



ISSUE 7

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# Editorial

Welcome to another Anor; this is your new (and, I fear, somewhat tardy) Editor speaking.

Building on the precedent established by Julian Bradfield, I am delighted to say that alongside the reports and fictional articles in this issue there are two excellent pieces of scholarly investigation. Readers may like to compare these with the similarly academic contribution from Elizabeth Holland in Anor 6 - though I doubt whether Duncan or Iwan (or Ms Holland) would relish the comparison.

Right, that's enough from me: I shall now leave you to Read On, enjoyably I hope; with the traditional editor's parting shot - an exhortation to draw on your bottomless well of inspiration and write (or draw) something for our next issue.

Have a great Lent term.

Peter Gilliver

# Geographical Observations On Númenor

In this short article I hope to make an attempt to apply modern geographical theory to the land of Númenor. To do this I have tried to cull any relevant information from the fragmentary accounts which we have recovered, in particular the "Description of the Island of Númenor" published in Unfinished Tales. Due to the somewhat fragmentary nature of the available material, the areas covered by this article are rather disparate: I hope that they will be interesting nevertheless.

First I wish to place Númenor in the world of macro-physical geography, using the concept of plate tectonics in which the earth is believed to consist of several plates of crustal material 'floating' on a fluid base, growing by the addition of material at some margins and being destroyed at others by a process of subduction and melting down. Thus plates move relative to one another: Númenor can be located upon the leading corner of a plate which is overriding another plate at a destructive margin. The shape of Númenor indicates that two (rather than one) other plates could be involved, which would increase the stresses produced by plate interaction. The results are fold mountains caused by the crumpling up of the plate in the north of Númenor, the south and eastwards tilt of the land and the uplift of the northern coast causing a relative fall in sea level, evidenced by the receded cliff line of the northern Andustar. The melting down of the overridden plate(s) would provide magma which is liable to be intruded volcanically into the overriding plate. This may explain the presence of a dormant volcano - the Meneltarma, which would appear to be a cone formed of siliceous lava of a type which can be produced in such situations, and tends upon eruption to form a steep sided cone with convex lower slopes and often a sealed crater (thus the slight depression in the summit of the mountain). However, its formation and its activity must have been many centuries earlier, because the only evidence of vulcanism is its shape - until it began to smoke again at the time of the downfall, that is.

Igneous intrusions are thus important in the lithology of Númenor, comprising at least the Meneltarma and the associated Tarmasundar. There is also circumstantial evidence for the Mittalmar, and possibly also part of the promontories, having been the result of a much earlier intrusion of igneous granitic rock into overlying strata which have since been partially eroded away. Firstly, there is the general shape and character of the Mittalmar, which was raised above the promontories and was a region of grasslands and low downs. Secondly, the sands of the south coast (the only ones described) are said to have been white. This suggests a high quartz content and thus a probable granitic origin as fluvial sediment carried to the sea. Thirdly, we know that there were copper ore deposits; copper and tin ores are often produced, as in Cornwall, by the intrusion of molten igneous rocks into the base of existing carboniferous or devonian rocks, and in the ensuing metamorphosis various mineral compounds are created. If

we postulate that the original overlying rocks were of carboniferous nature this could also account for the availability of iron ore and coal. Lastly, the description of drainage as short torrents rushing to the sea is indicative of a tough and relatively even lithology such as that provided by igneous rocks. There is one major problem in the suggestion of rocks of granitic type - there were no tors or equivalent landforms which are often formed on granitic rocks. However such landforms are thought to be the result of periglacial activity, for which there is no evidence anywhere on Numenor.

The climate can be deduced from the descriptions of vegetation and agriculture. In general it could be described as a cool temperate western margin climate, with the characteristics of regular rainfall; mild winters and warm summers. Most rainfall would be orographic, resulting from the warm moist westerly winds which occurred particularly in the spring, and probably in the autumn as well. The forests of the Bay of Eldanna were thus a response to the highest rainfall intensities. Rainfall totals would fall off towards the east, resulting in a transition from forest to grassland, probably aided by the anthropogenic impact of grazing. The forests of the Hyarnustar are more likely to have been related to the cold north-easterly winds (and their associated rainfall) characteristic of winter. The rest of the island was sheltered from these winds by the northern mountains. In the summer the wind belts would have moved northward and this would expose the Hyarnustar to the warm sunny conditions of a mediterranean type summer, perfect for the viniculture that was carried on there.

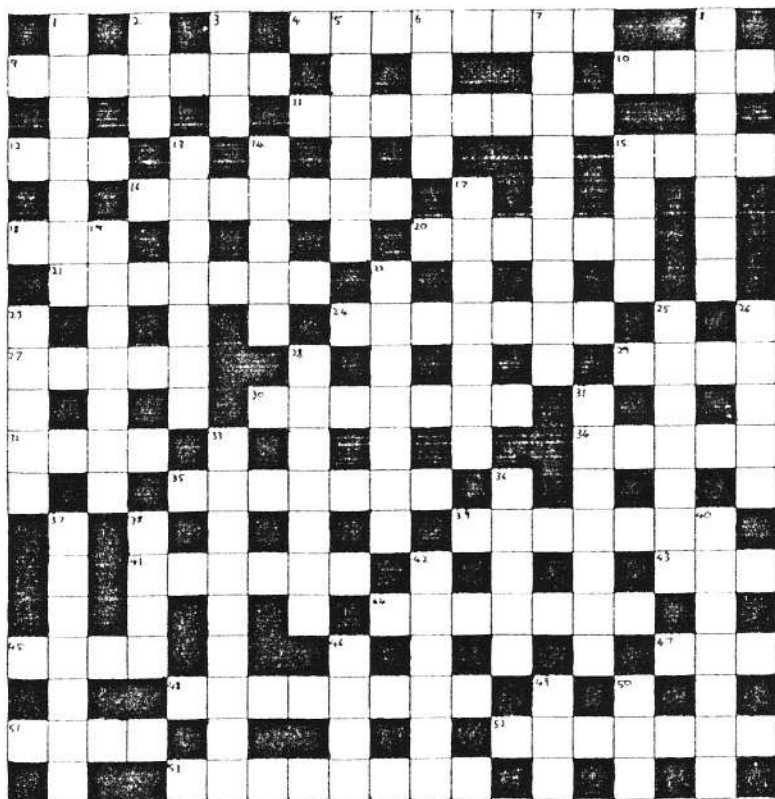
The natural resources appear to have largely determined the economy, which depended on fishing and pastoral agriculture organized on a feudal basis, with the typical escape routes for the peasantry of a late feudal period, that is the guilds, which probably catered for some types of craftsmen as well as mariners. Unfortunately the system is never considered openly, perhaps because the authors of the records we have were members of the upper class and therefore presumably considered the system to be self-evident. However one characteristic of a late feudal period is particularly debatable in the context of Numenor, namely whether the major settlements could be classed as urban. Only a few of the criteria for a 'town' are met, although some of the others are obviously irrelevant (such as the existence of complex religious organization). While the settlements may have been 'central places', with concomitant diverse economic bases and roles as judicial and ceremonial centres, it is difficult to postulate the widespread use of coinage which seems essential to the activity of a true urban centre. However, some progress to urbanization and therefore to 'modernization' had obviously been made. The agricultural surplus to feed the consuming elite (which included the guildsmen) must have existed, while long distance trade (which is associated with the concentration of population) had begun. Unfortunately there is not enough information on the actual organization of the 'towns' as yet discovered to embark upon any deeper analysis.

No consideration of the geography of Numenor could possibly overlook the Downfall, with which I shall conclude. This was probably a catastrophic plate tectonic movement event. The buildup of stress between antagonistic plate movements was released in such a way that the entire land was forced

beneath the waves. While such a cataclysmic event has not been recorded in the present Age, we must remember that events of the greatest magnitude occur most infrequently. Such an event would also have caused a massive tidal wave, capable of severely damaging the coasts of the ocean. This is recorded for the eastern coastline where substantial changes were caused. It seems just possible that such a tidal wave may have completely overwhelmed a land to the west. Could this be the reason behind the legends concerning the removal of the Undying Lands from the earth?

Duncan McLaren

# CROSSWORD



(Clues for this Crossword may be found on page 10.)

# Oxonmoot Report

The Cambridge contingent at last year's Oxonmoot, the annual meeting of the Tolkien Society held in late September or early October to celebrate Tolkien's memory, was rather smaller than that of 1983, but that did not hinder our merry-making, and all of us enjoyed the weekend immensely.

Preparations really got going about a week beforehand, when a couple of us came up and immediately entered a state of panic in an attempt to produce Anor 6 in time to sell it at Oxonmoot. A little later in the week, most other Moot-goers and Committee members arrived, so we managed to produce Anor with a couple of hours to spare.

Then, in the afternoon of Friday 5th October, Mike Percival, Iwan Morus and I piled into Mike's car, and set off for Oxford. The journey was, fortunately, uneventful (I have been told that this is not true - but whatever happened, it wasn't eventful enough to wake me up!), and we arrived in Oxford at around six o'clock (I think), and went to our various lodgings. Iwan and I stayed in a guest-house on Banbury Road, but Mike went for the Ranger touch and camped - the camp-site was, naturally, well over the other side of town from our guest-house, which posed us a pretty problem in time and motion. Having dumped our baggage, we proceeded to the Turf Tavern, which suffers invasion by the Tolkien Society each year (and makes a fat profit out of it, judging by their prices). Friday evening was as usual: collect your envelope (full of useful information, together with, if you are unlucky, some more ghastly songs for the so-called Tolkien Society song-sheet), drink, talk, eat, drink, talk, drink, drink . . . together with the occasional attempt to persuade people to buy Anor or a set of posters [still available from Mike Percival at £6 the set]. Once the pub had closed, many people repaired to the notorious Room 15 - the Turf has some accommodation, which the TS takes over for Oxonmoot, and Room 15 is the biggest, wherefore people congregate there and drink large quantities of gin and orange, vodka etc. We left reasonably early, and went back to get some sleep before the rigours of the morrow.

The only event on Saturday morning was the Smials' Forum, held in one of the Town Hall committee rooms. This took the form of a general heart-searching about the nature and purpose of smials. Cambridge, in their guise as Minas Tirith and Barad Ecthelion, made their mark, and I am sure many there remember with pleasure Iwan's masterly put-down of the Brighton Burrow (whose views on smials and other things are, shall we say, not always in concordance with the general consensus), which, however, I shall not reproduce here, since only a tape recording could do it justice.

At mid-day, Miss Priscilla Tolkien, with her usual great hospitality, gave a reception in the Town Hall, with mountains of food which the Society, to its shame, failed to consumé, despite Miss Tolkien's

exhortations. I should like to record our gratitude for Miss Tolkien's generosity and kindness, which do so much to make Oxonmoot what it is.

In the afternoon, Iwan and I decided that we had better make some faint pretence at being academic, and so attended a discussion group, ably led by Gill Page (of the Morgul-hai in Maidstone). The discussion was based on the Book of Lost Tales, but as is the way with such events, took many and varied diversions. Indeed, I have a horrible feeling that we might have mentioned Balrogs' wings, though I'm not sure! There were other events: I was peeved to have to miss a reading of the 'Dear Bil' Letters - these are a highly entertaining series of letters from Celeborn to Bilbo (discovered by John Ellison), which bear a certain resemblance to another well-known series of letters. I was also slightly sad to have missed the sight of Martin Smith's sword breaking in the metal weapons practice (familiarily, and accurately, known as hacking), although perhaps it was safer not to be there!

Then, on Saturday evening, there was The Party, held in the main hall in the Town Hall buildings. For this the hall was decorated with banners of the various smials present, although we had not been efficient enough to get a banner in time. Most people there were in costume, with, as always, the Swedes out-shining everyone else - and from next year, I too shall cast off my dinner-jacket and join the ranks of the lunatic: sic transit . . . (unless, of course, I come to my senses first!).

One end of the hall was occupied by the tables on which the Society and smials placed all the magazines etc. they hoped to sell. Unlike previous years, the sales tables were controlled and organized by the Society's Sales Officer, Jeremy Morgan, so that one could go round the whole area and pay in one lump at a central till. We, of course, had nothing to do with this, and remained strictly independent, which had obvious security and book-keeping advantages, but did mean that one of us had to be behind the table at all times. Happily for me, my first shift coincided with the ceremonials, when no sales could be made. There were assorted presentations by smials and other Tolkien Societies to the Society, which, to be honest, are rather tedious (although I suppose we shall do one in '85, in the interests of keeping up with the Bracegirdles), and a couple of dramatic pieces. The Morgul-hai were, as usual, highly theatrical - three Morgul-hai stood with drawn knives behind three kneeling victims, and asked them whether they acknowledged Melkor as Lord - in suitable phrases, of course -; the first two victims did, and were therefore released. The third victim was Brin Dunsire, the Chairman of the Society, and he naturally utterly refused to surrender. Unfortunately, the Morgul-hai then spoiled things by letting him off for no readily apparent reason. Oh well, as those of you who were at the Quiz will know, Brin will have good reason to expect less mercy this year! Maggie Thomson, a CIS member (who despite being at college in Kent contrives to be in Cambridge remarkably often!), gave a recitation of the poem 'The Mewlips', combined with a most effective dance. I am not competent to comment on such things, but since Maggie's subject is Performing Arts, the standard may readily be appreciated.

Thereafter, the party continued with no organized events. This was perhaps not wise, since there are limits to how long one can wander around

the hall talking to people. I gather that this year more entertainment will be provided, although this of course depends on us the members to produce it!

Once we were thrown out of the Town Hall, some thirty-odd people went to Room 15. (I think the highest number during the night was thirty-five - it was crowded in there.) People just chatted, and drank the traditional highly alcoholic concoctions. The Cambridge contingent did not get off entirely unscathed by the gin and orange (at least, I think there was some orange in it), although it would really be most unkind of me to go into details. [Requests for details of this and any other gossip I can remember/invent will be given favourable consideration if accompanied by a pint (I don't like gin and orange)!]

Sunday morning holds the culmination of Oxonmoot - the visit to Tolkien's grave in Headington cemetery. There we remember Tolkien, and as is now traditional, Galadriel's Lament is sung by the graveside (this year, as in years past, by Denis Bridoux), and wreaths placed on the grave. There Oxonmoot officially ends.

However, there were other events arranged unofficially. After lunch, which most people took at the Turf, Martin Smith organized a punting expedition. Unfortunately, I was otherwise engaged; but by all accounts it was a thoroughly enjoyable and exciting trip. Cambridge, in the shape of Mike Percival, outpunted the largest and strongest people in the Society, even when they were being most unfair and using four paddles as well! Mike is now looking forward to issuing challenges at our Puntmoot in June.

After this, we finally set off back to Cambridge - driving at breakneck speed in order to get to . . . the first Committee meeting of term, to sort out our plans for the Societies' Fair (yawn).

Lastly, I would like to thank the Tolkien Society Oxonmoot Sub-Committee for their efficient organization, and Mike Percival for taking Iwan and me - Mike also did sterling work in Oxford as a 'gopher-on-wheels', ferrying people and things about Oxford. I would also like to encourage you to go to Oxonmoot this year - any current or past CTS Committee member will be most pleased to give you information about the Tolkien Society. At present, only about ten of our members are also members of the Tolkien Society; it would be nice to increase this, and really to make our presence felt at Oxonmoot '85.

Julian Bradfield



8MAUG



# Book Reviews

## THE BELGARIAD by David Eddings

The five books of the Belgariad form what I found to be the most compulsive fantasy series since I first read The Lord of the Rings. The entire story is told as seen through the eyes of the hero, Garion, a simple farmhand who is torn away from his familiar background on a quest which he doesn't understand, and who has to accept major changes as responsibility and power are thrust upon him. The majority of the first book, Pawn of Prophecy, is taken up with Garion's problems in accepting his new role, as the narrative drags him on through a wonderful variety of scenes in a series of strange lands. A collection of well-portrayed characters add wit and sparkle to the tale which is missing from so many fantasy books: notable in particular are the relationships between pairs of characters, and the variety of ways in which they express their love for one another. The fifth book, Enchanter's End Game, lacks some of the bite of the earlier volumes, but by this time one is thoroughly hooked, and the reader is drawn on to the inevitable final meeting on which the fate of the universe depends. . . .

The Belgariad:- Pawn of Prophecy  
Queen of Sorcery  
Magician's Gambit  
Castle of Wizardry  
Enchanter's End Game (not yet published in GB)

Mike Percival

## THE MISTS OF AVALON by Marion Bradley

For Marion Bradley this novel is a complete departure from the Darkover sequence of novels. Here she moves from a world of her own invention to the retelling of the Arthurian saga, a legend of which Tolkien once said, "Powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with 'English'; . . . its 'faerie' is too lavish and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive . . . it is involved in, and explicitly contains the Christian religion . . . that seems to me fatal." (Letters p144).

The authoress has retained the power of the original legend, and has also given to it a greater impression of depth and of at least, literary reality. She has successfully constrained its 'faerie' and has integrated it into an overlying religious theme. Morgaine (Morgan le Fay) learns her

magic not in Malory's nunnery but as a priestess of a pre-Christian religion. We see the conversion of the land to Christianity through her eyes, which is a refreshing change to the usual Christian telling of any such conversion.

Her device of recounting the whole tale from the viewpoint of the women involved is on the whole successful, although in some places parts of the tale do read as if a masculine view has been put into the mouth of the female story-teller. However this is unavoidable given that the original legend is male orientated.

While the alteration of several of the names is a little off-putting at first, one soon gets adjusted. It has the advantage of adding an element of coherence and of deepening the feeling of period that Bradley has given to the tale. This successful periodization I feel is a major improvement on most versions of the tale.

If you like long, intriguing and above all believable 'history' then read this book. If not, why are you reading Anor?

The Mists of Avalon. Marion Bradley. 1025pp. Published by Sphere Books Limited, 1984. £2.95 in paperback.

#### ACROSS

4. Seedling of Galathilion (8) 9. Forest near Isengard (7) 10. Turin (4)  
11. Spouse of 20 (8) 12. Son of Bell Goodchild (3) 15. Slayer of Azog (4)  
16. Bauglir (7) 18. 'The day's --' (3) 20. Manwe (6) 21. King, d. 435 (7)  
24. Alias of 12 (7) 27. Men (5) 29. Brother of 52 (4) 30. Grandson of  
Fengel (7) 32. 1/144 yen (4) 34. Master of Mar Vanwa Tyalieva (5) 35. Lord  
of Belegost (7) 39. Linhir stood on this river (7) 41. Tender of the trees  
of Lorien (6) 43. A 32 (3) 44. Annuminas stood by this lake (7) 45. Granary  
of Mordor (4) 47. Otso minus one (3) 48. Eagle (in BolI) (8) 51. Butcher of  
Michel Delving (4) 52. The Hidden King (7) 53. Amon Amarth (8)

#### DOWN

1. Brewer of miruvore (7) 2. We are in the Fourth (3) 3. God (3)  
5. Finduilas (6) 6. Short broad sword (4) 7. Street beyond Fen Hollen (4,5)  
8. Prince of Cats (7) 13. Just after minual (7) 14. Glory (5)  
17. Edith? (7) 19. Wose (7) 22. Son of Thranduil (7) 23. Second of the Three  
Rings (5) 25. Great-great-grandfather of 21 (7) 26. '... from -- to  
Erui' (5) 28. Squeezed Radbug's eyes out (7) 31. Lorien (7)  
33. Corollaire (9) 36. He mentioned autumn and winter. . . . (5)  
37. 25's sword reforged (7) 38. The Blessed Realm (4) 40. Vardamir (7)  
42. Hyarmentir was one of these (6) 46. Guided by Arien [or me] (4)  
49. Rage (3) 50. 9 for example (3)

# ADVENTURE

As dark settled over Mirkwood like a black cloud, the night-creatures of the forest crept from dark places under gnarled trees, and in the darkness they fought and hunted and died. But this was no ordinary night, for the wind brought with it rumour of invaders, outsiders, strangers swarming through the forest so that even the creatures of the deep night fled back into hiding in their dark holes under forest-floor. In the gloom, yellow eyes glowed with malice and evil voices whispered.

No rumour of evil had yet come to Vaindo Hardfist of the woodmen as he retired to bed and sank swiftly into the deep dark sleep of the man of toil. Yet, as the night wore on, his sleep became ever more fitful as dark shapes shadowed the landscapes of his dreams and fierce glowing eyes stalked the plains of his slumber.

He awoke and it was dark and fear clawed at him. He leapt to the window and gazed out at the village, and the clearing; and the dark shadow beyond. As he watched, the moon was unveiled and the darkness seemed banished: yet his fear did not leave him; for even as the first rays of moonshine struck the forest, so there grew all round the clearing a great clamour and howling of wolf voices, and Vaindo's blood ran chill in his veins. Then he turned and looked on the face of Garta, his wife, and he thought of the child she carried: a fire was kindled in his veins, and all fear fled him, and he was turned to wrath.

Then quickly he woke his wife; and having sent her to the village square, in truth no more than an open patch of ground set aside for public gatherings, he ran through the narrow streets and alleys, waking those who were not already up and ordering all he met to assemble in the square, taking with them all the firewood they could carry.

So it was that the Warg-riders found the woodmen not unprepared as they descended upon the village. For in the square a bonfire had quickly been built and round it the woodmen had gathered, forming a protective circle around their children and womenfolk. In each man's hands there was a burning brand and a large heavy woodaxe, and even the women and children prepared to fight with whatever weapons they could find.

For an age the wolf-riders circled the villagers, just out of range of the firelight, and it seemed to the villagers that a wall of darkness surrounded them, and in it shapes blacker than night stalked. Then silence fell, and the leader of the Warg-riders rode forward into the firelight and faced Vaindo and knew him for his enemy. Man-high he was, and the hell-beast he rode was like almost to a horse in size and his eyes glowed in the light of the fire and they were the colour of blood.

Then he leapt forward at the woodman, and his rider aimed a mighty blow with a great club. But Vaindo ducked the blow and thrust at the Warg's snout with his flamebrand so that the beast shied away. The woodsman then swung his axe at the head of the orc-chieftain: but he parried the blow with a shield and struck once again, and once again he was foiled, for Vaindo leapt back toward the fire just barely in time.

Long and weary was their battle, and many hard blows were struck: but at last Vaindo was victorious, for the wolf's fear of fire made him hard to control: and he fell with his hideous wolf-head cloven in two, and his master was crushed beneath him.

When the Warg and his master lay dead, silence fell once again on the square, and hope rose in the hearts of the villagers: and they prayed that with their leaders dead, the host would depart, and return whence they had come. But even as hope grew in them, it was dashed: for out of the darkness came the shrill cries of orc-voices and the howling of wolves. Then they attacked, and their numbers were very many and they were filled with anger for the loss of their captains.

None of those who fought there, not man nor orc nor wolf, saw the black cloud which swiftly covered the face of the moon. Nor did any hear the faint sound, like the whistling of the wind through the marsh-rushes on an autumn day. Yet ever closer came that cloud and ever louder grew that sound as battle raged in the clearing in the forest.

Deadly was that battle, fought there by light of fire, and bravely did the woodsfolk fight; though all knew there was no hope, for the numbers alone must soon overwhelm them. Before long, they were hard pressed to hold their circle, for many had fallen and only Vaindo Hardfist seemed unwearied, though he had slain many of his foes. To all there, it seemed that cruel death was at hand, and despair clutched at their hearts: but still they fought on without hope.

Then, in an instant, they were shrouded in a dark cloud of beating wings and all fell back in fear, man and foe. But quickly did fear turn to hope for the woodsmen as the birds of the forest attacked the wolves and their riders. Blackbirds there were, and wood-pigeons and nightingales and a host of thrushes: and they flew at the evil creatures, ever pecking at their eyes, Warg and orc, so that they fell back screaming. Quickly the woodsmen recovered their wits and charged forward to despatch their enemies, who now sought only to flee that deadly place. Great was the slaughter there, and few of the fell creatures ever returned to their lairs to tell of that battle in the forest.

Dawn came, and Vaindo Hardfist sat by the dying embers of the fire, and Garta sat next to him: and they wept in grief and joy, for the many that had died and for the many more that lived. The woodsman looked out at the forest and nothing there seemed to stir, for his eyes had grown dim from his toils and he did not see the ancient bearded figure, in a brown and tattered cloak, who turned and vanished into the trees.

Colin Rosenthal

# Quiz Report

I'd been vaguely sorry that a Minas Tirith 'B' team couldn't be formed, as I'd wanted a go at the quiz. However, that vague sorrow became a rather certain relief when I found out what was involved. Minas Tirith (hooray for our side!) naturally trounced Kent, Northfarthing and Arvernien, but they wouldn't have done it if I'd been on the team.

The only questions I remember are the real stunners like "How many years was Elrond's house a haven in Middle-earth?", "Name six great-grandparents of Elrond", "Name seven tributaries of the Anduin" and "How many brothers did Rose Cotton have?". These terrified me, and the specialist round was full of truly abominable ones about the provinces of Numenor, which sheets of newspaper were upside down in certain books, Father Christmas' taste in indoor decor, and such like.

Some of the specialist sections, however, seemed rather too easy. The Mr Bliss questions sounded really quite simple, although not having read the book it is difficult to judge. And I wonder whether in his Quenya round Julian Bradfield was actually translating, or just remembering sentences lifted from the books? The mistakes he made would be so dissimilar to the 'right' answer that I felt he wasn't really understanding the Quenya [!!!! - Ed] but trying to recognize meaningless sound-patterns. To be fair, I once translated "est ouverte" in a French oral exam as "is completely green", so I suppose it's possible Julian had the same problem - but then I never claim to be able to speak French, or even to understand it particularly.

The best part of the Quiz, for me, was the sight of twelve Tolkienophiles bringing their intellectual ability and attempts at total recall to bear on the question "According to Bifur, what comes after autumn?" The massed brains of Tolkienendom sat and thought - perhaps inwardly reciting all the novels, biographies and letters in the hope that Bifur's odd statement (presumably not referring to winter?) could be found. Minas Tirith (who else?) decided to try 'winter' and were, I think, a little surprised to discover that it was correct. They were not alone: everyone in Emma Old JCR was bemused that the question-setters would have the audacity to ask such a daft question. Mind you, it must have been about the only question which stumped everyone.

I am told that our triumphant team members may well not be doing it (so to speak) next year, in which case some current CTS members will have to start thinking about switching to Tolkien Studies Tripos, Part III in preparation for the '85 quiz. Minas Tirith must retain the trophy, after all.

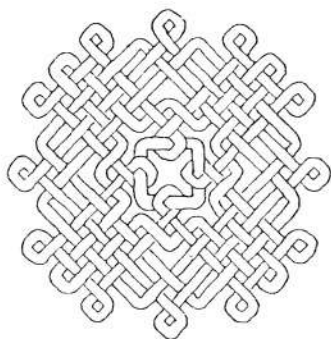
The team won't be the only thing that'll be different next year. I rather hope that the score indicators will be improved or dispensed with

completely. Catherine Hooley and Mike Percival were very good question setters, but they ought to have simply read out the marks at the end of each round, rather than jumping around trying to persuade bundles of computer paper to stay put - not all of which scanned their numbers the same way.

The other technical item - the buzzer network - was very efficient. It only hiccoughed about twice, and Julian Bradfield made a very good job of constructing it. [1] (A man of many talents, indeed.)

I hope to represent Minas Tirith next term, and I trust there are two brave fools out there somewhere who will also step forward to keep our team at the top, where it belongs.

Adam Atkinson



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[1] I should point out that the circuitry was designed by Mark Tillotson, without whose help the equipment would not have appeared at all. Many thanks to Mark for his help - the blame for the hiccoughs is entirely due to my hasty construction. -- JCB

# Why Do Scientists Like Tolkien?

This may at first glance seem a rather puerile question; after all scientists being human are as entitled as anyone else to enjoy good literature. Yet a brief consideration of the current membership of the Cambridge Tolkien Society would seem to indicate that an unusually high proportion of the members (or at least of the active members!) are science students. (For purposes of argument I include mathematicians, engineers etc. in this category.) It is quite easy to see why scientists are attracted by science-fiction or even the new hybrid science-fantasy for in these forms of literature they have what might be called a professional interest. But it seems on the surface quite inexplicable that scientists of all people should enjoy fantasy literature in general and Tolkien in particular.

Tolkien himself would probably have been somewhat surprised to say the least had he noticed this rather puzzling trend. Neither he nor his fellow Inklings seem to have had a particularly high opinion of scientists. On more than one occasion C.S. Lewis for example makes a scientist or group of scientists the villains of a novel. (See especially his science-theology Out of the Silent Planet etc.) Tolkien himself seems to have viewed science chiefly in terms of the damage caused by technological progress to the environment and his attitude is probably best summed-up by the fact that after the second World War he refused to buy or drive a car as he saw the damage caused to the landscape by new roads and other offshoots of the internal combustion engine. On the other hand Tolkien is on record as having stated a liking for science-fiction novels so his attitude may not have been a straightforward antagonism towards science in general. However in view of all this I suggest that the question may be worth asking after all: why do scientists like Tolkien?

I propose to answer this question by first discussing another, closely related problem and then laying some philosophical ground-work before proceeding. Firstly, therefore, I will consider why students and critics of what is considered orthodox literature in general dislike Tolkien, or at best do not consider him to be a literary figure of any great stature. This antipathy towards Tolkien seems to me a result of the tendency to classify *LoTR* as a novel rather than as Romance. The modern attitude to Romance is that it is merely a rather inferior version of the novel; dealing with wish-fulfilment and escapism rather than the tragic realities of our existence. I would argue however that Romance and the novel are two fundamentally different forms of literature and that all they have in common is that both consist of extended narratives. [2]

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[2] For a more extensive treatment of this issue see D. Brewer: LoTR as Romance in JRRR: Scholar & Storyteller, ed. Galt & Farrell.



The rise of the novel to its pre-eminent place in Western literature coincides with the rise to dominance within Western philosophy of the naturalistic and materialistic ideals of the Italian Renaissance. In literature this naturalism first expressed itself in the somewhat ambivalent attitude to Romance which first becomes apparent in writers such as Ariosto in the early 16th century. As it developed and merged with the triumphant positivism brought about by the Newtonian synthesis in science, naturalism in literature became the dominant feature and its main vehicle was the novel as it developed from the mid-18th century. The aim of the novel as Art is to mirror as exactly as it may the everyday world of the observer, and to develop characters in that context which act out the tragedy of human existence.

As mentioned earlier the philosophy underlying this tradition became increasingly positivist with the impact of Newtonianism. This philosophy reached its conclusion in the logical positivism of the 30s and 40s of this century which without doubt deeply affected many of the contemporary critics of Tolkien and has still not lost all its force. The underlying premise of positivism as it developed from Newton, through philosophers such as Locke, to recent proponents like A.J. Ayer is the intuitively attractive and apparently unproblematic assumption that there is a unique one-to-one correspondence between experience and reality. To use a non-technical jargon; positivism and (to a less rigorous degree) naturalism presuppose that we see the world unproblematically as it is. More technically these philosophies presuppose an independent observation language. [3] It is therefore not surprising that modern critics with the positivist leanings of recent philosophy and labouring under the misapprehension that LotR is a novel have great difficulty appreciating the work. After all, it is the function of the novel to mirror reality and there is only one Real World. How can a work of romantic fiction which tells a tale of heroic Quest through a world of elves and hobbits possibly have any significance for the grey world we inhabit? What has a story about magic and brave deeds in a hopeless battle of good against evil to do with the problems of our existence?

This is typically the response of a follower of the naturalistic or neoclassic school of thought when confronted with Romance. To quote Goethe: "Klassische ist das Gesunde, romantisch das Kranke." Later on T.S. Eliot said much the same when discussing the Romantic Movement of the 19th century. To him the difference between the Classic and the Romantic was "the difference between the complete and the fragmentary, the adult and the immature, the orderly and the chaotic." This is all very reminiscent of Edmund Wilson, for example, and his dismissal of LotR as "juvenile trash", or William Ready and his assertion that all the characters in LotR behaved like schoolboys. [4] This seems to me to offer some plausible reasons for the problem of Tolkien's unpopularity amongst orthodox critics, but some

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[3] For a popular exposition of logical positivism at its most intolerant see A.J. Ayer: Language, Truth & Logic.

[4] This dismissal appears in the notorious "Oo those awful Orcs" review in The Nation. Ready's comment is found in his rather mistitled Understanding Tolkien & LotR.

philosophical ground-work now seems necessary before I proceed to discuss the main issue.

It is perhaps unfortunate for positivism and naturalism as schools of thought that their initially plausible assumption of an independent observation language is in fact rather difficult to sustain when analysed. There does not appear to be a unique one-to-one correspondence between experience and reality. This implausibility of an independent observation language cannot of course be proved, but it can be demonstrated in many ways. [5] Consider for example an observation language in which all descriptive predicates (words or sentences) come into use either through direct reference to an empirical observation, or by reference to another predicate which has already entered the language in this fashion. As the language develops some predicates enter into general statements such as "all apples are green" or "all stars shine at night". These statements function as instructions telling the user under what conditions given predicates may legitimately be employed. At this stage our hypothetical language appears free of underlying theory and might therefore appear a good candidate for an independent observation language.

But cases may now arise in which the general statements governing the use of a descriptive predicate in certain situations are not compatible with all the accepted meanings of the predicate. Consider for example the statement "mammals live on land" as a general statement governing the use of the word "mammal". This statement is quite sufficient in most situations, but difficulties arise when we consider classes of creature (such as dolphins) which we categorise as mammals even though they do not live on land. It can be counter-argued that we were merely mistaken to assume that "mammals live on land" was a correct general statement governing the use of "mammal" and that the correct statement is something like "all mammals suckle their young." But it is however easily seen that were the state of our empirical background knowledge different the first statement would have been quite adequate. It seems as a result that our choice of criteria to identify the correct usages of terms and concepts is a pragmatic process involving decisions on our part that are not immune to change as the state of our knowledge changes. Furthermore if a language is to be usable, its predicates must be intersubjectively testable and hence in principle at least they must be falsifiable and hence theory-laden. In simple terms it seems unlikely that there exists an unique representation of reality. What we see, hear, feel etc. depends on what we expect to sense in different situations and there is more than one way of interpreting the world around us. This incidentally rather undermines any literary criticism based on the 'irrelevance to real life' of any piece of literature. To use an example once more: a child walking past a chemical factory will smell rotten eggs, whilst a chemist walking past five minutes later will smell hydrogen sulphide.

I am now in a position to attempt an answer to my original question, for this implausibility of any independent observation language has some

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[5] For a more rigorous treatment of the following see M.B.Hesse: Scientific Inference (first chapter).

interesting consequences for recent philosophical discussions concerning the way science and scientists operate. The traditional view of science as a process whereby hypotheses are proposed and consequences deduced which are then compared with experimental fact is no longer adequate since we have shown that there is no such thing as an independent body of facts which may be used as objective criteria for a choice between rival theories. [6] In response to this difficulty more recent accounts of scientific method emphasise the role of scientific theories as models which represent a scientific reality. The choice between rival theories then depends on the success or failure of the model within its own conceptual framework.

When a scientist is using a certain model, such as the free-electron theory of metals, he is totally immersed within the scientific world-picture. While he is immersed in a theory which assumes the existence of electrons, then when dealing with problems in the domain of that theory the objectivity of electrons cannot be qualified. [7] It must be emphasised that this does not (or need not) imply any absolute belief in the truth of the theory, for the scientist might well approach the next problem assuming a model which takes matter to be continuous, and when as must eventually happen the model proves empirically inadequate and a superior theory is proposed, it will be abandoned.

Those familiar with Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-Stories" should by now be aware of my intended argument, for I wish to show that this epistemic attitude on the part of a scientist when confronted by a theory is very similar to the state of mind required of a reader of Fantasy. According to Tolkien in his essay, the effect of a successful piece of Fantasy on the reader will be to create for him a Secondary World into which he can enter and where he will believe the events that happen there. "What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it what he relates is 'true'; it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you were, as it were, inside." [8] This statement is very similar to my previous description of how scientists use theories. Thus it can be argued that a scientist proposing a new theory is in many respects very similar to a writer composing a work of Fantasy. He chooses a framework within which he will work, and then within that context he builds a self-consistent model. The only additional constraint on the scientist is that his work must be more than aesthetically pleasing, it must also provide observable results which are isomorphic with the observable results of the Real World. In this the scientist's task is perhaps the more difficult, for his consistent model must also be capable of predicting events in the world we see around us. This is not to say that a writer's task is not difficult. As Tolkien says, it is easy enough to say "the green sun" but to

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[6] For a naive account of the traditional approach see for example K. Popper: Conjectures & Refutations. A more sophisticated account is I. Lakatos: The methodology of scientific research-programmes.

[7] See van Fraassen: The Scientific Image.

[8] JRRT: "On Fairy-Stories" in 'The Monsters and the Critics' and other essays (p.132 in 1st ed.).

build a Secondary World inside which a green sun is real requires far more; it requires Art. (Incidentally I find Tolkien's choice of words in this example rather amusingly apt for my purpose, for not only Fantasy, but Science also can build worlds where blue or red, if not green, suns are real!)

To conclude then I propose that, paradoxically perhaps, scientists have exactly the right kind of mind to appreciate Fantasy, for their vocation is to build other worlds which allow us to look at the familiar everyday world around us in a new light, and that is also perhaps the function of Fantasy. On a more down-to-earth level I do not doubt that others could find more pragmatic answers to my question, one being the fact that scientists, typically being untrained in the field of literature, are more open-minded! I however prefer my explanation.

Iwan Rhys Morus



THE CAMBRIDGE TOLKIEN SOCIETY is a University registered society whose aim is to further interest in the life and works of J.R.R.Tolkien. Meetings are held approximately fortnightly during full term. Membership is £2.00 Annual or £4.50 for life (covering only three years' Anor's). For further information contact the Secretary, Adam Atkinson (Trinity College). Subscriptions should be paid to the Treasurer, Mike Percival (Jesus College, or at the address below).

#### ANOR Issue 7

Editor: Peter Gilliver  
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Produced by the Cambridge Tolkien Society (Minas Tirith). Printed by the Cambridge University Computing Service Bookshop from originals prepared on the Cambridge University Computing Service IBM 3081 with Diablo printer, formatted with the Cambridge University GCAL package.

Copies of Anor are available from:

Mike Percival, 46 Church Street, Thriplow, ROYSTON, Herts., SG8 7RE.

The prices of Anors are 40p for issues 1 to 4 and 50p for issues 5 to 7. Issue 8 is due to appear in mid 1985 and will cost 50p - advance orders are accepted. Postage and Packing are as follows:

	inland	surface	<----- Air Mail ----->			
			Europe	Middle East	Americas	Far East & Australia
first copy	20p	25p	45p	50p	60p	65p
each further copy	5p	5p	15p	15p	20p	25p

Payment may be made by cash, British cheque or International Money Order, in sterling only. Cheques etc. should be payable to the Cambridge Tolkien Society.

Copy for the next issue should be sent to Peter Gilliver, Jesus College, CAMBRIDGE, CB5 8EL by 12th April 1985 (preferably a few weeks earlier). Alternatively, copy can be typed directly into the Cambridge University Computer. Details for doing this can be found in TOLKIEN.INFO:ANOR.

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