

ISSUE 34

# Raven & GOLDEN

Following once again an obsession with things hirsute, which means that if I detect something hairy on my pillow somewhat after 2 a.m. I don't know whether it's Andrew or the cat (both are equally welcome), I am going to inspect Tolkien's distribution of dark and golden hair amongst his Elves (and by extension, his Men).

Let's lay ground rules: fairies are blonde - we all grew up knowing that. Heroines, fays and goddesses right across European folklore from saga to Cinderella have, with a few exceptions, an overwhelming propensity to bloneness. This is only a short article; I'm not going to dig out footnotes. Confirm or deny me from your own experience.

Tolkien is no exception. Check out the odd moments when in one of his tales an elf flashes across the screen for a moment: Thranduil in the woods in "The Hobbit", Haldir taking his leave in Lorien, Nimrodel dancing, the elven-knights in "Errantry" - some trivial examples, some more serious, but all establish a baseline. Unless otherwise labelled, your faery has golden hair.

Yet word of mouth authority among Tolkien fans asserts that elves, on the contrary, are dark. The authority for this is the short passage in Appendix F of the three-volume "Lord of the Rings", almost the last passage in the book, which says of "the Eldar... their locks were dark ... save in the golden house of Finrod". If you actually check back over all the Eldar (this definition should include Sindar, Noldor and Vanyar) this does not fit; it creaks a bit if you only consider the Sindar and the Noldor (Thranduil is blonde, Glorfindel is blonde and we keep getting grey ones like Celeborn and Eärwen); there was some inbreeding between the Vanyar and the Noldor; besides, it is Finarfin and his descendants, of whom Finrod is only one, who were specifically golden-haired. The definition, in fact, fits the children of Finwë quite well - never mind all the rest. The information in the book is either garbled or, more likely, in a half-developed form.

Consider a different point: there are few 'baddie' elves, or ones who commit serious indiscretions, but those who do, e.g. Fëanor, Eöl, Maeglin, possibly most of Fëanor's sons, and to a lesser extent Aredhel and Míriel, are all dark.

Something of the same - a brooding fieryness of spirit, not actually bad, but slightly doomed - appears in Fingolfin and his son Turgon (who turns his friend away from his borders before repenting), and also in Erendis ("The Mariner's Wife"), Morwen and Túrin.

The point I am trying to make is that, take an elf, any elf, an elvish image without a special storyline, and it comes out blonde; introduce a troublemaker, and it tends to come out black. Does this correspond with our experience of Tolkien?

The answer is a resounding NO, because of one factor, the arch-factor, the House of Lúthien. Lúthien is dark, Elrond and Elros are dark, Arwen Evenstar, Elladan and Elrohir are dark. There are fair ones in the chain, possibly, but they are bit-part players by comparison. Of course, the more significant the characters, the more significant their physical appearance to writer and reader. There can hardly be a more significant figure than Lúthien Tinúviel.

The opposition that I am trying to pin down is a subtle one, but seems to be utterly consistent, at least among major characters. The dark ones are quick to react, deep in their passions, strong-willed, tenacious in good or ill, brooding, even domineering, sometimes with a kind of elegiac sadness. They tend to be quick to start a fight. The gold ones by comparison have a more ethereal, gentler, less aggressive, quality; while being no less swift to action, tenacious and persistent when the moment calls, they wait for that moment, rather than riding out to seek it.

The oppositions could be picked out in Tuor, with his calm persistence, and Túrin, with his inner raging; Idril, who evacuates her people under siege, and Lúthien, who leaves home to go questing with a mortal; Galadriel, who moves in with Melian (who is almost her mother-in-law), and Aredhel, who moves out on her family and falls in with the wrong kind of people; Turgon, who sets up a fortress which most are forbidden to enter, and Finrod, who adopts men and makes friends with dwarves; Erendis, who acts to reject her husband, while Aldarion merely neglects his wife; where the oppositions seem turned inside-out, they are still consistent: Elrond stays home and administrates while Glorfindel rides out and tangles with Ringwraiths; Aragorn remains hidden under a dark hood while the Rohirrim ride round him waving spears. It is not the charger or the spears which define the dark or the golden, but a certain simplicity or unity of outlook for the latter, while the brooding on life's uncertainties tends to be left to the former.

Doubtless there are exceptions. Galadriel may be one, but she has changed character too many times to pronounce on. Just for the record, I feel that Celeborn and Thingol belong with the dark ones.

Was this intrusion of dark onto the perfect blonditude of myth and legend accident or design? I would say that Tolkien's identification of Lúthien with his wife was an important reason for it, and that without the [1] effect which she had on his early writing, we probably would still

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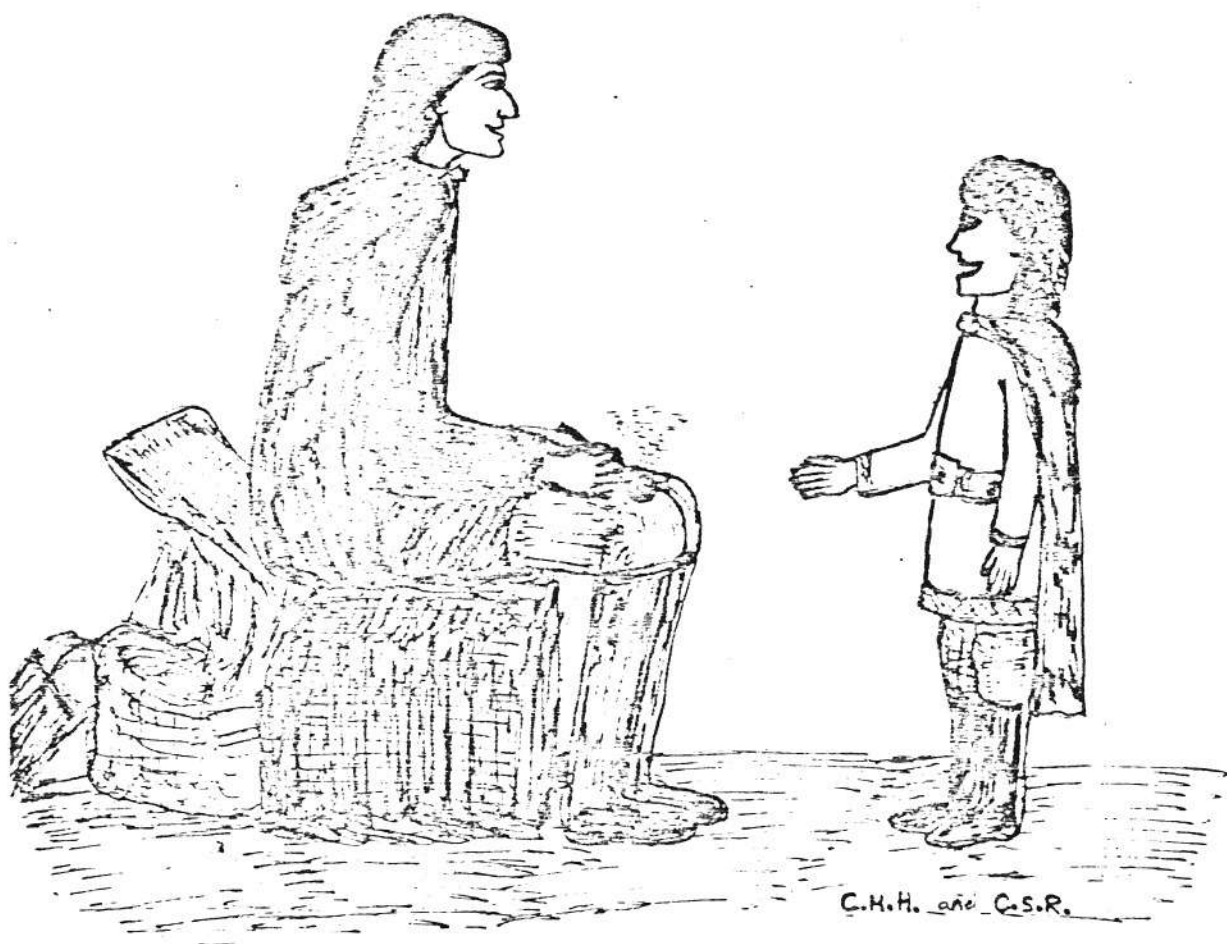
[1] A line or two was lost from the file here. Unfortunately a certain person, who shall remain nameless, lost the original of the article, and owing to the shortage of time we could not ask Helen to tell us. I have therefore interpolated words that seem reasonable. I apologize to Helen if I have distorted or omitted part of her meaning. - JCB

have a Red Book, and a Book of Lost Tales, but in a somewhat different form. It would lack that acute personal awareness that legend could be shaped by very personal doubts, hopes and fears, and by the irreconcilable credibility gaps that exist between one person (mortal or immortal) and another.

HELEN ARMSTRONG

"Excuse me, are you Rangers?"

"No Pal, we're Celtic!"



# The Geology of the Shire

References to the precise nature of rock types are rare in "Lord of the Rings". I have tried in this article to put together what evidence there is to produce a coherent picture of the geology of the Shire and the surrounding regions.

The existence of several rows of hills in this area ( Tower Hills, Far White and Barrow Downs, Weather Hills and Hills of Evendim ) all parallel to the Blue Mountains (i.e running North-South ) indicates that the hills were produced by ripples of the orogenic activity which formed the mountains. The structure I propose for the area therefore contains gentle folds with N-S axes, unconformably overlain by limestone.

The topography of the Shire was produced by a fairly recent period of extensive glaciation, followed by river erosion to give the present land surface. The Hill in Hobbiton is formed from fluvio-glacial sands and gravels deposited as the glaciers melted, and later worked by Saruman in the Scouring of the Shire. It is likely that there were other similar deposits in the area; the sand-pit in which the Ruffians were buried after the Battle of Bywater may be the same as the hill, or it may be a separate deposit nearby.

Extensive alluvial muds and clays are present in the Brandywine valley; the name means "golden-brown," and presumably refers to the colour of the water, which must therefore have carried much sediment, which would have been deposited as the river flowed slowly through the relatively flat Shire, and on southwards towards the sea. These deposits formed the famous mushroom and turnip fields of the Marish. The two villages in this area, Stock and Rushey, must have been built on 'islands' of harder rock, which I have shown as outliers of the sandstone which underlies much of Buckland and the Old Forest.

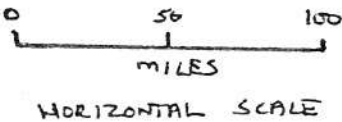
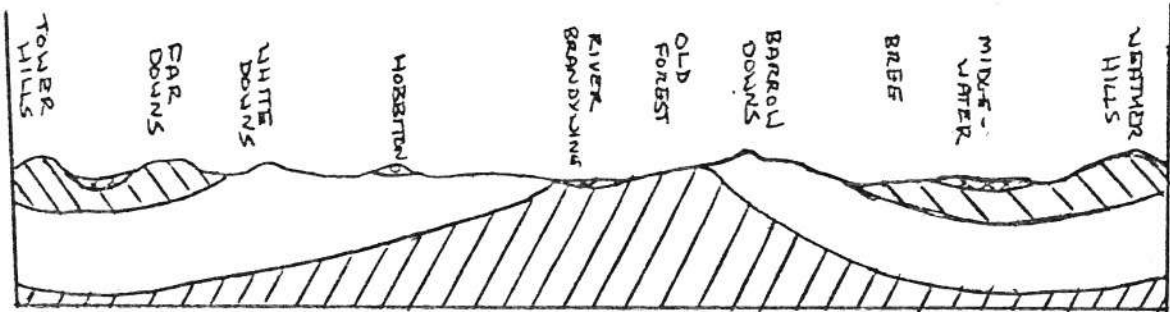
The majority of the Shire is chalk; place names like Whitfurrows and Whitwell refer to the colour of the soil, while the White Downs must have been formed of chalk.

Beyond the White Downs lie the Far Downs and Tower Hills. Any rocks assigned to these areas are pure guesswork, since there are no references of any kind. I have shown them as both being formed of the same sandstone, which was relatively hard, and also formed the Weather Hills and separated to clay in Westmarch, which also underlay the Midgewater Marshes.

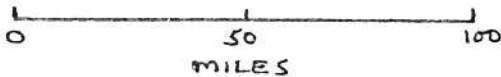
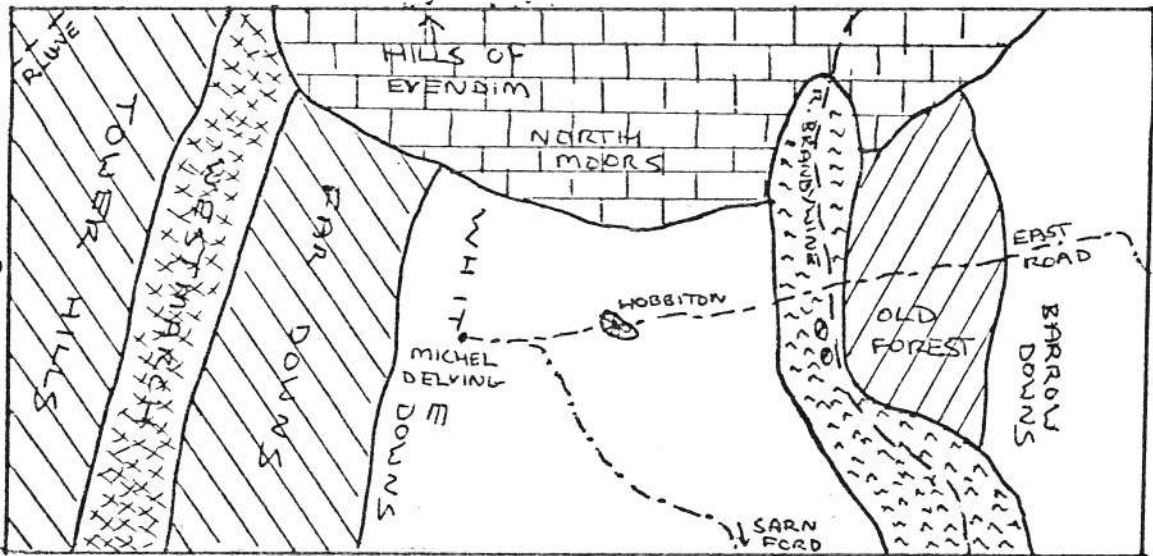
In the north of the Shire lie the Brockenbores, which appear to be a series of limestone caves, and nearby was a quarry, where the hobbits must have mined what limestone they required for building stone. This limestone I have shown continuing under the North Moors and on into the southern parts of the Hills of Evendim. In order to preserve the N-S structure of the map, I have, however found it necessary to place the limestone uncomfortably on top of the older, folded sediments.

The structure of the area is summarised in the E-W section through Hobbiton and Bree below.








MIKE PERCIVAL



THE VERTICAL SCALE IS MUCH EXAGGERATED



--- MAJOR ROADS  
 - - - RIVERS

-  ALLUVIAL CLAY / MUD
-  SAND / GRAVEL
-  CLAY
-  SANDSTONE
-  CHALK
-  SANDSTONE
-  LIMESTONE

# Tolkien and Structuralism

New intellectual movements are often the cause of great controversy, but few can claim to have caused as much discord as the structuralist movement. By many it is dismissed out of hand as being totally irrelevant to reality and so-called 'everyday life'. Yet I imagine that only a few of its many critics could give an account of the principles of structuralism. This, before proceeding further, I will attempt to do. It is not an easy task, for structuralism is a mode of thought common to many disciplines as diverse as mathematics and literary criticism.

Structuralism, as the term itself implies, is concerned with structures. It is essentially a method of answering questions by ordering observed phenomena so they may be interpreted in a logical fashion. As method, it can be applied to the whole range of social phenomena. This is possible since it is one of the basic axioms of the structuralist method that all manifestations of social activity can be treated as a code or language. As a result, the regularities inherent in these activities may be interpreted as a set of abstract rules such as those which define language in the formal sense. A structuralist does not seek these codes on the surface, on the level of observed reality, but rather in the depths below that surface. As Levi-Strauss states on the subject mythology: "We should not exclude the possibility that the men themselves who produce and pass on these myths could be aware of their structure and mode of operation, though this would not be usual, but rather partial and intermittent." He again draws the analogy between the form of myths, and men using their own language. When speaking they consistently apply the grammatical laws of their own tongue (i.e. its structural code), but unless they are professional linguists, they will not usually be aware of what they are doing, and will be unable to formulate the structures they are using.

These regularities then, which constitute the social code, exist at the level of structure, although they are obviously reflected on the surface. In abstract they can be further simplified, and reduced to the level of a series of binary oppositions. This term can be applied to two somewhat different concepts: firstly the logically rigorous concept of being either  $p$  or  $\sim p$  (not  $p$ ) where  $p$  and  $\sim p$  are rigidly defined, mutually exclusive and exhaustive classes, such as dead and alive, asleep and awake etc. The second, and more commonly used meaning is rather more difficult to define since it does not involve a rigidly logical concept. It is best described by such examples as fire/water, earth/air which, as can be seen, are not mutually exhaustive categories in the sense of  $p$  and  $\sim p$ , but can be shown

to be perceived as such within a specific context.

Lastly, structuralism is mostly concerned with synchronic, as opposed to diachronic, structures; to relations across a given moment of time rather than to relations through time. As a result structuralist analysis is to all purposes anti-causal, and has no use for the concepts of cause and effect. Traditionally, on observing two different situations across a distance of space and time, it might be argued that factors a,b,c etc. caused the differences between them. The structuralist argument however is to state that a certain structure is seen to be transformed into another structure and, given repeated observations, we may say that the structure is always transformed thus. This gives a law of transformation rather than a statement of causality.

These, very briefly, are the basic tenets of structuralist analysis. I will now proceed to discuss various ways in which these concepts may be involved in a discussion of the works of Tolkien. It is obviously far beyond the scope of this brief article to study exhaustively all the possible applications of structuralist thought to Tolkien's writings. I will therefore confine myself to only an example of what might be considered.

One interesting exercise is to analyse the structure of Tolkien's pantheon for Middle-Earth. The basic group or set from which all Tolkien's 'gods' are derived is the Ainur: these are the creations of Ilúvatar, the One, "the offspring of his thought, and they were with him before aught else was made." The obvious division of this group is into the two sub-groups of those who remained faithful to the original vision of Ilúvatar; and the Enemy, who fought against the realization of that vision. The distinctive feature separating the two groups is the hostility of one to the universe, and the point at which they meet, neutralizing their opposition, is in the Music of the Ainur.

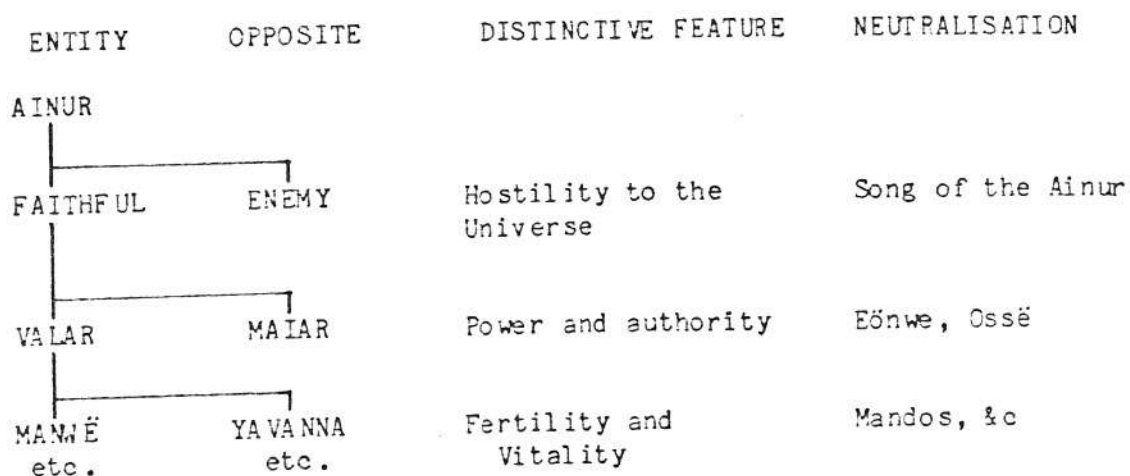
Considering the sub-group of the Faithful, we encounter the next binary opposition: this group can be subdivided into Valar and Maiar. The distinctive feature in this case rests in the relative power and authority of the two groups; the Valar are conceived as being directly responsible for various aspects of the universe whilst the Maiar are their servants. Some Maiar, however, such as Eönwë and possibly Ossë, wield great power in their own right. Eönwë leads the army of the Valar at the end of the First Age, and Ossë, during his flirtation with Melkor, can challenge Aulë. These two can therefore be placed in the enigmatic centre between the two groups.

There are several ways in which it might be possible to divide the Valar into two groups: Valar and Valier, Aratar and the rest, for instance. I prefer, however, to divide this group according to the perceived primary function of the beings involved, rather than by superficial qualities such as gender. According to function the Valar may be divided as follows: Manwë, Varda, Ulmo, Aulë are all primarily concerned with the material contents of the universe, with Wind and Air, Stars, Water and Earth respectively. On the other hand, Yavanna, Oromë, Nessa, Tulkas, Vána are concerned with fertility, with the life and vitality of the universe and



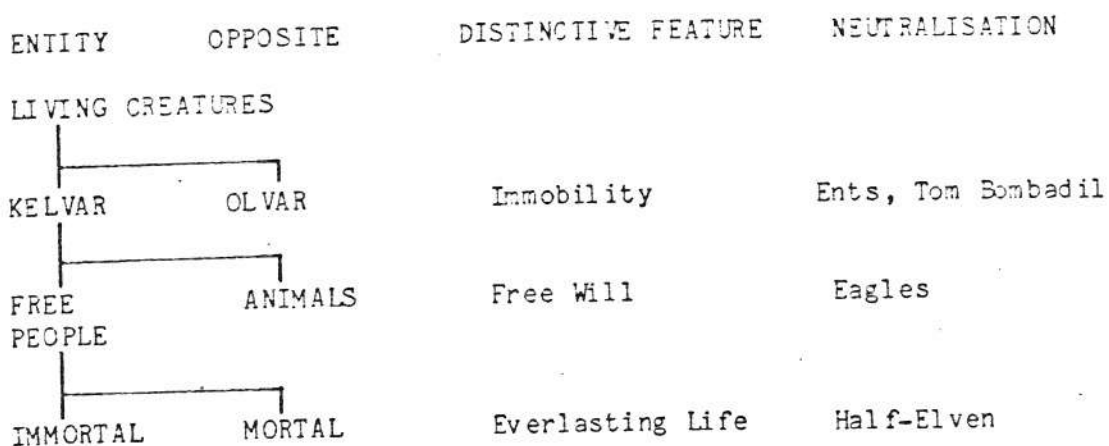
its creatures. In the shadowy middle-ground between the two groups are those Valar who have functions which may be characteristic of both groups. These are the Fëanturi, Mandos and Lórien, and the remaining Valier: Estë, Nienna and Vairë.

These structural relationships may be schematically represented as follows:



It is beyond my intention in this article to theorise as to the meaning or purpose of these structures, if indeed they have any, but merely to point out that they exist and may be analysed.

A similar example of a series of binary oppositions may be found by studying the structural relationships of all living things on Middle-Earth. To save space, I will merely give the final schematic diagram here, and leave it to the reader as an exercise to follow the logic involved.



IWAN RHYS MORUS

# Comment

## Tolkien and Fascism

Iwan Rhys Morus' article in Anor 3 was a worthwhile attempt to open up a little-explored area of Tolkien study: the Professor's politics. It is not a study of which he would have approved - we know his views about the value of biography and "looking at the author" as an aid to literary appreciation - and it may be that there is not much that could be said beyond Carpenter's perceptive comments in his excellent *Life*. Tolkien was not by any definition a political creature, but if labels must be applied then he was certainly a Conservative, and if not actually an Anarchist (can an anarchist be a monarchist?), he was definitely anti-Government. The German philosophy of the supremacy of the State horrified him, and one can imagine him approving of the Thatcher aim of "rolling back the State" and increasing reliance on the individual.

But Iwan's aim is to refute allegations that Tolkien was a Fascist. I would like to know where he read such accusations. Presumably he is lifting Westall's remark from Jessica Yates' article in *Amon Hen* 52, in which case it does not behove him to criticise Westall for not reading "The Silmarillion" before making judgments. I apologise if I am wrong in this, but nowhere in the remarks there quoted does Westall say that Tolkien is "fascist"; he used the word "racialist" but it would be wrong to equate the two. His point is that the moral simplicity and polarity that he (like many before him) perceives in Tolkien would lead the impressionable young to succumb more easily to prejudice and stereotyping in the real world - since the Easterners and the black Men and Orcs from the south are evil, our juvenile Tolkien reader will be led to regard Russians and black Africans as evil also. The author, whatever his subconscious moral geography, resented such interpretations, and also resented the notion of 20th century critics that all good literature had to deal in shades of grey exclusively.

Whether or not Iwan has misinterpreted Westall's remarks, he must provide more proof that it has "become fashionable ... to accuse Tolkien of being a Fascist". The term is loosely enough used in journalism and left-wing abuse without it creeping unwarranted into Tolkien criticism. One person's comments cannot provide evidence of a "fashion". Anyway, I take exception to his opening sneer; I am a woolly-minded middle-class liberal and belligerently proud of it.

The suggestion that all Tolkien characters are either black or white is of course asinine and always produces the same knee-jerk reaction from

Tolkien fans. But it has a certain amount of truth in it. Iwan exaggerates in saying that "almost all the major characters in LotR succumb to some form of temptation in the course of their action.". Aragorn ? Gandalf ? Sam ? Gimli ? Legolas ? Faramir ? Many of them experience temptation, but so did Christ. It is true that some of the characters that idiots like Westall would regard as evil are more complex than he would allow - Gollum and Saruman spring to mind - and that 'good' leaders such as Gandalf and Elrond come under suspicion for cunning manipulation to achieve their ends. But as I said, it is wrong to judge the book by the standards applied to modern novels. It is an heroic romance and an allegory of moral growth.

I find dubious the suggestion that Tolkien's views were "nearer to Marxist Communism than he knew". I bow to Iwan's superior knowledge of Communism, but at the simplest level it is clear that Tolkien did not approve of "levelling" in any form. He of course perceived Communism only in what he saw of Soviet Russia and his main objection was its anti-Catholicism. Iwan might care to write more on these points. Despite this, he is quite right to say that the nearest thing to Fascism in "Lord of the Rings" is the Sharkey regime, and this is portrayed as undeniably evil - particularly in its association with industrialisation. It remains curious that a Fascist/ecological group in Italy should have adopted "Lord of the Rings" as its cult, and I would like to hear an explanation of this from anyone who knows more about it.

BRIN DUNSIRE B.A.hons (Cantab.)

### First Impressions ... (?)

Having joined the Tolkien Society because it seemed slightly more subtle than joining the Monster Raving Looney Society and didn't sound to be as taxing as the Very Nice Society (imagine having to be nice to all of the people all of the time!), I was intrigued by the topic for discussion at the first meeting and actually bothered to turn up. So impressed was I by the discussion of phallic symbolism, Russian cossacks and physical jerks (not to mention keel rows) and their relevance - nay, undisputed importance - in "Lord of the Rings", that I resolved to write an article on something equally necessary for a complete understanding of "Lord of the Rings".

However, there was one slight problem; having not read "Lord of the Rings" for well over six months, my recall of all the fascinating little details necessary to write a suitably impressive and scholarly article, such as the ones I had read in Anor 3, left rather a lot to be desired. Having committed the ultimate sin of coming up without "Lord of the Rings"

(my orc of a brother having pinched it and rushed off to a boarding school somewhere in the wilds of Surrey - equivalent to being beyond the Misty Mountains), I was rather stuck for something to write about.

I flirted briefly with the idea of discussing the probability that elves, being the advanced sort of beings that they were, had invented the flush toilet long before the Babylonians (or was it the Egyptians?) had even got round to thinking about it, but I soon discarded this idea as I decided it would probably lower the tone of "Anor" even further.

I also considered doing a statistical analysis of early death of hobbits due to liver failure, coronary arrest and other diseases related to excesses of food and drink, but without having the book to hand, and having the disadvantage (or advantage, depending on your point of view) of not being either a medic or a mathematician, I decided that this would probably be somewhat difficult to do and excruciatingly boring to read.

Having finally run out of things not to write about and whilst gazing glumly at a scrappy piece of paper reminding me that the success of "Anor" depended on my active participation, inspiration crept up on me from behind and grabbed me by the throat (a bit like Gollum really - unexpected and extremely unpleasant). My hands shook and my brain went numb, as if the Lord of the Nazgûl himself had tapped me on the shoulder and politely asked for a light, and slowly, ever so painfully, my pen started to crawl across the blank piece of paper in front of me.

It wrote ..."My first impressions of the Cambridge Tolkien Society by an impressionable fresher"..... and then it stopped.

HELENA GREENWOOD

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