



AN C OR

Issue 22

Editorial

Welcome to *Anor 22*, only a few months late. To those of you reading this at Oxonmoot; do enjoy yourselves, but don't forget to subscribe to *Anor* for another year. I won't be joining you this year, as I should be sunning myself in the Gard Valley in Provence by now. I hope you enjoy the wide range of articles in this issue and feel provoked into writing something yourself for *Anor 23*. Just in case my regular contributors are feeling lazy, I might be forced to include the words to 'I'm dreaming of a White Gandalf' if I don't get enough material.

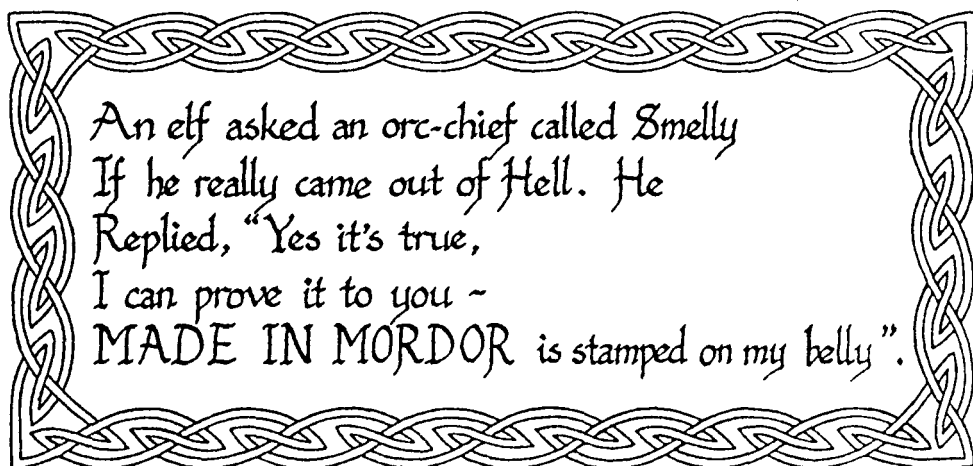
Some of you may have read about the strange events scheduled to happen on the 22nd of September to commemorate the Baggins' birthday. Computers all over the country are expected to celebrate by flashing the message 'Frodo Lives!' The editor and his assistant would like to take this opportunity to deny categorically any responsibility for this happening. Indeed, this issue of *Anor* was lovingly hand-crafted in Bulgaria in a process involving absolutely no computers.

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The Layman's Guide to Advanced Tolkien

Part V: The Annotated Hobbit and Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien

Editor's Introduction

This series was introduced many moons ago by my distinguished predecessor Mike Percival, who has since gone on to better things. (Indeed, I must take this opportunity to congratulate Mike and Maggie, albeit late, on the birth of their son, Lawrence, last December). The main aim of the series remains - to introduce members of the Cambridge Tolkien Society to works of Tolkien beyond the *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*. Although this instalment does not strictly meet that aim it does provide a worthwhile introduction to two intriguing books. There are of course several books in the *History of Middle-earth* series which have yet to be introduced. For those of you who do not have a full collection of *Anors*, we have so far covered only *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, the *Lays of Beleriand* and the minor works. Please contact me if you would like to write an article for this series.

The Annotated Hobbit, J.R.R. Tolkien

With annotation by Douglas A. Anderson, Unwin Hyman, 1988, hardback only, £14.95.

At £14.95 this sounds expensive, but it is a large and well produced tome, although my copy has a couple of printing blots which somewhat spoil the effect. The original text occupies about half of each page, leaving room for the many notes and illustrations.

It would be worth buying the book for the illustrations alone. As well as all JRRT's pictures for the original edition of *The Hobbit*, there are more of his pictures, and many from foreign editions. Fortunately, only the better foreign attempts have been used. If you want to see the more, shall I say, 'imaginative' attempts, you will have to talk the Committee into inviting Christina Scull to repeat her slide show on 'Illustrating Tolkien'.¹

Having said that, one portrayal of the Elvenking is suspect and some of Smaug fail to do him justice. JRRT's picture of Bilbo wearing boots, and conversing with the dragon, previously

¹. I seem to remember a distinct lack of non-committee members at the original showing last year, but that says more about the membership than the presentation.

used on the cover of some paperback editions, re-appears here. I had not noticed this mystery, but Anderson is able to point us to the solution.

The book contains a list of all revisions made to the text between various editions.² These range from changing single words to the rewriting of most of Chapter Five. This was required to bring the story of the encounter with Gollum and his relationship with the ring in line with the story of the *Lord of the Rings* which subsequently had been written. The rest of the revisions shed little light on the story, but do show JRRT's concern to get things perfect.

In contrast I found most of the annotations helpful. Some points I knew from Northern myth and others from *Letters*.³ However the information is much easier to digest when arranged alongside the original text, rather than scattered amongst other sources. The lack of an index is annoying, but such is life.

On one issue the annotator begs to disagree with the author. Tolkien denies any association of the words 'rabbit' and 'hobbit', but Anderson cites several instances where Bilbo is likened to a rabbit.⁴ Even given the original mention of the hobbit as living in a hole (which the annotator overlooks) this is hardly proof that the words are related. I find it more likely that the similarity of the sounds led to an association of the creatures.

Some additional poems are reproduced, but none are of great relevance or quality. 'Goblin Feet' is so bad that it is amusing; a far cry from the marching song of the Uruk Hai, indeed. But it is of some historical interest (Tolkien himself was ashamed of it later and wished it could be 'buried forever').

Tolkien also became dissatisfied with the childish nature of *The Hobbit*. I found this conspicuous when reading the story this time. Although the plot and themes are adult, he is often patronising in his commentary on the action. In particular, Gandalf appears petty and weedy,⁵ despite his great drinking feat - over a quart of mead at Beorn's house with no noticeable effects. (None of us did that well at the Puntmoot).

Yet a good reason for buying this book is to be encouraged to read *The Hobbit* again. For all its childishness, it has great moments and is a better read than much of what is currently being salvaged from JRRT's waste paper basket. It is interesting to learn more of the background to the story.

Whether Tolkien would have approved is doubtful. He was never keen on people speculating about his writings. Anderson admits this, but argues that it is worth showing the links with his philological work and with Northern literature. In this he has done a good job.

2. Invaluable for those of us who do not possess a copy of the first edition.

3. In his annotations, Anderson relies heavily on Tolkien's published letters, and rightly so.

4. Editor's note: Anderson also omits the reference from *LoTR* where Aragorn discovers Frodo's mithril coat: 'here's a pretty hobbit-skin to wrap an elven-princeling in' cf. 'here's a pretty rabbit-skin to wrap the baby-bunting in!' (from an old English nursery rhyme. noted in Geoffrey Ridden 'York Notes on the *Lord of the Rings*' (see review in *Anor* 6)).

5. See however, discussion on this topic in *Anors* 19 and 21.

However, there are two mysteries which Anderson passes over. Firstly, stone-giants are said to inhabit the Misty Mountains. No giants are mentioned in *The Silmarillion* or its forerunners, nor in *LotR*.⁶ Secondly, Anderson mentions that all the dwarf names except Balin are derived from the *Voluspa*, but does not attempt to explain why this one was not. I suspect it was simply an invention to rhyme with Dwalin. Anderson also points out that Thorin's epithet 'Oakenshield' is a translation of 'Eikinskjaldi' from the same list.

The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien,

A selection edited by Humphrey Carpenter, with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien, 1981, Hardback, George Allen and Unwin, 1989, Paperback, Unwin Paperbacks, £6.99.

As students of Middle-earth we are fortunate that a collection of Tolkien's letters has been published. long available in hardback, it is only recently that it was brought out in paperback. For the real students among us, who cannot afford both to drink *and* buy expensive books, this is invaluable.⁷

The collection is large (over 350 letters), very readable and varied. Carpenter (who also wrote the official biography of JRRT) has made a careful selection, concentrating on those letters which tell us about the mythology. But we do get to see other sides to Tolkien's life, which even the biography does not show clearly.

The first is his Roman Catholicism. I had not detected this until I read *Leaf by Niggle*, an allegory of purgatory. The idea of purgatory also features in the *Book of Lost Tales*, but in Letter 246 Tolkien refers to Frodo's time in Valinor as a purgatory. The biography makes clear the extent of his commitment to the Church of Rome. The letters make clear the extent of his beliefs. 'I myself am convinced by the Petrine claims, nor looking around the world does there seem much doubt which (if Christianity is true) is the True Church' (Letter 250). He was never happy about C.S. Lewis sticking with the Church of England.

Some of the letters deal with the conflict between his Christian beliefs and his books, for example whether orcs were irredeemably wicked (Letter 153). The fact that he took these conflicts seriously simply shows how earnestly he took his beliefs. Another intriguing topic is that of the nature of death. In the Bible it made clear that death is the penalty for man's rebellion against God. But JRRT portrays death as the gift of Iluvatar to Men, and argues that it is only the lies of the Enemy which make it out to be a bad thing. This theme is common to *The Silmarillion*. He states also (in Letter 211), that *LotR* is not about Power, but

6. I am sure there must be an *Anor* reader out there who is dying to find a topic to write on. How about a spot of research into this conundrum. (Or even some speculation). Go on - it will give you hours of fun, and you will earn the undying gratitude of the editor.

7. Well, £6.99 actually, but you know what I mean!

about Death and Immortality. It never seemed that way to me - perhaps this is another topic for *Anor*.

On the use of 'dwarves' instead of 'dwarfs' (Letter 17), Tolkien describes it as 'private bad grammar' - somewhat different from his account in *LotR*, where he claims he did it to distance them from fairy-tale dwarfs. He goes on to point out that the correct 'historical' plural would be 'dwarrows'! He is keen on retrospective justification in his letters, such as explaining the contradiction between the hobbit custom of giving others presents on one's birthday, but Smeagol demanding the Ring as a present on his birthday (Letter 214).

This care in making his world consistent is one of the reasons why he guarded his work jealously. He did not take kindly to translators murdering his naming schemes - understandable when he wrote the stories to find a home for the languages he had developed. He took even less kindly to film-makers murdering the rest of the book. Do not miss his comments on the proposed story-line for a film of *LotR* (Letter 210).

Many of his letters were in reply to people who thought they had found the origins of his names. He denied any such origins (for example the rabbit/hobbit similarity), except where he found appealing sound combinations which could be rationalised into the existing languages. The letters provide a wealth of general linguistic information, but not in a compact form.

Tolkien could be scathing in his letters, such as about the German publishers who wrote to enquire whether he was of Aryan origin, or of the 'fan' who intended to write a sequel to *The Hobbit*. In both these cases it is understandable, but at other times seems less reasonable. However, more often we see how he enjoyed exploring the details of his subcreation with others who respected it.

The editing seems competent, although one always wonders what revelations have been omitted. This book does have a useful index, although it makes the mistake of listing the Icelandic translator as 'U. Adalsteinsdottir'. That makes as much sense as listing Aragorn as 'A. Arathorn's son'! It is regrettable that the English abandoned patronymics (or, rather, father-names), but they might at least respect those countries more sensible than themselves.

These letters cover many of the questions left unanswered in the books, and the collection is indispensable in any discussion on Middle-earth. Even dipping into it reveals gems which tell us much about JRRT. I cannot think of any reasonable excuse not to buy, borrow or burgle a copy.

Jeremy King

The Lord of the Rings - in one hour

Look I hate being negative about things. Can't you get someone else to do it? (Like who, eh? Now stop whinging and get on with it! Ed.) OW!! Okay, okay. Here goes.

Well, a few poor souls gathered at The Mill for a swift pint or several to prepare them for the ordeal which awaited. Undaunted by a plague of wasps, they waited until the last possible moment for latecomers (who shall remain nameless) before setting off to Memorial Court gardens to face whatever lay in store ...

And what terrible nightmare awaited? Nothing less than an adaptaion of J.R.R. Tolkein's (sic) *The Lord of the Rings* (what, all of it? - someone was heard to exclaim) by the National Student Theatre Company as part of the Cambridge Festival fringe. The use of the 'unorthodox' spelling of the author's name - and a cast list of four - did nothing to restore confidence. It seemed as though the latecomes (who didn't arrive until the performance was already underway) had decided not to turn up - and who were we to blame them?

And so, the spectacle began. It soon emerged that we were to be treated not so much to a dramatisation as to a 'dramatic' re-telling with music - rathe rlike the hypothetical origins of Greek Tragedy. Imagine then, four apparently post-nuclear troubadours wandering around the stage¹ and the audience, giving a potted plot summary of the book, and you'll have an idea of what it was like to be there. In fact this was quite an interesting idea, with very effective music; but it was marred by disappointing execution.

It would be easy to write a savage review, and tear this production apart ... but I'm not like that (who laughed?). Instead I shall make a few comments which I hope will appear constructive. First of all, the setting. plcasant as Memorial Court Gardens are, I feel that an indoor performance, with subtle lighting to create an atmosphere of a storytelling in, say, Meduseld would have been more effective would have been far more effective. This is, of course, determined by budget, and I suppose a fringe performance couldn't stretch that far. So I'll forgive them that. Much worse, though, was the adaptation² of the story. Obviously cuts have to be made, but to omit the exploits of Merry and Pippin entirely, most of the 'cucatastrophe', and the Scouring of the Shire, is disastrous: shades indeed of Zimmerman's film adaptation³.

On top of that, rushed delivery led to occasional confusion of names, and made events completely obscure, so that one would imagine someone with no previous knowledge of the book would be completely lost. They didn't even use the original words half the time (I for one don't remember reading 'OK' anywhere in anything by Tolkien!). There was a carelessness about names even when applied to the correct characters: we experienced

1. For stage read 'clear area of lawn strewn with various pieces of rusty metal pipe'.

2. Read 'Butchery'.

3. See *Letters* pp270-7.

Lobella, Sam Gamwise, Eregium, Miners Tirith, Anduin for Anduril, Khazad-dune, Sore-on (curiously only in the second half of the performance) and Arwen Avonstar. And since when has Shelob had glowing red eyes, or the plural of Nazgul been Nazguls? And what on earth does 'they lay wandering' mean?

To sum up, a nice idea that went disastrously wrong, mostly through carelessness. Maybe I was expecting too much, but it could have been improved immensely if only they had retained a bit more of the story and maybe split the performance with an interval: this one hour, one act plot summary was just not satisfactory. The music and merging of voices was atmospheric, and Gollum effective, but the hasty delivery ruined any build up of suspense and destroyed the tension of the best bit of the book. I suppose the BBC's thirteen hour adaptation is about as far as it is possible to reduce the text without losing the very things that make the *Lord of the Rings* such a great piece of literature.

So everyone went back to the Steward's residence where a new batch of ale was ready, and that was much more successful!

Stephen Linley



"It's heavy on me, Sam..." TC 394

Angmarian Ghouls

Well east coast ghouls are hip
I really dig those shrouds they wear
And the southern ghouls with the way they drool
They knock me out when I'm down there
The mid-west wholesale slaughters
Really made me feel alright
And the northern ghouls with the way they kiss
They keep the peasants home at night

I wish they all could be Angmarian (ghouls)
I wish they all could be Angmarian
I wish they all could be Angmarian ghouls

The west coast has the sunshine
So the ghouls stay underground
I dig a bijou barrow with a long-fanged ghoul
In a high-rise burial mound
I've flown all over this Middle-Earth
And I've smelled all kinds of ghouls
Yeah but I couldn't wait to get back to the state
That has the meanest ghouls in the world

I wish they all could be Angmarian (ghouls)
I wish they all could be Angmarian
I wish they all could be Angmarian ghouls

How Bored Can You Get?

Americanisms in Bored of the Rings *A glossary for British readers*

Introductory note

If an obel (†) is placed after an entry it indicates that the word or phrase is used with its American meaning, rather than as a name. Nonsense words from the many elven songs are omitted.

The glossary

Anacin (Anduin, p.xvii): American name for Anadin aspirin tablets.

Andrea Doria (Elvish name for Moria, p.81): A private yacht found at sea with no crew aboard and breakfast laid out on the cabin table. There were no signs of any disturbance but none of the passengers or crew were ever found.

Arbor Day (Boggie (hobbit) election day, p.xix): An official national holiday originally dedicated to planting trees. A popular excuse for a day off work.

Bactine† (used by boggies in preparation for battle, p.144): A brand of spray disinfectant with a mild anaesthetic, for minor cuts and scrapes.

Ban-Lon (Material of Garfinkel's (Glorfindel) tunic, p. 63): An artificial fabric.

Barbisol (Isildur, p.58): Graduate of Barbizon School of beauty - for fashion models.

Beltelephon (the Senile) (designer of Minas Troney (Minas Tirith), p.136): Bell telephone - unofficial US telephone service monopoly until broken up by court order in 1981.

Bocaraton (historian, p.136): Boca Raton - a city in Florida.

Borax (Angmar, p.xvii): Brand name for a laundry brightener, based on boron.

Bromosel (Boromir): Short name for Bromoseltzer, a brand of indigestion tablets.

Chicken Delight† (p.xx): A chain of fast food take-away and delivery restaurants specialising in bad fried chicken, though they also offer truly awful pizza.

Cisco Kid† (Riddle topic between Dildo (Bilbo) and Goddam (Gollum), p.xx): Masked hero of a popular radio and TV western.

Clotty Peristalt (Daddy Twofoot, p.24): A double reference to the side-effects of a high cholesterol diet - blood clots and peristaltic blood pressure.

Conastoga (Elvish term of greeting, p.89): A water-tight wagon used extensively to settle the Far West.

'Damn the Torpedoes' (Stomper's (Strider's) battle-cry, p.56): First part of orders given by US admiral in the Battle of Manila Harbour (1893). He had just been warned that the harbour entrance was blocked by torpedoes (floating mines). The quote continues: 'full speed ahead!'

Don't Tread on Me (One interpretation of the Ring inscription, p.73): Slogan on New Hampshire flag, which displayed an open-jawed snake. It was intended as a warning to the British and is still the state motto.

Drano (Drago, p.xviii): A brand of drain cleaner, almost 100% lye.

Dristan (Elvish farewell - 'a dristan nasograph', p.77): Brand of cold tablets, much more effective than anything I have found in Cambridge.

Evilyn Wood (Old Forest, p.39): Founder of a chain of schools teaching speed reading.

'For those whose campaigns peak too soon' (prophetic warning, p.59): Refers to candidates for the presidency whose campaigns run out of energy and cash long before polling day.

Four-F† (Used by Benzedrine (Bombadil) as an excuse for not going with the boggies, p.47): The lowest possible draft classification. The US will probably offer unconditional surrender, rather than start drafting men classified as 4F.

Free Silver (Exclamation of horror by Gimlet (Gimli), alongside Sorcery, Witchcraft and Devilry, p.87): Rallying cry of the Populist party in the late nineteenth century, the most successful third party in US history. Refers to the demand of farmers to decrease the official ratio of gold to silver prices, expected to cause inflation and ease the farm debt crisis.

'From the Halls of Khezaduma to the shores of Lithui' (Nares' marching song, p.106): The US marines' marching song runs 'From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli'. It refers to the capture of Mexico City and to the destruction of the Tripolitanian pirates in the early nineteenth century.

Gabby Hayes (Derogatory reference by Legolam to Gimlet, p.70): Highly talkative comedian.

Gallowine (Brandywine river, p.xviii): Gallo wine - a popular Californian vintage (Vintage? - Ed).

Geritol (Home of Gimlet, p.101): A brand of iron supplement for elderly people.

Hartz (Mountains, (Weather Hills to north of Weathertop), p.57): A brand of pet care products.

Hojo Hominigrits (Barlman Butterbur, p.50): Hojo is a nickname for Howard Johnson's - a nationwide chain of motels noted for good (although ordinary) American food. Hominy and Grits is a popular dish from the old South, made from molasses and corn.

Indian-head nickel (subdivision of the Sty (Shire), p.xix): US coin minted during late nineteenth century.

Kelvinator (elf-rune on Benzedrine's (Bombadil's) amulet, p.42): A brand of refrigerator.

Kielbasa† (p.105): Polish for sausage.

Magnavox (Faraslax' (Faramir's) lieutenant, p.131): A brand of television set.

Maybelline† (Used by Nesselrode (Nimrodel), p.87): A brand of make-up.

Mazola (Sorhed's (Sauron's) troll wife, p.132): A brand of corn-oil and margarine.

Moxie (Merry): The quality of being streetwise, energetic and ambitious.

Narcs (ores): Slang for undercover police narcotics officers.

Naugahyde (Fallohide, P.xvii): A brand of artificial leather.

Nephritis (Beltelephon's (qv) concubine, p.136): Inflammation of the kidneys.

No-doZ (part of dwarven farewell, p.77): Brand name for caffeine pills.

Noxzema (star, p.92): Brand of cold cream for skin treatment.

Nozdrulville sluggers (weapons of the Nozdrul (Nazgul), p.61): After Louisville sluggers - a type of baseball bat.

Oleodor (Eriador, p.xvii): From olcomargarine, an old and more chemically accurate term for margarine.

Orlon (Elrond, p.64): Another artificial fabric, used mainly for carpets.

Oxydol (Goddess of Quick tricks and Small Slams, p.87): A brand of laundry detergent.

PhisoHex (Elven name, p.87): A brand of acne medication.

Pismo (opening word, p.82): From Pismo Beach - a resort town in California.

Pyongyang Panmunjon (Narc (qv) chieftain's challenge, p85): Capital city of South Korea, location of a major amphibious invasion.

Road apple (description of Spam by Pepsi, p.79): Euphemism for horse-droppings.

Roi-tan (Rohan, p.97): A brand of cigars.

Saniflush (Shadowfax, p.102): A brand of toilet bowl cleaner.

Saranrap (elf-king, p70): Brand name for cling-wrap.

Serutan (Saruman): A diet supplement for elderly people.

Short-term municipals (dragon treasure, p.xx): Short-term bonds sold by city governments to finance projects. Although the interest rate is low, the premium is exempt from state and national income tax and the bonds are attractive investments for the rich.

Spumoni (Silverlode/Celebrant river, p.86): Italian style ice-cream.

The Coast† (destination in Tim Benzadrine's song, p.42): the west coast of the USA, in particular California, noted as a centre for hippies in the '60s.

Top O' the Mark (revolving restaurant at the top of Isintower (Orthanc), p.121): A very fancy and expensive restaurant which revolves slowly at the top of the Mark Taper building in New York.

Torpedoes (common job for boggies, p.xvii): gang-land slang for hired gun-men.

Velveeta (morning star, p.92): A brand of processed cheese.

Villanova Balhog (Balrog, p.82): Villanova is a catholic university noted for the quality of its basketball team. Hence the ominous 'Dribble. Dribble. Fake. Dribble. Fake. Shoot.' Someone who refuses to pass is a ball-hog.

Wetbacks (new arrivals in Whee (Bree), p.49): Illegal immigrants to the US - so called because the commonest way of entering the country was by swimming - either across the St. Lawrence or the Rio Grande.

Weldwood (Mirkwood, p.74): A type of artificial wood panels.

Zazu Pits (Cracks of Doom, p.33): Female black jazz singer of the 1950s.

Prepared by James Kuyper Jr.
with the assistance of Stephen Linley

MIDDLE EARTH REVISITED



Tolkien on Tape

'*The Hobbit*' - '*The Acclaimed BBC Radio Dramatisation*' (four one-hour cassettes: BBC Enterprises, £16.95)

'*The Lord of the Rings*' - Adapted for radio by Brian Sibley & Michael Bakewell (thirteen one-hour cassettes: BBC Enterprises, £39.95)

Yes, o unbelievers! Your Roving Reviewer has actually sat through seventeen hours' worth of BBC cassettes in order to bring you this report on Bilbo as Broadcaster (that's enough alliteration. Ed.). Now read on . . .

Michael Kilgariff's adaptation of *The Hobbit* suffers from two major flaws: firstly, it is much too short (necessitating some hefty cuts); and secondly, the cast appear to be labouring under some peculiar misconceptions about the pronunciation of Tolkien's names. After constant subjection to such oddities as Tor-EEN, Goll-OOM and Gand-ALF, one begins to suspect that Gobl-EENS are waiting just around the corner! With these provisos, I found the dramatization generally very enjoyable. The acting is on the whole excellent: special mention must go to Bilbo, Smaug, 'Golloom' and the tipsy Master of Laketown. The adaptation is generally very faithful, despite some rather forced attempts to make sure each episode ends with a cliff-hanger and the aforementioned cuts, including the cup-stealing episode (beloved of source-critics) and, still worse, the auction of Bag End (beloved of writers on 'Tolkien and the Classical Epic'). Other victims of the blue pencil are the Riddle Game, Gandalf's trick for introducing the dwarves to Beorn, and Bilbo's Conversation with Smaug. All these scenes lose much of their verbal humour owing to the heavy cuts. Nevertheless, the overall atmosphere of the book is well captured, as is the development of Bilbo's character and the heightening of the tone towards the 'heroic' climax.

David Cain's pseudo-mediaeval music is initially odd, but definitely grows on one (though many of the songs are - perhaps mercifully - cut or omitted). The sound effects, particularly the crowd scenes, are also excellent ... although our old friend the thrush (or seagull?!) sounds like a cat this time. And while I'm on the subject, why the Welsh Lakemen and adenoidal elves?

The Lord of the Rings is both stronger and weaker than its companion set. In many ways a very memorable production, it suffers from a few almost embarrassing moments. By contrast with *The Hobbit*, the crowd scenes and battles are terrible, sounding without exception like four people cheering in chorus or clattering cutlery as appropriate, and vainly attempting to impersonate a multitude. Stephen Oliver's music, while generally pleasant and often effective, is also responsible for some unfortunate aberrations. The songs are not, as a rule, performed by the cast, as in *The Hobbit*, but by The Ambrosian Singers (!), whose trebles and tenors somehow fail signally to sound like Elves, Rohirrim or whatever. Particularly cringe-worthy is the Eagle's song announcing the downfall of Sauron, sung in an improbable treble and accompanied by peculiar plinking and clanking noises (had he got entangled in Sam's cooking

gear in the ruin of Mordor?). By this stage, the rebellious audience were beginning to shout 'no singing' (shades of Monty Python...) every time the torture seemed about to threaten!

On a more serious note (sorry), the adaptation is again generally effective. 'Cuts were obviously necessary, but have been sensitively managed. Sibley and Bakewell opt for one major excision (the Old Forest, Tom Bombadil and the Barrow Downs are omitted entirely) to avoid excessive cuts elsewhere. The passage of time is often effectively conveyed by the use of music and short scenes, and the time-scale seldom seems contracted (perhaps only in Frodo and Sam's monotonous march across Mordor). Less easily justifiable is the adaptors' meddling with the narrative structure of the novel. In the later episodes, the action shifts rapidly back and forth between the various members of the broken Fellowship: perhaps such shifts were felt to be necessary in a weekly radio serial, but much of the suspense of Frodo's capture by the orcs of Cirth Ungol, Aragorn's use of the Corsairs' ships, or the fate of the Captains of the West, is thereby lost. Similarly, we learn why Gandalf is delayed in returning to Bag End long before Frodo finds out where he has got to.

These defects are, however, far outweighed by the brilliance of almost all the lead actors. Since the first broadcast of the series, Gandalf, Frodo and Gollum have always spoken for me in the voices of Michael Horden, Ian Holm and Peter Woodthorpe. All three are superb: Michael Horden's Gandalf combines majesty, humour and compassion (though Stephen said he couldn't help thinking of Paddington Bear, which I suppose would be a disadvantage!); Ian Holm gives a masterly interpretation of Frodo's strengths and weaknesses, his 'heroization' (nasty Americanism) and his relationship with Sam, and manages the difficult task of being both hobbit and hero superbly; while Peter Woodthorpe is by turns ferocious, wheedling and spiteful, carrying the Smeagol/Gollum dichotomy with thorough conviction - and making wonderfully unpleasant hissing and 'gollum' noises in his throat. Very effective performances are also delivered by Richard O'Callaghan and John McAndrew (Merry and Pippin), Stephen Thorne (Treebeard) and Peter Howell (Saruman). The seductive quality of Saruman's voice is effectively conveyed by 'homing in' on his speeches, and 'The Voice of Sauron' (sic) is one of the best of the thirteen episodes. I also liked the distinction in voice-quality between the different races, which was subtle but convincing, and very helpful for the listener. The one character about whom I felt strong reservations was Aragorn (Robert Stephens), who not only has a slight lisp, but comes across as melodramatic and not a little pompous.

As in *The Hobbit*, the atmosphere of the original is generally very well conveyed. I found the latter episodes really gripping, and the final episode is superb, mingling pathos and humour, and capturing the sad-happy feel of the concluding chapters of the book wonderfully. The contrast between the Shire scenes and the 'heroic' scenes is also very effectively handled, both at the beginning and the end of the series.

Oh, and the box is rather pretty, too!

Findegil

Comment

I suppose one 'letter' is one better than 'last time'. So to kick off, some comments on heroism in Tolkien from Stephen Linley:

I would like to bring into the discussion Tolkien's *Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthebn's Son*, and the short passage which follows it entitled *Ofermod*, as both can be seen as supporting Jeremy's point.

The first of these is notable for the constant chiding of the youthful Torthelm's 'romantic' notions of heroism, full of old poetic ideas; by the older, more down-to earth Tidwald, who is keen to point out the realities of battle and death:

*You can talk Tolta! Your time'll come,
And it'll look less easy than the lays make it
When your shield is shivered, between shame and death
is hard choosing.*

And again:

*Aye, that's battle for you,
and no worse today than wars you sing of,
When Froda fell, and Finn was slain
The world wept then, as it weeps today:
You can hear the tears through the harp's twanging.*

Such things as the poets sang of may have been alright long ago or for the heathen, but 'these are Christian days..; Beorhtnoth we bear, not Beowulf here.' This concurs with Jeremy's last sentence, that the heroic ideal is in a sense inadequate, when personal pride outweighs responsibility or loyalty to others.

Tolkien's short treatise argues that this very same view is held by the Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition. There is explicit criticism of Beorhtnoth's decision to make the Battle of Maldon more of a 'fair fight' in the surviving fragment of that poem, and Tolkien suggests that there may have been more in the lost portions. Similarly there is implicit criticism of Beowulf's final 'glorious' act in that poem, as there is of Arthur in *Gawain and the Green Knight*. In all these cases the grounds are the same: loyal subordinates are put in unnecessary peril for the glory of their liege-lord. For these same subordinates to put themselves in peril out of loyalty (which may include a desire to win glory for their lords) is a different matter.

It is in my view, the mark of a truly sensitive heroic poetry to bring to light and to explore the tragic precariousness of the hero and the ingrained 'ideal'. There are tantalising hints of such treatment in the 'Maldon' fragment, there is similar treatment of the 'chivalrous' ideal (which

is really the same thing) in Gawain, and it is one of the major threads of the *Iliad* - but I guess you've had enough classics for a while!

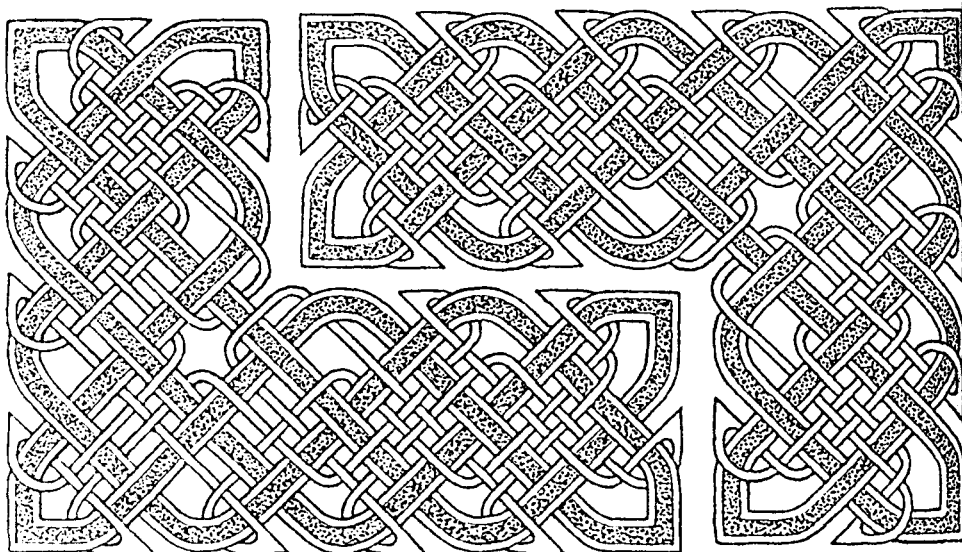
And finally: why does nobody ever comment on my articles? Surely there must be something left to say on the matter?

Commentary

I also have some reflections on heroism to add. Reading the articles by Jeremy and by Monica in *Anor 21* demonstrated that there are clearly a number of different models of heroism, belonging to different cultures. One is the Icelandic (or perhaps generally Northern) model in which heroism is closely related to honour. Yet Monica's article revealed that the main theme of heroism in the classical or epic mode is moral (to do good) and as Stephen points out above, honour without responsibility is not truly heroic. Finally, as I discuss elsewhere in this issue, I believe there is a functional definition which spans both these and more, which is simply based on the ability of the individual to, in a sense, make history .. a concept now rejected by many historians who perceive that an account of history based on the deeds of individuals is normally inadequate. Can anyone think of any more?

Finally, especially for our loyal readers a comment on Ian Alexander's article on 'Tolkien and the First World War' in *Anor 12*. Having finally ploughed through the *History of the Lord of the Rings* as far as Lorien I discovered that an early name for the Dead Marshes (or at least an area adjacent to them, was in fact No Man's Land - this demonstrates even more clearly that Tolkien was probably directly influenced by his war-time experiences.

Editor



Aragorn at the Prancing Pony



Lynne Elson

Fionavar: the first of all worlds?

Guy Gavriel Kay's *Fionavar Tapestry* is one of the latest of a long line of fantasy books to be compared (at least in the jacket notes) with *LotR*. Hopefully the books will be familiar to many of you by now: Mike Whitaker did after all give them a wonderful review in *Anor 18*, suggesting that for once the publisher's blurb was right. I too can strongly recommend them.

Fionavar, the stage for the action, is said to be the 'first of all worlds' which all the others (including our own) reflect to a greater or lesser degree. Those of you who have read it will have noticed that in certain respects Fionavar would appear to reflect Middle-earth. The most obvious are in the geography of the world and its inhabitants, perhaps less immediately so are those relating to the plot. This article attempts to identify and begin to catalogue some of these reflections.

Geography

Except insofar as Middle-earth and Fionavar lie on the Western Coast of a larger continent (a coincidence with a 50-50 chance) there is little resemblance between them on a grand scale. However there are aspects of geography that are similar and that would appear to go beyond mere coincidence. Pendaran Wood is not only the haunt of evil creatures, but also of powerful spirits. These are perhaps more self-interested than malign, but include trees with abilities like those of the Old Forest. Indeed Pendaran bears a great resemblance to the original, much larger Old Forest.

The home of the Dwarves is, not surprisingly, underground; in caverns delved deep into the twin peaks of Banir Lok and Banir Tal. But between the peaks lies a lake, deep and reflective: the Crystal Lake, Calor Diman; Mirrormere. Durin saw his crown in Mirrormere, the king of the dwarves of Fionavar is selected by Calor Diman. The land of the lios alfar lies in Shadow, hidden by spells from mortal men. In Daniloth, the Shadowland, time runs differently. Similar indeed to Lothlorien, Daniloth is also a land of beautiful trees and flowers.

Beyond Daniloth lies Andarien, once populous now bleak and devastated, destined to be the scene of the decisive battle. It lies nigh to Starkadh, the black pyramidal fortress of the Dark Lord as Dagorlad, the Battle Plain, lies outside the Morannon and Barad-dur.

Of these similarities I would suggest that two are particularly significant reflections: Daniloth and Calor Diman. This is more because of their meaning in relation to the inhabitants of that location, than because of their physical form. Thus we turn to a second group of reflections: the inhabitants of the land.

Inhabitants

We should not forget the humans: they are not omnipresent in fantasy worlds, but both in Fionavar and in Middle-earth (at least at the time of the War of the Ring) they form the largest and most geographically widespread part of the population. One particular group of humans bears comparison with the Riders of Rohan. The Dalrei of Fionavar are also riders and warriors of great skill who are allied to their human neighbours. However they are less sedentary than the Rohirrim and travel around their territory on a seasonal basis.

Although like humans, dwarves are clearly not Tolkien's own creation, the dwarves of Fionavar are very reminiscent of those of Middle-earth, even to the spelling. However, the elves of Middle-earth are very distinctive compared with those of myth, and the lios alfar are also tall, powerful, beautiful and the central element of the forces of light. The lios too are attracted by the sound of the sea and when their time in Fionavar is over (when they '*hear their song*'), they too travel westwards to a land set aside for them by the Creator.

In Middle-earth it is suggested that the orcs were made from elves by torture and perversion. In Fionavar, the place of orcs as the warriors of the dark is taken by svart alfar, clearly related to the lios, although how this relationship arose is not revealed.

Characters

How many classic fantasies do not feature a wise magician, guiding or manipulating events? There are many actually, but Gandalf is a definitive character and all wizards will reflect him in some ways. Loren Silvercloak is reminiscent of Gandalf in other ways too, most interestingly in that he too is (in effect) reborn during the course of the tale. However it is not Silvercloak himself that is killed (and revived), but his magical source Matt Soren. In the process, the link that binds mage and source is broken and both are therefore fundamentally changed. Matt returns to take up his destiny as King of the Dwarves, while Loren becomes his adviser.

Another common motif is the King in Exile. Aileron in this case, was only recently banished. However he, like Aragorn, is a definitive leader of men who returns to inherit the crown and lead his people to war with the Dark Lord.

The Dark Lord against whom he rides, Rakoth Maugrim (The Unraveller) is more closely related to Morgoth himself than to Sauron. His lieutenant is Galadan, one of the Andain (offspring of god and mortal). Galadan reflects Sauron further, as he takes the form of a great wolf at will.

The five visitors to Fionavar from our world do not have direct parallels in Middle-earth, but in literary terms they play the role of the hobbits, leading us from the familiar to the heroic and fantastic, and indeed they too end up playing significant roles in the battles between good and evil.

Plot

Two basic features of similarity have already been touched upon. Firstly, the basic conflict between good and evil, personified in the Dark Lord returned to power and threatening to take over the world. And secondly, the return of the King in Exile to fight against the Dark Lord in alliance with other nations and races. However, Kay is a little more explicit that this is the Last Battle.

In both cases too, the final battle is only won because of the actions of one individual, 'heroic' actions indeed. Both Frodo and Darien endure long journeys into the very heart of the Dark Lord's domain where they make the decisive blow for the forces of good. Yet there is an intriguing and decisive difference: Frodo travels far intending to do good and at the end claims the ring for himself, Darien travels intending to ally himself with Rakoth, yet at the last moment redeems himself and chooses the light.

Religion

Both worlds are basically the creation of a single divine entity. Eru the One in the case of Middle-earth and The Weaver in the case of Fionavar. This is just one element of Kay's tapestry metaphor which pervades the trilogy. The Weaver is conceived of as sitting at a loom, the strands of the tapestry he weaves representing individual lives which are interwoven with each other.

In both worlds there exists an intermediate group of divine beings more able to directly intervene in the actual lives of individuals. But both the Gods & Goddesses of Fionavar and The Valar are forbidden to intervene. The nature of the deities is similar but the Fionavar variant draws far more directly on mythical sources.

I would argue that these differences relate very clearly to Tolkien's own religious beliefs which would have restrained him from developing a particularly non-Christian religious milieu. Eru and the Valar and the fall of Morgoth are all more reminiscent of Christian beliefs than of pre-Christian religion. This can be contrasted with Marion Bradley's *Mists of Avalon* which places Arthurian legend (very effectively) into the context of the struggle between Christian and Pre-Christian religious belief.

The nature of fantasy

In conclusion I want to raise, but not answer, some questions relating to the nature of effective fantasy writing. In doing so I make no apologies for drawing directly on Tolkien's essay, *On Fairy Stories*.

Tolkien's objective in his Middle-earth writing was the sub-creation of a body of myth that could be described as English (rather than Finnish, or Icelandic, or Germanic ...). However, he clearly drew on those existing mythic cultures which formed part of his academic studies. Kay too draws heavily on such cultural sources. My first question is to what extent must fantasy draw on common cultural sources if it is to be 'successful'? Must it stir cultural memories in its readers? Is this the essence of believable fantastic sub-creation? Tolkien

argues that 'fantasy' embraces both the sub-creative art itself and the quality of strangeness and wonder in its expression but that the expression must still have '*the inner consistency of reality*' and thereby approach 'Enchantment'. The closer the fantasy world approaches the real world, the more consistent it will appear, but the less strange.

This leads directly into my second question 'to what extent are certain plot elements functional to effective fantasy?' I would argue that some device that bridges from the real world to the fantastic is essential.

In *On Fairy Stories*, Tolkien argues that 'good fairy-stories' are about the adventures of men in the Perilous Realm' (*The Monsters and the Critics - MatC* - p.113). His definition of that land relates to its nature as a magical place (*MatC*, p.114). I would argue that for effective fantasy that world must also be heroic. By drawing on mythic literature which relates heroic tales featuring beings with whose nature we are familiar (even though we no longer accept their existence in our primary world) the fantasy author can achieve effective sub-creation. Yet she can only 'enchant' us into her world if she somehow draws us into it. Both Tolkien and Kay give us characters with whom we can closely identify and use them to draw us into the 'Perilous Realm'.

Tolkien also discusses a further essential element of fantasy. He writes: '*the eucatastrophic tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function*'. He defines this as

*the sudden joyous turn ... not essentially escapist [but] a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on ... It does not deny the existence of dycatastrophe, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies universal final defeat and in so far is evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief (*MatC*, p.153).*

Tolkien achieved this brilliantly in the *Lord of the Rings* with the deliverance of Middle-earth (and our heroes) from the dominion of Sauron at the last minute. I cannot think of any other tale in which the eucatastrophe is so great. Save one. Heretical as it may be, I will argue that the degree of eucatastrophe in the *Lord of the Rings* is actually surpassed in the *Fionavar Tapestry*, even though in both cases we know that deliverance must come (and indeed how it will be achieved).

Finally I want to offer an answer to the question posed by my title. Many aspects of *Fionavar* reflect Middle-earth, yet few of these reflections are functional to successful fantasy. In my opinion, Tolkien fans should treat the fact that so much has been borrowed as a great honour to Tolkien's genius. In literary terms therefore, Middle-earth is the first of all worlds.

Duncan McLaren

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