their Guardianship and called upon the One, and the world was changed" (RK, 317). Again, death is referred to as "the gift of the One to Men" (RK, 343). This sort of reference to "the One" is all we have as precise evidence that Tolkien's universe has a Ruler, but it is sufficient, when combined with the repeated men-

tions of cosmic purpose, of beings "sent" for some particular mission. If the trilogy, as has been said, deals with a "pre-religious" age, an age in which worship was confined to adherence to a special ethos, the fact remains that its author includes in it all the necessary materials for religion.

So it is that the Fate which governs all here is not arbitrary. Indeed, as has been hinted already in relation to Bilbo's act of mercy, it is to some extent determined by individual acts of will. "Now we have chosen," says the Lady Galadriel, "and the tides of fate are flowing" (FR,381). In the Council of Elrond, in which the final decision that the Ring must be destroyed is taken, Elrond says, "That is the purpose for which you are called hither. Called, I say, though I have not called you to me, strangers from distant lands. You have come and are here met, by chance as it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril of the world" (FR,255). The theme is constant throughout the trilogy: over and over we find similar statements denying the existence of mere chance, insisting on some plan governing the activities of all. Tom Bombadil implies that his appearance for the rescue of the hobbits was no accident; Galadriel tells the company that their paths are laid out, although not apparent to them; Frodo feels that a way will be found for him to reach the Dark Tower because such is his "doom"; he speaks to Collum of a fate moving them both. And, although all participants in the Quest realize that the Shadow repeatedly rises again, far more forceful is the affirmation made by Frodo -- "in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach" (RK,199).

The universe of Tolkien, then, unlike that of the Anglo-Saxons, is ultimately affirmative. Within the vast affirmative context, however, there are enormous possibilities for immediate evil: the individual exists in a realm where choice is always necessary. The freedom of that choice, for the virtuous, is of paramount importance. "I count you blessed, Gimli son of Gloin," says Legolas the Elf to a dwarf member of the Ring-Bearer's company: "for your loss you suffer of your own free will, and you might have chosen otherwise" (FR,395). When Aragorn meets the Riders of Rohan, their leader asks him what doom he brings out of the north. "The doom of choice," replies Aragorn (TT, 36): all men must now choose good or evil. Sam, Frodo's closest companion, realizes how many opportunities they have had of turning back, and understands that heroism, in legend and in fact, consists of making repeatedly and freely the choice of good (TT, 321). In his moment of crisis, he knows that destiny has put him in this dilemma, and that his most important responsibility is to make up his own mind (TT, 341).

In this world as in the Christian one, the result of repeated choices of good is the spiritual growth of the chooser. Frodo's stature increases markedly in the course of his adventures, and the increase is in the specifically Christian virtues. When Gandalf first tells him of Collum, he feels no pity, and rejects the pity that Bilbo has felt. But by the time he has his own first encounter with the creature, he himself makes the choice of pity and mercy: he does not kill Collum when he has him in his power. When they reach the depths of Mordor, Sam watches while Frodo sleeps. He notes in Frodo's face that a light seems to be shining within. "Now the light was even clearer and stronger than when he first noticed it a few months earlier⁷. Frodo's face was peaceful, the marks of fear and care had left it; but it looked old, old and beautiful, as if the chiseling of the shaping years was now revealed in many fine lines that had before been hidden, though the identity of the face was not changed" (TT,260). Finally, Frodo has mercy even on Saruman, who has been far more definitely than Collum an active agent of evil, an agent who, indeed, has just tried to murder Frodo. Saruman looks at him with "mingled wonder and respect and hatred. 'You have grown, Halfling,' he said. 'You have grown very much. You are wise...'" (RK,299). And, at the very end, it is Frodo who as-

serts the necessity and value of sacrifice. "When things are in danger," he says to Sam, "Someone has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them" (RK, 309). So he gives up his beloved Shire, and goes unto the unknown West, to a land equivalent to Arthur's Avalon. He has become heroic in mind as well as in action; heroic in mind as a direct result of his action.

The course of the evil beings is equally well-defined. By using their freedom to choose evil, the wicked destroy freedom: emphasis is consistently upon the essential slavery of the servants of Sauron, who can no longer accept freedom when it is offered them. Pride and self-will, here as in so many other great works, are often the sources of evil. Saruman has been corrupted through pride; even the trees of the forest which attempt to capture the Hobbits are said to have become evil by the growth of pride in them. Denethor, the Steward of the King, kills himself as a direct result of pride and that other great Christian sin, despair. It is pride that leads Boromir to want the Ring — pride, indeed, that lures all toward the Ring: Sam is able to resist its pull solely because of his humility, the fact that he is content with his own garden (RK, 177).

Saruman and Gollum are the main case histories here of the gradual destructive effect of willing submission to evil wills, but Gandalf makes it clear that the result of such submission must always be the same, even for one predominantly virtuous at the outset. Even Bilbo began his ownership of the Ring with a lie intended to make his claim on it more secure. If a mortal often uses the Ring, says Gandalf, he "fades: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the dark power that rules the Rings. Yes, sooner or later -- later, if he is strong or well-meaning to begin with, but neither strength nor good purpose will last -- sooner or later the dark power will devour him" (FR, 56). The Ring, of course, represents power; and Frodo the Hobbit is no more capable than Tamburlaine the Great of controlling unlimited power without himself being destructively controlled by it. Not even Gandalf is capable of wielding such force. Frodo offers him the Ring because he is already "wise and powerful," but he rejects it vehemently. "Do not tempt me! For I do not wish to become like the Dark Lord himself. Yet the way of the Ring to my heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good. Do not tempt me! I dare not take it, not even to keep it safe, unused. The wish to wield it would be too great for my strength.... With that power I should have power too great and terrible. And over me the Ring would gain a power still greater and more deadly" (FR, 70-71).

Indeed, Saruman began from precisely the position of Gandalf, and even without possession of the Ring, pride and the lust for power destroy him. In one of the most dramatic scenes of the trilogy, Gandalf confronts Saruman in his ruined stronghold and offers him the choice of complete freedom -- "free from bond, of chain or command: to go where you will, even, even to Mordor, Saruman, if you desire" (TT, 188) -- or continued slavery to Sauron. But the sorcerer has become too corrupted to retain the ability to choose; he is forced by the decay of his own will to remain in a slavery resulting from free choice made long before.

So too with Gollum, a far more pitiable creature, essentially amoral, but degraded to the uses of evil: amorality is not really possible in Tolkien's scheme. Gandalf tells the story of his slow destruction through possession of the Ring: "All the 'great secrets' under the mountains had turned out to be just empty night: there was nothing more to find out, nothing worth doing, only nasty furtive eating and resentful remembering. He was altogether wretched. He hated the dark, and he hated light more: he hated everything, and the Ring most of all.... He hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter" (FR, 64; italics mine). As Frodo's Quest nears its end, Faramir advises him against trusting --

as he is -- to Collum's leadership. Faramir is convinced that Collum is wicked; Frodo maintains that the creature is not altogether wicked. "Not wholly, perhaps," agrees Faramir, "but malice eats it like a canker, and the evil is growing" (TT,301). And this is apt: the progress of evil in an individual cannot be reversed without a specific, conscious act of will, an act that Collum, like the other characters devoted to evil, is quite incapable of performing.

Yet this same Collum, ever more corrupted by lust for the Ring, his "Precious," becomes finally the instrument of Grace for Frodo in one of the most perplexing episodes of The Lord of the Rings. At the very end of his Quest, having struggled against hideous adversity to reach the Crack of Doom -- at the very end, Frodo "changes his mind." "'I have come,' he said, 'But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!'" (RK,223). He still uses the language of free will -- "I do not choose" -- but the speech and the act which accompanies it (he puts on the Ring) represent rather a crucial failure of will. For "he was come to the heart of the realm of Sauron and the forges of his ancient might, greatest in Middle-Earth; all other powers were here subdued" (RK,222; italics mine). Strong as it is, Frodo's will here succumbs.

Yet still he is saved -- not by an act of will, but by an act of Fate. Collum, whose corruption is complete at this moment, leaps on Frodo, bites off the finger which wears the Ring, waves it aloft in triumph, and -- falls into the Crack of Doom with it: the Quest is thus accomplished.

Dramatically, this final twist is quite unnecessary. It prolongs the suspense by barely a page; the dilemma raised by Frodo's failure is immediately resolved. Thematically, however, it is essential. In the presentation of this event, the idea of free will intimately involved with fate receives its most forceful statement. The same idea has been suggested before; now, however, it becomes inescapable. Free choice of good by the individual involves his participation in a broad pattern of Good; individual acts become a part of Fate. Frodo has repeatedly chosen to behave mercifully toward Collum, even in the face of treachery on the other's part. His merciful acts determine his fate and, because he has by his acceptance of his mission come to hold a symbolic position, they determine also the fate of the world he inhabits. Collum, on the other hand, though he is comparatively weak in evil, has become the symbolic representative of evil. His original acceptance of evil has made him will-less; it is quite appropriate that at the last he should be merely an instrument of that essentially benevolent fate through which, as Sam realizes, "his master had been saved; he was himself again, he was free" (RK,225) -- free at the cost of physical maiming, the emblem of his human (or Hobbit) weakness -- like Lewis's hero, Ransom, who is in Perelandra successful in physical struggle with the Devil, but emerges from it with an unhealable wound in the heel.

So, although The Lord of the Rings is by no means allegorical, it gains much of its force from its symbolic concentration on the most basic human concerns: the problems of man's relation to his universe. The fact that Tolkien's cosmos seems at first totally alien to our own might mislead us into thinking that his trilogy has no more right than ordinary science fiction to be considered as serious literature, that it is really the "juvenile trash" that Wilson thinks it. Yet Tolkien removes his fiction from the realm of "real life" only to be enabled to talk more forcefully about reality. A serious reading of The Lord of the Rings must produce the realization that its issues are profoundly relevant to human problems. To be sure, Tolkien's method of communicating that relevance differs markedly from that of Lewis and Williams, who write always with the clear and specific purpose of Christian apologetics. If they create weird and alien worlds, worlds of science fiction, of the ghost

story, it is with the basic intent of demonstrating the engulfing power of Christianity. Their primary referents are Christian and (especially in Lewis) classic myth, and didacticism lurks always behind their tales: the ultimate success of That Hideous Strength or All Hallows' Eve would be the conversion of its readers.

Tolkien, on the other hand, has no such ax to grind -- and this fact itself aids in the communication of true mythic power in his work. Like true myth, his trilogy bears no specific message, despite its heavy overtones of moral significance. It has mythic scope, mythic imagination; it projects a quality of originality fused with timelessness. If it fails at all as myth, its weakness lies at the opposite pole from that of Lewis and Williams, who suffer a bit from the comparative simplicity and the constancy of their didactic purpose. Tolkien tends rather to over-complicate: his account of Frodo's adventures is perhaps too heavily decorated to survive as genuine literary myth. Yet Tolkien's achievement is no small one: his work must be considered relevant, despite the fact that it is far removed from the main tradition of twentieth-century literature. Gigantic in effect, unique in conception, his trilogy must assume, it seems, a central position in the canon of serious supernatural literature.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

FOOTNOTES

1. One notable reply to Wilson is Douglass Parker's "Hwaet We Holbytla..." (Hudson Review 9, Winter 1956-7, pp.598-609), which brilliantly refutes Wilson's attack and makes a strong defense of the trilogy. Mr. Parker is largely, though by no means entirely, concerned with the success of The Lord of the Rings as fantasy. He reads the trilogy as being most essentially concerned not with the struggle of Good against Evil, but with an account of "the end of an age," an account which defines the human condition perceived in basically pagan terms. Although I agree enthusiastically with Mr. Parker on most counts, I must quarrel with his easy rejection of free will as a theme of Tolkien's ("Free will has not, as some critics think, been restored [as a result of the Ring's destruction]; it never existed in the first place, nor did determinism reside in the Ring"; p.604). Surely the situation, for Tolkien as for the Beowulf-poet, is more complicated: the universe is one which paradoxically combines qualified determinism with qualified free will.
2. J. R. R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring (New York: Houghton Mifflin, n.d.), p.279; hereafter referred to as FR. The other volumes of the trilogy are The Two Towers (New York: Houghton Mifflin, n.d.), referred to as TT; and The Return of the King (RK) (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1956). The edition of The Hobbit referred to is published by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1956.

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THE WATCHER IN THE WATER AND OTHERS

by DAINIS BISENIEKS

The order of creation of Middle-Earth must remain beyond the knowledge of even the greatest lore-masters of mortal kind. Much that might have been known has been lost; some few of the elder writings are yet promised to the students of lore in our day. Of the beginning of the Dwarves, of Morgoth and his downfall, and of other great events of the Elder Days, the Silmarillion will tell us. But of some few of the dark things that came into the tale of the War of the Ring, men of our era have learned secrets which only the Wise of that far-off time had the strength to bear. The few hints now made public of what these men found are enough to persuade us that their dark knowledge must be utterly suppressed. Words of utter despair are written in their books, and only men who unknowingly seek their own doom could feel any wish to study those pages. And even when they do, they are ensnared by the Lie behind the accounts of horrors that are real enough — the Great Lie of the Enemy, who says there is no truth beyond this, there is no greater Power, there is no Hope.

The Watcher in the Water at the Hollin Gate of Moria was one of these dark things, yet not by far the most terrible. Gandalf said of it, "Something has crept, or has been driven out of dark waters under the mountains. There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world" (FR, 323). Yet, though it had seized on the Ring-bearer first, it was not a creature of Sauron, nor was it bound to do his bidding. "The Orcs," we are told (RK, 409), "were first bred by the Dark Power of the North in the Elder Days," at which time Sauron was yet a servant. The creatures of the nethermost caverns must have bred there from Earth's beginnings and grown in their own peculiar malice, which knows nothing of the craving for mastery. The Balrog must have disturbed this one in its obscene doings and set it to its evil work in the world outside. I will guess that it did not perish when Sauron was thrown down, but was freed of alien compulsion and crept back into the deeps, where horrors such as itself continue to spawn and wax strong, even unto our day.

What of the Balrog? "...a Balrog of Morgoth, of all elf-banes the most deadly, save the One who sits in the Dark Tower" (FR, 371). It survived the overthrow of Morgoth, but in Sauron alone was the lust for power incarnate. The Balrog did not even walk abroad in the service of Sauron, but dwelt in Moria for a thousand years after it appeared in Moria and was the bane of Durin VI. Only the conflicts of the final years of the Third Age stirred it to action again. Flame of Udun, Gandalf called it. "Go back to the Shadow!" he said. But was it then a servant of the Shadow as the Ringwraiths were? Hardly in that way, for it had a power all its own. Their relationship must remain beyond mortal understanding, yet it may be guessed that They who sent the Wizards to oppose Sauron had not forgotten the Balrog, and meant him to be cast down by him who became the White Rider.

An accident of ill-luck it was that led the Nine Walkers into Moria — perhaps. Gandalf had feared it, yet he was only a servant, and a servant cannot know all ends for which he must serve. When Gandalf strove with the Balrog, he fell into those depths from which the Watcher had come.

'Deep is the abyss that is spanned by Durin's Bridge, and none has

measured it,' said Gimli.

'Yet it has a bottom, beyond light and knowledge,' said Gandalf. 'Thither I came at last, to the uttermost foundations of stone. He was with me still. His fire was quenched, but now he was a thing of slime, stronger than a strangling snake.'

'We fought far under the living earth, where time is not counted. Ever he clutched me, and ever I hewed him, till at last he fled into dark tunnels. They were not made by Durin's folk, Gimli son of Gloin. Far, far below the deepest delvings of the Dwarves, the world is gnawed by nameless things. Even Sauron knows them not. They are older than he. Now I have walked there, but I bring no report to darken the light of day. ...' (TT,105).

Yet report of them has been brought, and far worse. In the writings of H. P. Lovecraft we find accounts of the terrible fate of those who dared to delve into such lore. We must perforce believe much of what is written here, if only we do not fall into the error of believing all and thus succumbing to the Lie. Knowing Gandalf's words, we must give credence to the tales which Thomas Olney heard from the man in the Strange High House in the Mist, far above Kingsport -- where he "listened to rumours of old times and far places, and heard how the kings of Atlantis fought with the slippery blasphemies that wriggled out of rifts in the ocean's floor" (The Outsider, p.25.) And we may guess that the last of the Orcs perished in the caverns under the house with the Rats in the Walls. But dare we go further, "even unto those grinning caverns of earth's center where Nyarlathotep, the mad faceless god, howls blindly in the dark to the piping of two amorphous flute players"? If Gandalf knew of them, he wisely did not despair. For under the sun, though much must pass away, hope was renewed, and will be renewed. Only madmen pass willingly into the darkness.

One of these was the Arab, Abdul Alhazred, who lived about the year 700 of the Common Era. Of his life many strange and disturbing things were reported, and a horrible tale is told of the manner of his death. His blasphemous legacy to humanity was the book known as the Necronomicon, which has the darkest reputation of any book of our era. It has survived all attempts to suppress it, for in every century there are men who seek such lore, to their undoing. Indeed, the original arabic text has long ago perished, and so has the Greek translation. The Latin version made from the latter survives to vex the minds of men. What horrors this book holds, I do not care to inquire. Some few passages have been quoted and been more widely circulated than the book itself. One of these is a startling confirmation of what Gandalf spoke of.

"The nethermost caverns," wrote the mad Arab, "are not for the fathoming of eyes that see, for their marvels are strange and terrific. Cursed the ground where dead thoughts live new and oddly-bodied, and evil the mind that is held by no head. Wisely did Ibn Schacabao say, that happy is the tomb where no wizard hath lain, and happy the town at night whose wizards are all ashes. For it is of old rumour that the soul of the devil-bought hastes not from his charnel clay, but farts and instructs the very worm that gnaws; till out of corruption horrid life springs, and the dull scavengers of earth wax crafty to vex it and swell monstrous to plague it. Great holes secretly are digged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl." (Outsider; "The Festival" p.137.)

I can guess dimly what he speaks of, but I do not care to inquire further. There were things in Middle-Earth which could be destroyed in their

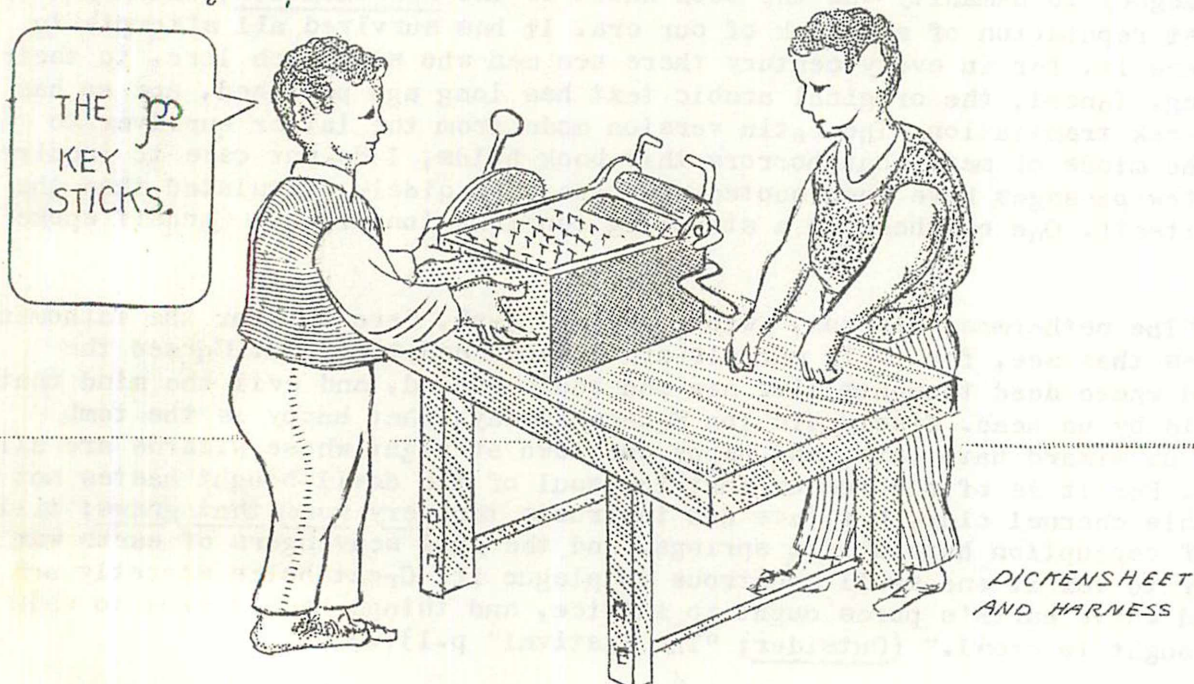
bodies and so perish; there were others which, bereft of one form, could arise and seek another. Yet the forces of Light vanquished the Darkness, and hope was restored to open life. If we choose to depart from it and seek what is beyond, and beyond that, we do not go unwarned.

"And while there are those," the mad Arab had written, "who have dared to seek glimpses beyond the void, and to accept HIM as guide, they would have been more prudent had they avoided commerce with HIM: for it is written in the Book of Thoth how terrific is the price of a single glimpse. Nor may those who pass ever return, for in the vastnesses transcending our world are shapes of darkness that seize and bind. The Affair that shamleth about in the night, the evil that defieth the Elder Sign, the Herd that stand watch at the secret portal each tomb is known to have, and that thrive on that which groweth out of the tenants thereof: — all these blacknesses are lesser than HE WHO guardeth the Gateway: HE WHO will guide the rash one beyond all the worlds into the Abyss of unnamable devourers. For HE is 'UMR AT-TAWIL, the Most Ancient One, which the scribe rendereth as THE PROLONGED OF LIFE." (The Outsider; "Through the Gate of the Silver Key" p.45)

Who would want to meddle in sorcery and worse than sorcery? Let us leave these dark things — and cultivate our gardens.

- - - Dainis Bisenieks

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No Monroe In Lothlórien!

by Arthur R. Weir, D.Sc.

Some books evoke pictures as we read them. How many of us, I wonder, have seen - clear before our mind's eye - the grim-faced Greys lined up for their last fight in King Solomon's Mines, or Edward Malone dropping his useless shotgun and using all his Rugby International's speed of foot for a desperate half-mile down the moonlit avenue, with the great carnivorous dinosaur of The Lost World thundering behind him.

But of all books it is the collections of myths, legends, and fairy tales that are, in the most literal sense, picturesque; they draw their scenes, clear in detail and vivid in colour and movement, before us as we read; and, as we re-read them for the tenth or twentieth time, our familiarity with the text leaves us able to follow the print with but a small corner of our minds, freeing all the rest of our mentality to decorate and clarify the well-loved scene to something more real than any of the dull realities of every day.

One of the greatest of all these wonder-provokers and image-painters among modern books is J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings trilogy, and I think that most of us, in reading it, have found ourselves building in our imagination such a marvellous pageant of colour, movement, action, and suspense as we had never hitherto dreamed might be evoked from us.

Given unlimited money and all the world's talent to command, how, then, would we set about turning it into the shadow reality of the silver-screen of the cinema? This, surely, should be a labour of love for many minds to work upon, each contributing its best.

First, where and how are we to picture the fertile well-farmed kindly country of Hobbiton-in-the-Shire? The Yorkshire dales? The Cheshire levels, with their high ash hedges and black-and-white cagework farmhouses? The mile wide fields of wheat or of gorgeous flowers of East Anglia and the Fen country? Or shall we follow Kipling's directions to "Lancaster County behind Philadelphia - a county of bursting fat fields, bursting fat barns and bursting fat country girls - like what you might think Heaven would be like if they farmed there"? Or, the snug, steep-sided valleys, hanging beech-woods and orchard-bounded fields of the Cotswolds?

Then, at the other end of the scenic scale, what is to portray the grim evil of the Vale of Morgul with the writh-haunted castle of Minas Morgul frowning at its end? The pitiless rocky desert of the Pass of Gorgoroth? The flaming ash-clad cliffs of Orodruin, the "Mount Doom" of the story's climax? Here, again, our choice is wide: the cliff-girt valley of grey rock and black rock with no single trace of growing green thing that was the scene of the famous Massacre of Glencoe; the endless miles of knife-edged lava clinker bristling with poison-thorned cactus of the Sonora Desert of Arizona; the iron-clad cliffs of the Sinai Desert springing vertically out of the desert sand, writhing and twisting and dancing in the heat-haze, that suddenly forms great sparkling lakes at their foot that equally suddenly shrivel and vanish; or, if we want something on the really grand scale, shall we go to where the Urumbaba Valley runs north-westwards from Lake Titicaca past the hidden Inca city of Macchu Pichu - a narrow valley

with sheer rock walls more than three-quarters of a mile high, of such terrifying appearance that even Pizarro's lion-hearted, iron-fisted soldiers crossed themselves uneasily when they first saw it, muttering to one another that this surely was the gate to Hell itself!

The castle of Minas Morgul has its own definite image in my mind - that of Schloss Thaurandt on the Moselle between Trier and Bonn, which was built in the middle of the Fourteenth Century by a genuine robber-baron of most evil repute, and which retains to this day the marked impression of a construction built with no concession to any human requirement other than sheer defensive strength. Indeed, so well was this condition fulfilled that a force that outnumbered its defenders by fifty to one besieged it for over two years - and failed to take it!

Minas Tirith, the fortified city, with its seven great towers, sets another problem. Carcassonne is, of course, the ideal medieval city-fortress, but is so generally well-known to tourists that many in an average audience would immediately recognize it, spoiling the illusion. Another magnificently picturesque city is Jeysalmir in India, but that is set in bleak sandy desert, not the fertile fields of Tolkien's royal city.

The difficulty of finding suitable locations, however, are almost nothing compared with the difficulty of casting Tolkien's characters. With my own rather limited knowledge of film-stars I can only think of two possibles: Alec Guinness as Gandalf, and Charles Laughton as Theoden, the aging King of the Rohirrim. But who can we find to portray the combination of immense physical strength and fitness, many years of hardship and disappointment and yet essential underlying youth that is the long-awaited Prince, Aragorn? Even more difficult, how are we to portray Legolas the Elf, the deadly archer, the light-footed runner, who looks like a merry boy with a jest or song always on his lips, until a chance reference shows that he has, with his own eyes, witnessed events that took place some centuries before?

Most difficult of all, what are we to do about the Elf-Queen, Galadriel? The very idea of any super-mammary American or hip-wagging Italian film star in this part must fill the loyal Tolkien follower with sick horror! But the requirements are stringent - very considerable good looks, great natural dignity, the widest range of voice at all times under perfect control, the most graceful carriage and - on top of all this - the perfect naturalness that led to Sam Gamgee's artless tribute "And, with it all, she's as merry as any country lass a-dancing with flowers in her hair!"

It would have been an ideal part for Sybil Thorndike at her best; of all living film (or stage) actresses the only one I can think of who could - if she only would - take the part is Greta Garbo. This may, perhaps, raise the eyebrows of some, but not, I think, of those who remember her, as I do, in one of her last films, in which she played the part of a Soviet emissary to a western country, fanatically Communist, touchy, humourless and suspicious. Towards the end of the story an unexpected turn of events suddenly brings home to her the completely incongruous, wildly funny side of her own solemn pretensions and gives the picture of her I still love - Greta Garbo, lying back in her chair, laughing with all the artless happiness of a schoolgirl - rocking, gasping, finally weeping with helpless laughter - and all the audience at the film joining in from sheer delight!

Or would we need a ballerina to cope with the grace and dignity of morion that the part requires? Margot Fonteyn with a fair make-up? Not Alicia Narkova - neither her "refeened" best-behaviour, accent, or her kindly unashamed London speech when at ease would fit such a part.

And, of course, Tin Pan Alley would try to introduce the latest hit tunes

in the Halls of Elrond at Imladris! Luckily we have at hand one genuine piece of elf-music in the shape of the strange haunting tune that appears in Kennedy-Frazet's "Songs of the Hebrides" under the name of "A Fairy Plaint" (music from inside a Fairy Hill). This is supposed to have been heard by a Benbecula crofter, who, going home one night, found one of the fairy hills open, with lights inside and a crowd of elven-folk singing, harp-playing, and dancing. Scared nearly out of his wits he hid behind a hillock and heard an elf harpist sing this song, which stayed in his mind - as well it might.

And now, with no financial considerations to worry about and all the world to choose from, who has some more good ideas for filming "The Lord of the Rings"?

Let's Hear them!

- - Don' Weir

[TRIODE 17, January 1960. Reprinted by permission.]

COMMENTARY ON THE ABOVE ARTICLE:

Professor J.R.R. Tolkien: I was very pleased to hear of the pleasure my book has given you. I think I agree with you in the matter of making a film out of the story. There have been some serious negotiations with regard to this, but my experience with scripts and "story-line" has warned me that only an overwhelming financial reward could possibly compensate an author for the horrors of the conversion of such a tale into film. Even when the pictorial part is very good. Fortunately, my publishers and I retain a legal hold in this matter and nothing can be done without our approval in detail.

Alan Burns: Doc Weir's article was without doubt the best in the issue. My own choice for Aragorn is Stewart Granger, and for Gollum who better than Herbert Lom? For the part of Legolas the Elf, well, why not Michael Wilding? I could go on in this vein for quite a while, but after all the film is never likely to be made, a literal cast of thousands would be required. Elf-music? I plump for "The Immortal Hour" without second thoughts.

Joe Patrizio: I enjoyed Doc' Weir's article, but then I enjoy most anything written on the Books. There was more written in this piece on possible locations than I have seen elsewhere, but I'm ~~na~~ afraid I haven't travelled enough to say much on this. I think Ted Johnstone also suggested Alec Guinness as Gandalf, and I think that he said that in his opinion no one else could play the part. Another suggestion by Johnstone was that Danny Kaye acted Legolas, and the more I think of this bit of casting the more I like it. My own idea for Galadriel would be Moira Shearer, I can't think of anyone better for the part, and certainly not those suggested by Doc' Weir. No, I don't think that Galadriel would be the most difficult to cast, personally, I can't think of anyone to take the part of Frodo. Try as I might I can't think of an actor who is even physically suitable for the part, except perhaps Charley Drake (ouch). I'm going to stop this here or I may run into another dozen or so pages, in fact I don't know how Doc' Weir restrained himself to writing just three pages.

Eric Bentcliffe, replying to Patrizio: Yes, it's a fascinating topic, and Charley Drake is a horrible thought, almost as bad

as Mickey Rooney for the part!

[COMMENTARY from TRIODE 18, May 1960. Reprinted by permission.]

HOBBITS AND HEROES

by ANTHONY CURTIS

What happens to Oxford and Cambridge professors of English when they retire? It seems that they go to live in Headington, the town at the top of the hill as you take the A.40 out of Oxford. Both C.S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien live out there within a few miles of each other, and both are still hard at work.

Tolkien, who retired from his professorship in 1959, has since been putting into order a further huge installment of "The Fellowship of the Ring," the three volumes of which have together sold 156,000 copies.

"The hobbits don't come into this," he explained, puffing at his pipe. "They of course represented the simple, rustic farming people I was brought up amongst - I just couldn't go on with that story. It would have become too grim.

"This deals with an earlier period and concerns a more rational, humanoid type of creature, and the powers of evil. The problem is to get across a whole mythology which I've invented before you get down to the stories.

"For instance, you can't expect people to believe in a flat earth any more... half-way through, the elves discover the earth is round...there's a great armada and a kind of Atlantis-theme - I've always been fascinated by the lost continent - and a lot about immortality.

"You see, both the idea of death and the thought of immortality on earth - Swift's struldbrugs - are equally intolerable. The whole thing will be dominated by three jewels, symbols of beauty rather than power... . But I mustn't give too much away."

Inspiration for these stories of dwarves, elves and hobbits came when Tolkien was in the hospital during the first world war, and he's been working away at them ever since. He has been gratified and a little taken aback by the huge public he has now collected for himself. "You know," he smiled, "there's nothing helps so much as a bad review."

From: The Sunday Telegraph, November 10th, 1963.

quoted by Jim Cawthorne

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°° THANK GODDNESS °°

Kind and patient friends, this is indeed I PALANTIR 3, successor to that #2 published in 1961. That it appears even now is somewhat of a miracle, and the publisher would be hard-put to guarantee the 4th issue in the next three years.

Lack of material is the primary problem. The featured writing in this issue, "The Parting of Arwen," was not received until January of 1963. Its authoress sent it in, saying she had been greatly influenced by Marion Zimmer Bradley's "Jewel of Arwen" in the second issue. With this, a few illustrations coaxed from an extremely busy and beleaguered Bjo Trimble, and the Critique article from the "files," we almost had enough for an issue by the middle of 1963 -- but not quite. The Bisenieks article was found in some other "files," and a few letters were written asking for reprint permission on several articles by Doc Weir from British fanzines. Terry Jeeves kindly gave permission to reprint "No Monroe in Lothlorien," but in several months no other word has been received. I am unwilling to wait longer, and this small issue is the result. I hope you enjoy it.

As for future issues, they are still possible. I had decided to give up I PALANTIR after this issue, turning it over to Ted Johnstone. But it has become more and more evident that he has even less time than I, and communication has decreased in the past few years, to the point where I don't think Ted even knows what's in this issue. Therefore, I shall continue to publish I PALANTIR when -- and if -- there is material to publish. A few items could still be reprinted -- another Weir article, a long MZB article originally published in FAPA, the series of articles by Ted Johnstone in PSI-PHI regarding a possible filming of The Lord of the Rings. Otherwise, there is nothing in the files for another issue. I hope that some of you can correct this situation.

The Second Annual meeting of the Fellowship was held at the Seattle World Science Fiction Convention in September 1961. Nothing of import was heard, and there have been no meetings at the two succeeding conventions.

The Award for the best Tolkien artwork at the Seattle convention was not awarded, because of lack of entries in the competition. The award, a cross-stitch sampler of the "Tall ships and tall kings..." motif, done by Dean W. Dickensheet, was held over to the 1962 Chicago convention, where it was won by Jim Cawthorne of England for his drawing "Field of Pelennor." The third Fellowship award, a trophy featuring a figurine of an Orc -- one of the figurines which won the first award for Sidney Lanier in 1960 -- was not awarded at the 1963 Washington DC convention, once more because of a lack of entries. It will be held over for the the Oakland convention this year. Many thanks are due to Bjo Trimble, owner of the set of figurines, for donating the Orc. Let's hope there are more entries this time.

---- Bruce Pelz, publisher

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