

DARK LORD THE BURKISS WAY' CD!



ANTOIR  
35

## Editorial

*What can you see on the horizon? Why do the white gulls call? Across the sea, a pale moon rises; the ships have come to carry you home. And all will turn to silver glass, a light on the water; all souls pass into the West.*

Last term's plea seems to have been heeded, and I present an erudite Anor. Though silliness may here be lacking, I must just plug Tim's latest sketch, *Defeat the Dark Lord the Burkiss Way*, which looks set to be side-splitting, as per usual, and will probably run about June 17th. That will make up for it!

All students face the Shelob-that-is-Finals, and thus come to the end of their time at Cambridge. I, and many of us, must now do so. In which spirit, I'd like to take a brief moment to do several things. Firstly, to wish Tim all the best with editing Anor next year – I'm sure that he'll do a far better job of it than I have! Second, to give my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to Anor over the last two years and helped me in battles with printers, photocopiers and staplers – it has been a real privilege to chronicle our madness. It's made a Samwise out of me.

Lastly, my apologies to Thea for my opening quote. The horizon is daunting; but still, as the Bard once said, *Westward Ho!* We come to Cambridge hobbits, and perhaps may leave it among the very great. If it has been such with me, many of you are in part responsible for it. The Tolkien Society has been a source of comfort and great strength to me; a place where my degree class meant nothing, and enthusiasm meant it all. Here, at the end of all things, I thank you all.

*Anna Slack, Editor*

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## Steward's Report

Wow! I can't believe it's three years<sup>1</sup> since I arrived at the CTS Squash in Selwyn in my second week here. This last year we've done some many different things, and, Anna having instructed me writing a Steward's Report for Anor was a mandatory requirement, I thought I'd share some of them.

The year started off<sup>2</sup> with a trip to see Howard Shore conducting the Lord of the Rings. I don't think I've seen so many fans of the films in one place before, and I doubt that I will again. And, typically, I was in floods of tears by the time 'Into the West' played out into the concert hall. Altogether, it was a brilliant trip to take with my fellow hobbits!

Then came the Lord of the Rings Reading. Anor has been filled with numerous accounts of it and most people reading this will have either seen or participated in it, so I won't talk too long about the reading. But I would like to just add my words of praise to the wonderful cast, and recall the highlights: the fun we had in the Party scene; the impact that Moria had; Naath's constant battles with the tape recorder and frustration with the same; Jonathan's creepy Nazgul-scream; the shock of my mother as Shelob; and the Cracks of Doom. I'd also like to thank and applaud my wonderful co-directors/producers, Esther, Becky, Anna and Pip; I can't believe how we managed to do so much in so little time! Naturally, largely thanks to Anna and Esther's evil schemes, by the end I was in floods of tears.<sup>3</sup>

When we returned to Cambridge in October, the first thing to do was Freshers' Fair... for 14 hours. Highlights in the debates we've had this year were: Gandalf - Mentor or Mental; finally winning an Eagle Debate (though I would have preferred to save Pippin, or even Gandalf rather than Gimli!); Esther's conversion into Gollum in the Outer Darkness debate; and our film debates, which turn into shouting matches whatever we do! We had another two lots of silly sketches, my particular favourite being Tim's wonderful 'Lord of the Goons'.

Traditionally we end each term with a dinner, and this year was no exception. The Foreyule Feast was challenging at moments (I don't think that there's anybody who doesn't know about the fire, so we'll take it as read; also the turkey that fed 40 with lots to spare), but was brilliant fun. New Hall proved an excellent venue for the Annual Dinner,<sup>4</sup> at which everyone was looking particularly splendid. Finally, just a mention for the Varsity Quiz, which was great fun, at least for those of us who were watching and I would hope a character-building exercise for the co-opted team (I think that Taruithorn may have taken it a wee bit more seriously than us).

I'm afraid that this report is rather short,<sup>5</sup> but I think I've covered the most important things. Thanks to this year's committee: without their tolerance for unreasonable levels of delegation, nothing would have happened. Good luck to our next committee, who, I'm sure, will do a splendid job. As I look forward to the term ahead with trepidation, all I can say is that the CTS

<sup>1</sup> Well, really it's more like 18 months given the length of Cambridge terms.

<sup>2</sup> Technically, last year ended, but I'm counting the year as starting in Easter term last year.

<sup>3</sup> Though I've never had a chance to see the photos that apparently exist of that and, I can only assume, are being saved up for the purposes of future blackmailing. ;-)

<sup>4</sup> For which thanks and applause go to Esther for organising it.

<sup>5</sup> Alas, 'Restitutionary damages for wrongs' and a mental image of my DoS looking cross eagerly beckon me back to work.

will lighten the dark days of revision, at least slightly. I'll miss everyone and all our events so much next year and I'll do my best to come back some time. Certainly, whenever I hear 'Into the West',<sup>6</sup> I'll be thinking of you...

Thea  
(Ex) Steward

## The Old and the New

Steward: Thea Wilson, appointed to Becky Corlett  
Keeper of the Red Book: Anna Slack, appointed to Jack Vickeridge  
Smaug: Helen Cousins, appointed to... Helen Cousins  
Bill the Pony: Esther Miller, appointed to Matthew Davison  
Gwaihir the Eagle: Jack Vickeridge, appointed to Sarah Arnold

Elvish Officer: Pip Steele, appointed to Pip Steele  
Editor of Anor: Anna Slack, appointed to Tim Kelby

With special thanks from this year's committee to Rivendell for the usual, and special especial thanks to Mark Waller, for his enduring patience regarding certain matters which cannot be mentioned, or the committee won't escape unscathed... Here's to the new committee: fly the CTS banner with pride!

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<sup>6</sup> Or at least, for the three bars that I typically make it through before breaking down in tears.

## The Cutting Room Floor

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in a land far, far away<sup>7</sup> in a dark and lonely little room, Peter Jackson sat, attempting to edit the *The Return of the King*. Suddenly, the phone rings ... it was New Line Cinema ... the size of drinks cups in cinemas had been doubled, so, for the sake of the audience's bladders, the film had to be made even shorter. Peter Jackson set to work ... all the extra and superfluous characters had to be cut out!

Suddenly, as the fumes of the Tipex filled the small room, Peter Jackson saw figures appearing before him; the minor characters, here to defend their place in the film. The following is an (mostly) accurate account of what followed...

### The Players:

Boromir's Elven Belt – Esther Miller  
Gothmog – Nick Taylor  
Caradhras – Jack Vickeridge  
Bombadil – Matthew Woodcraft  
Otho Sackville-Baggins – Thea Wilson  
Halmer – Becky Corlett  
Beregond – Anna Slack  
Glorfindel – Helen Cousins

### Round 1: "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

**Halmer** – I'm a nice Rohirim who's actually *nice* to Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli and Aragorn and who *doesn't* take Gandalf's staff.

**Boromir's belt** – Boromir gets a rough lot in the film and deserves something nice. We see everyone else's gift, it's not fair! Also, gold things are pretty.

**Bombadil** – When making the film, there are some characters who just can't be cut. Bombadil is one of them. Who's the real hero? Frodo? His only mission – the Ring – fails (he can't throw the ring away)! Aragorn? His only task was to get Elrond to give up his daughter; Bombadil had no trouble getting his wife from her father! Also, Bombadil's a better poet than Sam.<sup>8</sup>

**Beregond** – Hi! I'm Beregond, a very important character whose role shouldn't be stolen by less important characters like Faramir. He's got a different role, but Pippin still needs a mentor. Also, Beregond has an important role with Aragorn later.

**Otho** – I'm here, not only as an interesting character, but I'm also a representative of the Scouring of the Shire. I also make Wormtongue's murder of Saruman more explicable.

**Gildur** – I'm the turning point in the entire story... "*Who are you?*" Gildur! If the hobbits hadn't met me, they wouldn't have been able to keep going. I also gave them dinner, and making hobbits happy is always good.

**Gothmog** – I captain the armies of orcs. I put an individual (if not human or even particularly pleasant) face on the orc army, which will help stupid audience members understand the battle.

**Caradhras** – I might not be popular, but I serve a necessary purpose, not just to the plot, but also to the themes of the book – an evil that isn't a person, like Sauron!

<sup>7</sup> Well, a couple of years ago in New Zealand anyway.

<sup>8</sup> Hisses all round...

**Glorfindel** – I'm Glorfindel and haven't been a flying Nazgul for some time!<sup>9</sup> I'm important because I lend Frodo a horse and rescue him from the black riders. I also was the first person to announce that the Witchking couldn't be killed by any man – relevant to the plot later on. Also, I'm way prettier than Arwen!

Glorfindel voted off

"Strikes pose as done by PJ on seeing hordes of Glorfindel fan girls"

#### Round 2: The dreaded five words round:

**Boromir's belt** – <sings> I feel pretty, oh so...

**Bombadil** – Imagine; Tom Bombadil action figure!

**Beregond** – Sword in service of Gondor.

**Otho** – Evil hobbit...hobbits more interesting!

**Gildur** – Made Sam obsessed with elves.

**Gothmog** – Eat my flying rocks humans!

**Caradhras** – Minor? I'm the *biggest* character.

**Halmer** – I have a cool beard.

Caradhras voted off

"I go to fetch the sun"

"That makes crossing over the mountains much easier..."

#### Round 3: Questions from the audience:

- What are you smoking?

**Bombadil** – Nothing (particularly given PJ's film).

- Ok then, what are you on?

**Bombadil** – Mushrooms. Which raises an important point – there are far too few mushrooms in the film, they need to be given an increased role!

- You wear very bright clothes, do bees and wasps chase you in the summer?

**Bombadil** – Well, honey for the table is good, especially with well trained bees. I take them on walks.

- Are you a murderer?

**Beregond** – The guy with the keys isn't important! Faramir was going to die, he *is* important, where would Eowyn be without him? Also, it was all done in the heat of the moment!

- What about the kids of the guy with the keys

**Beregond** – I look after them. I'm good at looking after kids, look at Bergil!

- What about his widow?

**Beregond** – Well, erm, I'm married so I can't really help there. But how do we know he had a wife? Anyway, Faramir will look after her!

- Are you the one that got eaten? Were you still alive when you were eaten? What type of wine goes best with hobbit?<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See the Silly Sketches.

<sup>10</sup> There were many other questions, but the poor writer's hand was \*very\* tired by this point (also, trying to think up answers)

**Otho** – I'm glad you brought that one up <sniff> yes, I was eaten, which is a very good reason for you to feel sorry for me and *not* vote me off! I wasn't alive, so I don't know what wine goes with hobbit. But Frodo had lots of wine, you'd better ask him! I was killed in my sleep. That night, I'd had a very good dinner, a nice bath, and then I went to bed with a book. I'd just got to an exciting part, but I thought I'd be good ... it was late; I'd finish the book tomorrow. Then I tucked myself in, drifted off to sleep, and that was it! Now I'll never know whodunit <more feeling sorry for self>

- Would you make the film better?

**Otho** – Is there anyone who doesn't think the film would be better with the Scouring of the Shire? (Answer came there none) I rest my case!

- Should you have been eaten?

**Otho** – Well, I can't deny that if anybody had to be eaten, Otho's a good candidate, but there are loads better candidates.

- Why didn't you take Frodo further?

**Gildur** – I was on a scouting mission, I came back on a roundabout route and missed him.

- How do you respond to the statement that singing elves are obnoxious?

**Gildur** – It's a matter of opinion

- How do you make your hair so nice and shiny?

**Gildur** – Timothei, it brings out the highlights.

- Were you afraid of the dark as a child?

**Gildur** – Yes

- Is that why you left Frodo?

**Gildur** – I assumed Frodo was crazy.

- Why did PJ give you that face?

**Gothmog** – Orcs are ugly but get the job done.

- How does the orc trade union fare?

**Gothmog** – Some sacrifices are necessary for the greater good. I personally ensured that the trade union leaders would be the first against the wall when the revolution came.

- Are you a war criminal?

**Gothmog** – Never been found guilty.

- What do you prefer, catapult or trebuchet?

**Gothmog** – Trebuchet, they're the easiest to use.

- Inny or outy?

**Gothmog** – Orcs don't have belly buttons.

- Don't you think that the ugly = bad, pretty = good stereotype is too simplistic?

**Gothmog** – Yes, I'm glad you brought that up. I'm going to lead an ugly, good people revolution!

- By failing to kill Wormtongue when you had the chance, aren't you responsible for Theodin's deterioration?

**Halmer** – I would have been fired if I'd tried anything.

- What shampoo/conditioner do you use?

**Halmer** – Vinegar

- Why is your armour the wrong period?

**Halmer** – Bought it off e-bay.

- Doesn't failing to take Gandalf's staff show how dim you are?

**Halmer** – I planned it!

- Do you have any interesting decorations?

**Boromir's belt** – Yup, very pretty designs.<sup>11</sup>

- Are you made of leather?

**Boromir's belt** – Nope, gold.

- Did you distract Boromir, making him less able to resist the ring?

**Boromir's belt** – I was a calculated move to draw Boromir's gold-lust off the ring.

- What would you say to the poor, innocent belt that was abandoned so Boromir could wear you?

**Boromir's belt** – That belt was leather – cruelty to animals, don't feel too sorry for it! Also, it wasn't thrown away; it was passed down to Faramir.

- Did you have any other owners?

**Boromir's belt** – No, I'm a one-man belt.

- Would you like to be anything other than a belt?

**Boromir's belt** – I'm happy being a belt, I serve my purpose.

Halmer voted off

"Hurrah! I had no more arguments!"

#### Round 4: Attack another in five words "Can you guess who's being attacked?"

**Beregond** – Poetic licence is no excuse.

**Otho** – Singing, oh god, the singing!

**Gildur** – Gothmog smells like old feet<sup>12</sup>

**Gothmog** – Weakness will not be tolerated.

**Boromir's belt** – Gothmog, he's evil and ugly<sup>13</sup>.

**Bombadil** – Singing elves are quite redundant.

Gildur voted off

"Return of the king isn't the same without my bit"

#### Round 5: Defend yourself ... one sentence please!

**Otho** – You should feel sorry for me, I was eaten!

**Gothmog** – Without me, monstrous architecture of Minas Tirith stays intact.

**Boromir's belt** – Pretty props increase the chances of expensive merchandise deals!

**Bombadil** – There was an old singer called Tom,

Whose singing just went on and on,

Rescued poor Merry

From that old Cherry,<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps I could be in King Kong?

**Beregond** – I'm a prime example of poetic justice, which the film is lacking.

Otho voted off

"I hope you realise you've vindicated PJ's decision to leave out the end of the book, feel truly sorry!"

<sup>11</sup> These were specified, but I missed them – sorry Esther!

<sup>12</sup> No points for guessing this one.

<sup>13</sup> Or this one.

<sup>14</sup> Willow just didn't rhyme.



**Round 6: Defend yourself in mime!**

Pity the writer, I'm afraid you'll have to use your imagination.

Editor's Note: The most memorable was Gothmog's rendition of *that incident with the rock* from *Return of the King*. Well done, Nick!

Beregond voted off  
"Deep breath before the plunge"

**Round 7: Defend someone else.**

**Boromir's belt** – Bombadil, he's good!

**Bombadil** – The important question is not who's cinematically moving, but who'll sell more action figures – Gothmog.

After some consideration, Bombadil remembered the pretty clothing market now everybody's got their own one ring, and changed his vote.

**Gothmog** – Bombadil, he's not beautiful but he's good, he proves my argument.

Votes to win:

**Boromir's Belt** – 1

"...pretty, I feel pretty and witty and bright, and I pity any *Ring* who isn't me tonight..."

**Bombadil** – 3

"Well, ring-a-ding-dong then!"

**Gothmog**

"Having made it to the film, I'll go on to crush the media and change the world, redefining evil!"

I hope this explains to anybody wondering how, out of all the minor characters he could have chosen, the only minor character PJ let into *The Return of the King* wasn't even in the book.

*Thea Wilson*

## The Gospel According to Tolkien?

### *The Use and Abuse of Tolkien's Mythology in the Religious Realm*

In this brief essay I shall offer a couple of thoughts on the way Tolkien's work (or, more usually, the work of a certain Kiwi film director) has affected the Christian world and the ways in which it has been used for both good and ill.

Imagine, if you will, a world which is dimly aware of its heritage and its past, a past full of magic and divine intervention, of angels and demons, of battles between good and evil. The awareness of this mythical history has grown steadily duller until it has become just that – myth. Eventually, however, an unlikely figure comes along who is ready to take upon himself the burden of a great power which once held the world enslaved and threatens to do so again. He cannot take this task upon himself alone and so gathers some friends to travel with him, one of whom eventually is to betray him. As the journey continues and reaches its horrifying conclusion, the hero finds himself utterly consumed by the power he set out to destroy, broken and spiritually dead. As he revives and makes his onward journey to a land where he cannot be followed, the world is changed and the power that consumed him is destroyed by his own weakness. A new age has dawned.

The previous paragraph represents a very shoddy attempt at assimilating the Christian story into *Lord of the Rings* (or perhaps the other way around). Most readers of this journal will, I'm sure, notice the gaping problems with it, and will quite rightly think it naïve of me to have mixed two very different stories together into a vague, incoherent melange. Yet there are those who, for better or worse, saw the immense popularity of Jackson's adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* as an opportunity to re-frame the Christian message in a more culturally relevant way. I'll outline a couple of ways in which this has been done and assess them in terms of their faithfulness both to Christian theology (which I view as pluricentric, rather than as monolithic) and to Tolkien's attitude to literature and religion.

Since Christianity is pluricentric and has many varied facets, it is possible for two people of the same religion to be speaking completely different theological languages (to borrow a phrase from Rowan Williams). Thus, it is possible for an Evangelical and a Roman Catholic to have a conversation where each uses terms that the other does not understand, and where the terms they have in common often refer to slightly different concepts. So it is, I believe, with the Evangelical church's treatment of Tolkien and Jackson in recent years. Tolkien was, as is well-known, a Roman Catholic, whose aim in creating Middle-Earth and its history was partly to provide a socio-linguistic background for his languages, and partly to create a pre-Christian mythology for England, which he saw as having lacked genuine pagan mythology. But somehow, probably simply because of his devout Catholic faith, some sections of the story are deeply Christian and contain undertones of figures in the Christian story (cf. Tolkien's comments on Galadriel and the Blessed Virgin Mary, in his *Letters*). Within this, there is no mention of an evangelistic agenda, so it does seem rather odd that his work, in its cinematographic form, should be used to spread the Gospel and teach Christian doctrine.

I attribute this strange occurrence to Tolkien's friendship with the High-Church Anglican and Christian apologist C. S. Lewis. Humphrey Carpenter, in his biography of Tolkien, relates the part that Tolkien played in Lewis' return to a lively and active Christian faith, so Evangelicals need not fear about Tolkien's status as an advocate of the Gospel. However, Lewis' fiction had a

somewhat different approach to mythology, namely that of allegory. Lewis sought to present the Christian message, concealed in a story that contained no explicitly Christian material. Again, this is well-known and Lewis' work has been the basis of many an apologetics talk – this writer would bet that around 99% of Evangelical apologetics in the last 50 years has been based on Lewis' arguments in such works as *Mere Christianity*. Tolkien's distaste for Lewis' *Narnia* books and their shallow mythology is well-documented.

However, I believe that the preachers of the 'gospel according to Tolkien' have read about Tolkien's relationship with Lewis and assumed that Tolkien's work had a similar, allegorical, drive. This, of course, was not true. I recall reading *The Lord of the Rings* as an adolescent, about to come up to University, and trying to discern which character in the book was equivalent to a Biblical figure. I gave up when I'd found the fourth Christ-figure in a row!

Tolkien himself talked at length about the difference between *allegory* and *applicability* in his letters. The one, so he says, is created by the author's domination of the interpretation, imposing his will upon the readers. The other is more passive on the author's part and allows a reader to be quite eisegetical – reading into a text their own meaning. In this way, it could be said that Tolkien pointed out a dichotomy which was eventually to lead to the postmodern approach to epistemology and literary criticism, where the reader's experience matters more than the author's original intent (which one can never fully know anyway).

Ultimately, I suppose that if Tolkien had his theory of applicability in mind when writing his work, there is no harm in others taking their own experience of his work and using it to explain their beliefs. The one condition and warning I would give is that such people should be fully aware that their interpretation is arbitrary and does not necessarily have anything to do with Tolkien's own interpretation. This is a humbling truth, both in relation to Tolkien and in relation to many other, more 'sacred' texts. We should never presume to own the truth created by another human being – we can only let that truth own and teach us.

*Richard Smith*

"THEN WOULD OUR PATHS BE SUNDERED FOREVER"

## The Choices of Elwing and Eärendil

[in part, a response to Lin Davies's essay "'This Doom we accepted': on Unions between Elves and Mortals" in *Amon Hen 192* (March 2005)]

In the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien writes:

"There were three unions of the Eldar and the Edain: Lúthien and Beren; Idril and Tuor; Arwen and Aragorn. By the last the long-sundered branches of the Half-elven were reunited and their line was restored."<sup>15</sup>

The use of the word 'Eldar' (especially when associated with the word 'Edain') seems to refer not to the Quendi (Elves) as a whole (where 'Eldar' means 'people of the stars'), but to the more specific meaning of Eldar as the Three Kindreds who journeyed westwards from Cuiviénen.<sup>16</sup> The term 'Edain' is similarly a term used to describe a subset of the Atani (Men). The implication of other unions between Men and Elves is supported by the statements in *The Lord of the Rings* about Elven blood in the lords of Dol Amroth,<sup>17</sup> and by other tales of Quendi-Atani unions.

Tolkien's highlighting of the three unions of the Eldar and the Edain can sometimes obscure the fact that there was another union where a choice had to be made between the immortality of the Elves (to be bound to Arda until its end<sup>18</sup>) and the mortality of Men (to pass beyond the circles of the world<sup>19</sup>). This was the union between Eärendil and Elwing.

Eärendil is the product of the union between Tuor and Idril, while Elwing is the daughter of Dior, the son of Beren and Lúthien. Eärendil and Elwing sail to Valinor, where Eärendil intends to deliver the errand of the Two Kindreds, pleading with the Valar for aid in the war against Morgoth. Eärendil (like Beren and Tuor) is driven by a high doom,<sup>20</sup> but still fears the wrath of the Valar on those who dare to pass the leaguer of Aman:

"Here none but myself shall set foot, lest you fall under the wrath of the Valar. But that peril I will take on myself alone, for the sake of the Two Kindreds."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Appendix A I i (Númenor), *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>16</sup> See index entry for 'Eldar' in *The Silmarillion*.

<sup>17</sup> "At length they came to the Prince Imrahil, and Legolas looked at him and bowed low; for he saw that here indeed was one who had elven-blood in his veins." (The Last Debate, Bk V Ch 9, *The Lord of the Rings*)

<sup>18</sup> "The Eldar, you say, are unpunished, and even those who rebelled do not die. Yet that is to them neither reward nor punishment, but the fulfilment of their being. They cannot escape, and are bound to this world, never to leave it so long as it lasts, for its life is theirs." (Akallabêth - The Downfall of Númenor, *The Silmarillion*)

<sup>19</sup> "the children of Men dwell only a short space in the world alive, and are not bound to it, and depart soon whither the Elves know not." (Of the Beginning of Days, QS Ch 1, *The Silmarillion*)

<sup>20</sup> "For this he was born into the world." (Ulmo speaking about Eärendil, Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath, QS Ch 24, *The Silmarillion*)

<sup>21</sup> Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath, QS Ch 24, *The Silmarillion*.

It is at this point that Elwing makes her first choice, saying:

“Then would our paths be sundered for ever; but all thy perils I will take on myself also.”<sup>21</sup>

And she leaps into the white foam and runs towards Eärendil. Now, whatever betides, their fates will be joined. Eärendil successfully delivers his plea, and the Valar debate his fate among themselves. Their decision concerning Eärendil and Elwing is that:

“...they shall not walk again ever among Elves or Men in the Outer Lands [...] to Eärendil and to Elwing, and to their sons, shall be given leave each to choose freely to which kindred their fates shall be joined, and under which kindred they shall be judged.”<sup>21</sup>

This is the second choice that Elwing will have to make. She decides to be counted among the Elves, and Eärendil, for her sake, makes the same choice. Elwing and Eärendil have had to make the same choice between mortality and immortality that Lúthien made, and that (presumably) Tuor made, and that Arwen would also have to make. What makes this choice of Eärendil and Elwing comparable to these three unions of the Eldar and the Edain is that the decision is taken against the same backdrop of choosing between their love for each other, and the very nature of their own being (as mortal or immortal).

There are many comparisons that can be made between the unions facing this choice. The obvious comparison is the one between the Aragorn/Arwen union and the Beren/Lúthien union. There are also, however, striking parallels and differences between Aragorn and Arwen on the one hand, and Elwing and Eärendil on the other hand. In both cases there is an irrevocable moment of choice, and in both cases there is a poignant moment when love wins through, though the moment is tinged with bittersweet contemplation of the alternative choice.

This moment of choice for Aragorn and Arwen is described in the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, when Aragorn says to Arwen (as they pledge their troth in Lothlórien):

“And the Shadow I utterly reject. But neither, lady, is the Twilight for me; for I am mortal, and if you will cleave to me Evenstar, then the Twilight you must also renounce.”<sup>22</sup>

Arwen’s reply, while looking West and after long thought, is described thus:

“I will cleave to you Dúnadan, and turn from the Twilight. Yet there lies the land of my people and the long home of all my kin.’ She loved her father dearly.”<sup>22</sup>

In the case of Eärendil and Elwing, the moment of choice comes when Eärendil says to Elwing:

“Choose thou, for now I am weary of the world.”<sup>21</sup>

We are not privy to the thoughts of Elwing as she made her choice,<sup>23</sup> but we are told that she chose to be judged among the Firstborn Children of Ilúvatar “because of Lúthien”.<sup>24</sup> We are then given a glimpse of Eärendil’s feelings:

<sup>22</sup> Appendix A I v (Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen), *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>23</sup> One can imagine Elwing using words (similar to those that Aragorn uses) to tell Eärendil of her choice (I constructed these speculative sentences using the corresponding text and giving Aragorn’s words to Elwing, and Arwen’s words to Eärendil): “But neither, lord, is the Gift for me; for I choose the Twilight, and if you

"...for her sake Eärendil chose alike, though his heart was rather with the kindred of Men and the people of his father."<sup>21</sup>

Eärendil is turning from his people (Men) and cleaving to Elwing for love of her. This is a direct parallel (though opposite) with Arwen's choice. Arwen is renouncing her Elvish heritage, while Eärendil renounces his mortal heritage. Both with anguish and no little regret, but both for love. It is interesting to speculate about what would have happened if Eärendil had chosen first, and decided to be counted among Men. Elwing would then have been faced with the choice that Arwen (and Lúthien) had to make. In my opinion, Tolkien is showing us the other side of the coin: what happens when someone has to choose immortality (instead of mortality) to be with their love. And I would go further and say that it is not certain that the ending, though it will not be "brief", will be any less "hard at the end."<sup>25</sup>

In the case of Arwen, the 'hard ending' comes when Aragorn lies on his deathbed, and we hear that Arwen:

"...was not yet weary of her days, and thus she tasted the bitterness of the mortality that she had taken upon her."<sup>22</sup>

We are not similarly told the consequences of the choices of Eärendil and Elwing, though the fate of Eärendil (to be a wandering star) and Elwing (in a tower with seabirds) has never seemed (to me) a particularly happy ending. Maybe it is possible to speculate that Eärendil was still weary of the world and: "thus he tasted the bitterness of the immortality that he had taken upon him."<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, it is also possible that Eärendil's weariness with the world, and the natural desire of Men to seek beyond the world, was satisfied by his voyages in Vingilot "beyond the confines of the world."<sup>27</sup>

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will cleave to me Eärendil, then the Gift you must also renounce." ["...and for her sake Eärendil chose alike..."] "I will cleave to you Elwing, and renounce the Gift. Yet therein is bound the fate of my people and the long home of all my kin."

<sup>24</sup> Though I do wonder, despite the previous quote, whether Elwing really was prepared to stand by her declaration on the shores of Aman: "all thy perils I will take on myself also". Was she prepared to be counted among the Secondborn Children of Ilúvatar for Eärendil's sake?

<sup>25</sup> "Brief it will be and hard at the end" (Finrod on the unions of Elves and Men, 'Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth', *Morgoth's Ring - The History of Middle-earth: Volume X*)

<sup>26</sup> This fictional quote has been constructed as a direct analogue of the similar quote about Arwen. It is consistent with other statements, such as this one about the Fate of Men: "Death is their fate, the gift of Ilúvatar, which as Time wears even the Powers shall envy." (Of the Beginning of Days, QS Ch 1, *The Silmarillion*)

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that Tolkien does not use the phrase "circles of the world" consistently. Mostly he uses it for the creation called Eä, within which lies Arda. In this context it is usually used to refer to the Fate of Men being to pass beyond the circles of the world. This is seen most clearly in Aragorn's final words: "Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory, Farewell!" (Appendix A I v (Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen), *The Lord of the Rings*). But sometimes he seems to use the phrase to refer to Middle-earth, particularly after the Downfall of Númenor, and the removal of the Land of Aman from the circles of the world: "...to the children of Elrond a choice was also appointed: to pass with him from the circles of the world; or if they remained, to become mortal and die in Middle-earth." (Appendix A I i (Númenor), *The Lord of the Rings*); "...the Valar laid down their Guardianship and called upon the One, and the world was changed. Númenor was thrown down and swallowed in the Sea, and the Undying Lands were removed for ever from the circles of the world." (Appendix A I i (Númenor), *The Lord of the Rings*); "[the Quendi] were a race high and beautiful the older

Through these examples, Tolkien explores the consequences of turning from one fate to another for the sake of love. The differences between immortality and mortality cause the characters in Tolkien's writings much anguish. Aragorn reassures Arwen with his last words:

"In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory, Farewell!"<sup>22</sup>

But the anguish seems no less when Men and Elves (or even Ainur) are separated. Such a parting is often said to be "beyond the ends of the world". This phrase is used in both the description of Melian's reaction to perceiving that Lúthien was now irrevocably mortal,<sup>28</sup> and the description of Elrond's farewell to Arwen.<sup>29</sup> We also see this anguish in the case of Andreth and Aegnor.<sup>30</sup> It seems that love was not enough to overcome the particular circumstances (war and maybe also the Doom of the Noldor), but the final words of Finrod to Andreth are strange, because while they emphasize the fundamental difference between Men and Elves, they also hint at the ultimate hope that Men and Elves are not irrevocably sundered:

"But you are not for Arda. Whither you go may you find light. Await us there, my brother - and me."<sup>31</sup>

This seems to be an example of 'estel', a deep-seated trust or faith that is fundamentally different from ordinary hope (called 'amdir').<sup>32</sup> An example of this is Aragorn's last words to Arwen (quoted above), giving additional meaning to Arwen's response: "Estel! Estel!" The words of Finrod to Andreth are all the more poignant when we consider Finrod's last words to Beren (a mortal man):

"...it may be that we shall not meet a second time in death or life, for the fates of our kindreds are apart. Farewell!"<sup>33</sup>

This seeming contradiction can be explained on several levels. It may be that Finrod's estel is not so certain, and he does not believe that Men and Elves can ultimately meet again after death. It may also reflect the changing thoughts of the author (Tolkien), as he wrote the passages at different times in his life. Finally, but perhaps most unsatisfying of all, the difference could be attributed to changes during the (fictional) transmission of the story to Tolkien.

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Children of the world [...] their fate is not that of Men. Their dominion passed long ago, and they dwell now beyond the circles of the world, and do not return." (Appendix F II (On Translation), *The Lord of the Rings*).

<sup>28</sup> "But Melian looked in [Lúthien's] eyes and read the doom that was written there, and turned away; for she knew that a parting beyond the end of the world had come between them, and no grief of loss has been heavier than the grief of Melian the Maia in that hour." (Of the Fifth Battle: Nimaeth Arnoediad, QS Ch 20, *The Silmarillion*)

<sup>29</sup> "None saw [Arwen's] last meeting with Elrond her father, for they went up into the hills and there spoke long together, and bitter was their parting that should endure beyond the ends of the world." (Many Partings, Bk VI Ch 6, *The Lord of the Rings*)

<sup>30</sup> Described by Lin Davies in Amon Hen 192 ("This Doom we accepted": on Unions between Elves and Mortals)

<sup>31</sup> Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth, *Morgoth's Ring - The History of Middle-earth: Volume X*

<sup>32</sup> A description of 'estel' and 'amdir' is found in the 'Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth' (*Morgoth's Ring - The History of Middle-earth: Volume X*)

<sup>33</sup> Of Beren and Lúthien, QS Ch 19, *The Silmarillion*

This quality or possession of estel can be considered for many of the characters facing the same intractable problems about life and death. It may even be possible to say that Melian and Elrond lack the estel we see in the words of Finrod to Andreth. As a final piece of speculation, one can consider the words of Finrod being spoken instead by Melian/Elrond to Lúthien/Arwen:

"But you are not for Arda. Whither you go may you find light. Await us there..."

This still leaves the problem of what exactly Finrod is referring to, though there is one other quote that compares to this glimmer of estel:

"Never since have the Ainur made any music like to this music, though it has been said that a greater still shall be made before Ilúvatar by the choirs of the Ainur and the Children of Ilúvatar after the end of days. Then the themes of Ilúvatar shall be played aright, and take Being in the moment of their utterance, for all shall then understand fully his intent in their part, and each shall know the comprehension of each, and Ilúvatar shall give to their thoughts the secret fire, being well pleased."<sup>34</sup>

Can this be what Finrod had in mind when speaking to Andreth?

*Christopher Kreuzer*

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<sup>34</sup> Ainulindalë, *The Silmarillion*



## Slow-Kindled Courage

*A Study of Heroes in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*<sup>35</sup>

We all have a problem with heroes. We want them so badly that we keep inventing new ones.<sup>36</sup>

If literature is a mimetic art, then heroes in literature both reflect and answer the need for heroes in the real world. The *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, the Bible, *Beowulf*, historiographic works such as those of Wace or Layamon: all exemplify the curious overlap between the secondary world of literature and the primary world of history. This dialogue between reality and fiction is a complex system of encouragement and self-perpetuation for writers and readers alike.

In this dissertation, Tolkien's heroes are examined in terms of their antecedents, the heroic spaces created for them, and the ways in which they enter into the aforementioned dialogue with history via the historical moment of their creation.

### 'Fairies and Fusiliers'

In Tolkien's time history and literature were closely intertwined in creating a model of heroism. Partially due to the amount of literature preserved, the Great War is one of the most-documented conflicts in western history. Generally speaking, the prevailing initial literary voice of the trenches came from officers and soldiers who were themselves educated on epics: the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, *Paradise Lost*. These possess a high-linguistic register that praises courage, honour and glorious death in battle, *Paradise Lost* doing so in its Homeric depiction of Satan. The trench-writers applied this style of thought and linguistic expression to a new conflict; for example, Rupert Brooke's 'Peace' captures a sense of language that originates ideologically in Homer:

Now God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour  
And Caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping...  
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,  
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,  
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,  
And all the little emptiness of love!<sup>37</sup>

This elucidation of honour and shame shows war as the ideal occupation of youth. Married to the Homeric framing ('hearts that honour could not move') is a redemptive bellicosity influenced by Christianity: '...we have found release there, / Where there's no ill, no grief...'

But this glorious view was disturbed by the sheer scale of the war; linguistic traits characteristic of the Classics and the Christian faith, used previously to aggrandise battle, were employed to sing a different song:

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,

<sup>35</sup> Editor's Comment: This article represents my final dissertation for Part II of the Cambridge University English Tripos. I'm taking the system down from the inside! A full bibliography is available on request.

<sup>36</sup> Colin Burrow in *The Guardian Review*, (9<sup>th</sup> October 2004), p.14

<sup>37</sup> *The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, ed. Jon Stallworthy (Oxford, 1984), p.162

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.<sup>38</sup>

In merging heroic/Christian language, Owen challenges views that automatically confer heroism on war. He does the same in 'Strange Meeting', where the poem's dream-like frame is reminiscent of Odysseus and Ajax's meeting in *Odyssey XI*; the title of 'Arms and the Boy' plainly references the *Aeneid's* opening line, *Arma uirumque cano* ('I sing of arms and of the man'), emphasising soldiers' youth. An archaic linguistic register associated with the values of war is consistently employed to undermine them, for Owen's subject was 'the pity of war', not its heroism.

Siegfried Sassoon wrote likewise. Keenly aware of 'one... who reads/ Of dying heroes and their deathless deeds',<sup>39</sup> his concern was to highlight the bitter difference between perception and reality. 'The Hero', for example, depicts the 'gallant lies' told to keep up heroism's façade for an Every-Woman whose son has been killed. Sassoon was also aware of the point where history, literature and war interlocked. In 'Songbooks of the War' he writes:

In fifty years, when peace outshines  
Remembrance of the battle lines,  
Adventurous lads will sigh and cast  
Proud looks upon the plundered past...  
And dream of lads who fought in France  
And lived in time to share the fun. (*Collected Poems*, p.86-7)

These poets sought to reflect the conflict of their time. Given the accepted canon of war poetry, prominently showcasing Owen and Sassoon, it can be said that the anti archaic-language backlash succeeded. That those dying were so young seems however to have turned the tide against more than the classics; this disenchantment of war also lashed out against fairy story:

The child alone a poet is:  
Spring and fairyland are his...  
Wisdom made him old and wary  
Banishing the Lords of Fairy.  
Wisdom made a breach and battered  
Babylon to bits: she scattered  
To the hedges and the ditches  
All our nursery gnomes and witches...  
None of all the magic hosts,  
None remain but a few ghosts  
Of timorous heart, to linger on  
Weeping for lost Babylon.<sup>40</sup>

Here the advent of wisdom is associated with war ('breach', 'battered', 'ditches'), and the death of faërie. John Garth writes: 'Graves' image of the end of innocence – wisdom scattering the nursery fairies – indicates the literal meaning of disenchantment. The Great War had broken a

<sup>38</sup>Wilfred Owen, 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. Edmund Blunden, (London, 1933; first published 1931), p.80

<sup>39</sup>Siegfried Sassoon, 'Remorse' in *Collected Poems of Siegfried Sassoon* (London, 1961)

<sup>40</sup>Robert Graves, 'Babylon' in *The Complete Poems of Robert Graves*, ed. Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward (Manchester, 1995; first published London 1916)

kind of spell'.<sup>41</sup> The broken spell created a post-world-war anxiety about heroic nature, hitherto defined by Homer, Virgil and the fantastic. 'The Western Front made the fairy aesthetic seem both desperately necessary and hopelessly anachronistic'.<sup>42</sup>

Tolkien, himself a trench-soldier, countered this linguistic and ideological background, offering a divergent approach: his '...real taste for fairy stories was awakened by philology on the threshold of manhood, and quickened to full life by war'.<sup>43</sup> Linguistically and ideologically, Tolkien's writing resounds with archaisms, and in this literary etymology he tries to resurrect the values dethroned by the writings of his contemporaries. In responding to the disregard of heroic language, Tolkien's writing challenges the economy of truth represented by the canon of 'disillusioned' writers like Owen and Sassoon. Tolkien's writing reflects his desire to rekindle a model of heroism despite the trend of history. A childhood friend had remarked to him that as writers they 'had been granted some spark of fire... that was destined to kindle a new light, or, what is the same thing, rekindle an old light in the world'.<sup>44</sup> For Tolkien, this spark resided in the mythopoetic realm of *faërie*.

### Prisoners and Deserters: Tolkien's Theory of *Faërie*

The function and appeal of fairy tales and similarly fantastic stories has long been discussed. Relatively few detailed analyses have been completed, though notable among these are the Brothers Grimm, Propp, Jung, Campbell, C.S.Lewis, Tolkien himself and Bettelheim. All agree that these stories fulfil an important need, although explanations differ. Jung discusses the appeal and function of myth in terms of archetypes (such as the Shadow, the Animus/Anima, and the Syzygy). In 'The Uses of Enchantment', Bettelheim posits that fairy tales give symbolic form to trying situations for children: 'The fairy tale simplifies all situations... Its figures are clearly drawn... All characters are typical rather than unique'.<sup>45</sup> The formative system provided by stories and heroes for children is also examined by Margery Hourihan in 'Deconstructing the Hero'.<sup>46</sup> In 'On Fairy Stories', Tolkien states that these tales have a 'prophylactic' effect for adults, whose oversight in critical thought he laments. He describes the main veins of this effect as recovery, escape and consolation, which in turn resolve themselves at their highest point into what he termed 'eucatastrophe'. In his distinctions of these functions, Tolkien asserted that a reader sought stories to escape from the world and recover the means to view it clearly, thereby returning to it renewed. In this he has common ground with writers like Bettelheim, except Tolkien's theory is trans-generational. Aware that some critics were quick to call an adult taste for fairy stories escapism or 'juvenile trash',<sup>47</sup> Tolkien used his three-part-theory to distinguish between the 'escape of the prisoner and the flight of the deserter'.<sup>48</sup> The crux of his position was in the fact that after reading, readers returned to the world rather than making a constant withdrawal from it (the act of deserting). That Tolkien uses terms like 'deserter' reflects the conflict of his time, linking war, *faërie* and theory together. With his theory in mind, it would be reasonable to expect Tolkien's heroes to bring a sense of recovery to his works.

<sup>41</sup> John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-Earth* (London, 2003) p.292

<sup>42</sup> Diane Purkiss, cited in Garth p.303

<sup>43</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories' in *Tree and Leaf* (London, 2001; first published 1964), p.42

<sup>44</sup> Garth, p.308

<sup>45</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment* (London, 1976), p.8

<sup>46</sup> Margery Hourihan, *Deconstructing the Hero*, (London and New York, 1997)

<sup>47</sup> Edmund Wilson, 'Oo, Those Awful Orcs!', *The Nation* 182 (1956), 312-14 (p.314)

<sup>48</sup> 'On Fairy Stories', p.61

### Models of Heroism: *Kleos* and *Sophrosyne*

Hero-theory runs from ancient Greece to more modern writers like Thomas Carlyle and Lucy Hughes-Hallett. For the purposes of this dissertation, literary heroism is broadly viewed as a bipolar delineation between *kleos* and *sophrosyne*.

*Kleos* is the Greek word for renown or glory; personal renown is paramount in this heroism. Hughes-Hallett suggests that these heroes are 'superb spirit[s]... associated with courage and integrity and a disdain for the cramping compromises by means of which the unheroic majority live their lives – attributes that are widely considered noble'.<sup>49</sup> The distinction between unheroic majority and hero sets the latter 'higher' than others on the mortal scale; this is suggested by frequently antagonistic roles between heroes and other figures of authority such as kings. The primary example of this hero is Achilles: offered the choice between living a long and comfortable life but having no fame, and going to war, dying young and winning great glory, he chooses the latter.<sup>50</sup>

Not every hero seeking renown falls under Achilles' category. *Kleos* could be further defined as the constant quest for renown (Achilles), the quest for another object (Beowulf or Siegfried), and the romance quest on behalf of a lady (Yvain or Lancelot). Norse and Classical heroes would be concerned with their reputation or their quest, while romance heroes often possess spiritual undertones, especially in the ornate, religiously-inspired modes of address of *fin'amor*.

Opposed to *kleos* is *sophrosyne*, the virtue of heroic temperance. Considered a fatal flaw of excess in tragedy (where it constitutes vital inaction), and often associated with women or the young, it was Christianity during the Mediaeval and Renaissance periods which facilitated the shift towards *sophrosyne* as a heroic virtue. Examples of sophrosynic heroes would be mediaeval hagiographies, Guyon in *The Faërie Queene*, or Milton's Christ in *Paradise Regained*. *Sophrosyne* is '...very difficult to give to a literary hero, because inaction is a highly undramatic mode of behaviour';<sup>51</sup> it necessitates the substitution of psychological/spiritual action for physical heroics.

These templates highlight a fundamental divide in literature's heroic roles; a *kleos* hero, of noble birth, perhaps divinely-engendered, was predetermined for great things. He was to excel in matters of prowess for his own advancement and glory, or for the honour of his lady. A sophrosynic hero was to imitate a higher standard: Christ. A variation on being divine offspring, the hero was to seek God's glory and will over his own.

This Christian mimetic (heroes mirroring Christ) was certainly one that Tolkien strove to create; eucatastrophe is defined as:

...a piercing glimpse of joy... [that] reads indeed the very web of story... in the 'eucatastrophe' we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater – it may be a far-off gleam or echo of *evangelium* in the real world... The Great Eucatastrophe, the Christian joy is... high and joyous. Because this story is supreme; and it is true. Art has been verified. God is the Lord, of angels, and of men – and of elves. Legend and history have met and fused.<sup>52</sup>

Tolkien calls this the 'true form of fairy tale...its highest function'.<sup>53</sup> Thus we may assume that Tolkien's heroes should enter the heroic tradition at a level which corresponds to the Christian

<sup>49</sup> Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *Heroes: Saviours, Traitors and Supermen* (London, 2004), p.1

<sup>50</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. E.V.Rieu, (Harmondsworth, 1950), p.34, 339

<sup>51</sup> Richard Douglas Jordan, *The Quiet Hero: Figures of Temperance in Spenser, Donne, Milton and Joyce* (Washington, 1989), p.4

<sup>52</sup> 'On Fairy Stories', p.71-3

<sup>53</sup> 'On Fairy Stories', p.68

one. The modern hero is a fusing of *Neos* and *sophrosyne*; he must act morally and often exhibit physical prowess, but only when vital. Like the trench-soldiers, he is an unheroic figure in a heroic circumstance. That Tolkien chooses to write in the *sophrosynic* tradition opposes this view.

Tolkien's stance was not unique; 'On Fairy Stories' and eucatastrophe were fermented in the creative arena of the Inklings, a group of Oxonians who met regularly to translate Norse sagas and read each others' work. Other Inklings included C.S.Lewis and Charles Williams: their works (e.g. *The Cosmic Trilogy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *War In Heaven*, *The Greater Trumps*) all exhibit the same 'Christianised' theory of the relation of story/story-telling to the real world. In Williams' fictions, for example, characters come to learn that the super-spiritual bubbles away intensely within the bounds of the world in which they live. In the autobiographical *Surprised By Joy*, C.S.Lewis states that the joy he has been describing would be called 'eucatastrophe' by Tolkien. As in his youth, Tolkien was involved with a group of writers that sought to influence the world. By accenting the spiritual in their writings, these writers presented fictitious framings of Ephesians 6:12: '...for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places'.<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, this Pauline letter then applies the topoi of arming the epic hero to Christians:

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:14-17)

This makes the Christian a hero with an epic level of prowess – but, as *sophrosyne* dictates, it is a spiritual prowess.

### Tolkien's Heroes

Tolkien's heroes draw on the traditions outlined above, his scheme of heroism modulating as his writing progresses and exhibits different heroic spaces. Considered here are Beren and Túrin in *The Silmarillion*; Bilbo in *The Hobbit*; Aragorn and Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien was engaged in depicting heroism for a culture sung increasingly in disillusion. If, as Aldous Huxley observes, 'civilisation has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism',<sup>55</sup> the question becomes what Tolkien's heroes— written for the superficially anti-heroic modern reader of the post-war critical environment— reflect of his time.

### Beren and Túrin: A Backward Glance?

In *Modern Heroism*, Robert Sale suggests that for Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* is 'a nostalgic glance...back to a world he would much rather have lived in'.<sup>56</sup> Sale asks how Tolkien can create heroes of an older tradition as a modern author, and hints at the Great War when he says: 'If despair is created by the sense that History has overwhelmed the world, then the heroism will be created in defiance of that same history'.<sup>57</sup> Because Tolkien-as-author feels the pressure of history, Beren and Túrin feel it too. Despite his fictional setting, Tolkien's content points to his modern position.

<sup>54</sup> *King James Bible* (London, 1611)

<sup>55</sup> Cited in Robert Sale *Modern Heroism* (Berkeley, 1973), p.1

<sup>56</sup> Sale, p.228

<sup>57</sup> Sale, p.11

A synopsis of Beren's heroism evokes a romance quest; he has to claim one of the Silmarils from the Iron Crown of Morgoth, deliver it to King Thingol, and thereafter claim the hand of Lúthien, whom he loves. But the story also operates on a darker level; the Silmarils carry a dreadful curse into which many have already been drawn; Beren is a stranger at court, dispossessed and the last of his people. Lúthien is an elf who must give up her immortality for Beren. Unusually active for a woman in a romance, she refuses to be left behind by Beren and the narrative follows her in as much detail as it does Beren.

Tolkien was obviously aware of this measure in heroics whose balancing unbalances the romance-quest. Lúthien belongs to a tradition of prominent women that goes back to Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes and later Spenser. But unlike Spenser's handling of Una and Redcrosse, Tolkien cannot balance his narrative in a fashion appropriate to his genre. Attempting to re-confine his heroine, Tolkien gives Lúthien a hound as companion who defeats Sauron and battles with Morgoth's wolf at the tale's end. Nevertheless, Lúthien is made conspicuous by her heroism. She rescues Beren from Sauron, sings Morgoth to sleep (facilitating the seizure of the Silmarils), heals Beren more than once, and pleads for his life to be returned to him in the Halls of the Dead. But Lúthien is not of Britomart's class; her prowess is not in arms.

The story counterpoises Beren's doom and Lúthien's voice; Lúthien consistently tips the possession of heroic status towards herself. Beren is weighed down by the grief of his humanity, but Lúthien, in her constant active role, is an artist within the tale who directly affects its ending. In persuading the divine agents, the Valar, to grant Beren his life, she becomes what Tolkien would call a 'sub-creator'; a position conferred upon her by her voice, which originates in her elven descent and connection therein to faërie. Faërie is a world with which Beren, fashioned by 'doom', cannot compete.

This extra-literary weight on the text is created by the author's position in history; the narrative is skewed between the typical hero-of-the-sword, and the artistic heroism of language figured in Lúthien. For example, there is more awe in the text when Huan the hound speaks (linguistic heroism) than when he wrestles with Carcaroth (physical heroism). When Beren names Lúthien *Timúviel*, he establishes the romance element of the narrative in foregrounding his love for her. But in the same breath he surrenders his position as hero to her by ceding to linguistic-heroism: 'Then the spell of silence fell from Beren, and he called to her, crying *Timúviel*; and the woods echoed her name'.<sup>58</sup> Beren's surrender of narrative and heroic primacy began when he entered the woods that were the realm of the Elves; here the woods themselves confirm that the silence of physical heroism is to be replaced by the voice.

The dominance of Lúthien's heroism is asserted at the tale's end when conclusion itself is tackled:

The song of Lúthien before Mandos was the song most fair that ever in words was woven, and the song most sorrowful that ever the world shall hear... and Mandos was moved to pity, who never before was so moved, nor has been since. (*Silmarillion* p.220)

The narrator also writes: 'Thus [with Beren's death] ended the Quest of the Silmaril; but the Lay of Leithian, Release from Bondage, does not end' (*Silmarillion*, p.220). Tolkien acknowledges the dualism of the heroism in his story, a conflict that lies in inter-weaving several modes and heroes into one story. What reflections does a tale where the artist (Lúthien) is more overtly heroic cast upon the narrator? At its outset, the narrator tells us that what we are reading is 'told in fewer words' than older versions and 'without song' (*Silmarillion* p.189), pointing to the fact that the story-teller has little grasp of the tale's principal heroic ethic, words. But is this to give

<sup>58</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London, 1999; first published 1977), p.193

more space to Lúthien? Does the narrator's alignment with linguistic heroism explain why Beren's physical heroism seems less important? Downplaying the narrator's own craft may reflect the fact that Lúthien, primary exponent of the faërie heroism of tongue, is 'now lost' (ibid, p.221). The debilitation of the narrator in the loss of faërie suggests the literary losses incurred in the disenchantment of Tolkien's contemporaries.

The power attributed to language in *The Silmarillion* reflects Tolkien's love of philology. Robert M.Adams observes: 'Tolkien has a fascination with names... that will probably seem excessive to anyone whose favourite light reading is not the first book of Chronicles'.<sup>39</sup> For example, Túrin's story begins: 'Rían, daughter of Belegund, was the wife of Huor, son of Galdor; and she was wedded to him two months before he went with Húrin his brother to the Nirmaeth Arnoediad' (ibid, p.235). The Biblical comparison is further evidenced in Tolkien's love of family trees, shown in the *Silmarillion* and the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*. The tale of Túrin Turambar is filled with names and the act of naming. One may assert this to be an extension of faërie heroism: power in words equals power in names.

Throughout 'Beren and Lúthien', Beren is accorded names befitting his deeds e.g. Erchamion ('One Hand') or Camlost ('The Empty-Handed'). These create a progressive heroic identity; though not making Beren heroic, they reflect his achieved heroism. Compare this to Genesis 17 or 35, where Abram and Jacob both have their names changed *post factum* to reflect their new status: Abram ('Exalted Father') becomes Abraham ('Father of Many') when he commits himself to God, and Jacob (figuratively 'He deceives') becomes Israel ('He struggles with God').

Túrin names himself, and frequently the event eliciting this naming is one he has falsely interpreted, as when he names himself Neithan ('The Wronged') refusing the king's pardon 'in the pride of his heart'. The sheer volume of names (seven in all) attributed to Túrin in the narrative bear witness to his attempt to mould his own heroism. Túrin is overshadowed by Beren ('This man is not Beren - a dark doom lies on him!' *Silmarillion* p.251), and in response he reaches for a way to turn himself into a hero.

Túrin's final name, Turambar ('Master of Doom') is a hubristic self-sentence. Empowered by the names he has given himself, Túrin tries to assert authority over the narrator of the text as well as the characters within it when he states that he has mastered his 'dark doom'. Unlike Beren, who accepts his doom, Túrin constantly pulls away from it in his act of naming, and in doing so only succeeds in becoming stuck fast. As a result, Túrin's story feels strongly governed by *wyrd*: the Norse fate. Ironically, Beren receives life for accepting his doom; Túrin receives death resisting it at every turn. Though Beren's strategy may be more 'Christian', it does not reward him with eternal life as a Biblical parallel might suggest; in this, Beren reflects the culture of disillusionment and foreshadows Frodo.

Both Beren and Túrin struggle in their heroic spaces because they are created 'backwards' as insertions into a tradition long passed. Beren and Túrin are forgeries, albeit intelligent ones. As a modern Christian, Tolkien cannot help but create characters that cannot quite sup with Achilles or Beowulf. This is exemplified in Túrin's encounter with Glaurung the dragon: while Túrin's literary predecessor, Siegfried, slew the dragon and claimed his prize, Túrin falls prey to Glaurung's voice, and as a consequence loses everything. Glaurung acknowledges Túrin's *kleos*-naming when he goads him: 'Then surely in scorn they will name thee, if thou spurnest this gift.' (p.256). It is Túrin's future reputation that Glaurung manipulates. In steering Túrin from the rescue of Finduilas (a romance quest), Glaurung denies Túrin the chance to become the hero of another genre. In this single moment, Túrin fails to belong either to

<sup>39</sup> Robert M.Adams, 'The Hobbit Habit' in *Tolkien: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. N.D.Isaacs and R.A.Zimbardo (Kentucky, 1981), p.169

the heroic genre (by discerning the dragon's guile as Siegfried with Fáfnir), or the romantic one. The result is a tragic matrix that ends with Túrin marrying his sister, and with both their deaths.

Beren and Túrin exemplify key aspects of Tolkien's heroic scheme; clearly language, name and deed all have a part to play in framing a hero. Epic, Norse and Mediaeval traditions were part of his thinking, and the Middle-Earth of *The Silmarillion* provides a place where these heroes can exist. *The Silmarillion* explores heroic temperament, with his heroes' fate as the first residue of war's disenchantment, for the heroism of Middle-Earth's heroes is never questioned. When Tolkien began to write *The Hobbit* in the 1930s, Middle-Earth's heroic space changed to accommodate the new protagonists.

### Bilbo Baggins: A 'Modern' Hero

'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit',<sup>60</sup> so begins Tolkien's first published fiction. Middle-Earth has changed; *The Silmarillion's* narrator would not write this way, nor would his heroes live in such a hole, even if it 'mean[t] comfort' (*Hobbit* p.3). But in essence the author's premise remains; emphasis in the opening words is not on defining what a hobbit is, but a detailed description of where one lives. Middle-Earth is still an arena fashioned for its heroes, though the shift in tone and locale alerts us to the shift in hero. Hobbiton is not a heroic setting, and Bagginses 'never [have] any adventures or [do] anything unexpected' (*ibid*). The narrator tells us that this story will be about one who breaks away from that mould: 'He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained – well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end' (*ibid*, p.4). This is an active invitation to consider the hero's achievements.

Bilbo is defined as stereotypical of the English upper-middle-class (with emphasis on decorum and social niceties); we are asked to weigh his 'fame' at home against the fame achieved in his quest. In this sense, Bilbo is anti-heroic; he is anti-heroic also in being neither wise nor strong, but hired as a burglar. Conducted by dwarves (who, with the almost concurrent appearance of Walt Disney's *Snow White*, may not have been viewed seriously), the quest would have no place in 'epic' literature. Although the dispossessed dwarves hold the quest highly ('a journey from which some of us, perhaps all of us, may never return', *ibid*, p.17), Bilbo does not appreciate its epic quality (at the thought of not returning, he faints), and the reader may therefore be less inclined to. A character like Bombur is clearly not designed for the epic tradition. Tolkien initially creates a miniature epic world, and carefully expands it until it becomes a full-blown mythological canvas seen through the eyes of an anti-mythic character.

This distinction is demonstrated in Bilbo's progression from bumbling protagonist to hero: in rescuing the dwarves from the spiders in Mirkwood or Thranduil's dungeons, the hobbit is drawn into heroic circumstances. The reader expects the conversation with Smaug to be the work's climax; it is certainly envisioned as such by the questing characters. That the story does not end with the slaying of the dragon indicates movement from fairy-tale to mythic canvas; but Bilbo retains a common sense that curtails him from either faërie or epic heroism. His unconsciousness at the Battle of the Five Armies reflects his dislocation in the narrative. Bilbo's heroism reaches its height when he relinquishes the Arkenstone to Bard;

"I hope you will find it useful."

The Elvenking looked at Bilbo with a new wonder. "Bilbo Baggins!" he said. "You are more worthy to wear the armour of elf-princes than many that have looked more comely in it." (p.251)

Here Tolkien highlights and reconciles the incongruity he has cultivated throughout the work. Much of the tale's humour stems from Bilbo's anachronism, the unheroic character in a heroic

<sup>60</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (London, 1999; first published 1937), p.3



world. In the above quotation, the two are conflated so that the reader sees that as Bilbo can be measured on the scale of elven-princes he is not such a misfit hero after all. Tolkien does similarly with Thorin's final words:

There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world. (p.266)

Here Bilbo is not so much affirmed into the heroic tradition as made equal to it in what he loves. However, upon his return to Hobbiton, he has 'lost his reputation... he was no longer quite respectable' (ibid, p.278). Affirmation of heroic equity can pass from mythic to non-mythic, but not from the non-mythic to the mythic: Achilles may dub a trench-soldier heroic, but the trench-soldier cannot claim it for himself. Bilbo comes from the later arm of the sophrosynic tradition; he is a 'moral' hero, who acts when it is right to do so, rather than not acting at all. Nothing he does is for fame or reputation, although this is the way in which he is then measured. *The Hobbit* reflects the perception of reputation and heroism that had been shifted and confused by the Great War; within the frame of children's story Tolkien touches on the concerns of disenchantment and problems for a modern hero.

### Spiritual Mimesis: *The Lord of the Rings*

Tolkien staunchly stated that *The Lord of the Rings*<sup>61</sup> was not an allegory, and that he 'much prefer[ed] history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of the reader'.<sup>62</sup> In this regard, *LotR* seems to present itself as historiography; this fused ground of history and myth allows Tolkien to attempt to mirror the spiritual realm in his literature. Tolkien's most prominent heroes, Frodo and Aragorn, are sophrosynic heroes reflecting two aspects of Christ; servant and king. Like Bilbo, they are anachronistic: although in narrative terms they prefigure Christ, in the author's terms they are His descendants. As mimetic heroes, they imitate Christ rather than seeking their own glory, though in this imitation, particularly Frodo's imitation, *LotR* also grapples more with eucatastrophe and disenchantment than Tolkien's earlier works.

Structurally, it is suggested that Frodo and Aragorn are flip sides of the same coin. C.S.Lewis observes: 'All the time we know that the fate of the world depends far more upon the small movement than on the great.'<sup>63</sup> Tolkien's interweaving of plot in *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* is highly complex, and Lewis' comment highlights the way in which heroism is split between Frodo and Aragorn accordingly. As a returning king, Aragorn inherits the *kleos* tradition, succeeding Beren and Túrin. In his love for Arwen he explicitly replays Beren's story; like Beren and Túrin he has many names.

One may easily point to Aragorn and claim that Tolkien is re-framing the Arthur myth: Aragorn has a magic sword, comparable in its elven-craft to Caliborn in Lasamon's *Brut*. Caught in a love triangle (between Eówyn and Arwen), Aragorn is the true but unknown king of Gondor, who with a wizard's help regains his throne. At this level the resemblance is striking, but Aragorn is far more modern than Malory's or Tennyson's Arthur. As king he is the story's figurehead, though he bows under the role's weight. In history and legend, kings are expected to be steadfast and wise in their decisions. Literature excels at highlighting instances where they are

<sup>61</sup> J.R.R.Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, (London, 1995; first published in one volume 1968); henceforth abbreviated to *LotR*

<sup>62</sup> *LotR*, Forward to the Second Edition

<sup>63</sup> C.S.Lewis, 'The Dethronement of Power' in *Tolkien and the Critics*, ed. Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo (Indiana, 1970), p.13

not (Homer's Agamemnon, Shakespeare's Lear). Within the frame of *LotR* we are aware of kings who failed at crucial times (Isildur).

Both author and Aragorn are aware of this burden, and as a result Aragorn is defined by the crisis of choice: 'I am not Gandalf, and though I have tried to bear his part, I do not know what design or hope he had for this hour, if indeed he had any...' (*LotR* p.387); 'All that I have done today has gone amiss... What is to be done now?... An evil choice is now before us.' (ibid, p.404-5). Unlike Túrin, Aragorn is concerned that he make the right choice for the sake of his heart rather than his historical reputation ('my heart sees clearly at last', ibid, p.409). Aragorn's progressing desire to perform his role affects his names. He begins as Strider; in 'The Council of Elrond' he is announced by his proper name, Aragorn (ibid, p.240); in 'Farewell to Lórien' Galadriel says 'In this hour take the name that was foretold for you, Elessar, the Elfstone of the house of Elendil!' (ibid, p.366). Aragorn receives names according to his destiny; only in accepting his right to choice does he announce himself by his own names:

"I am Aragorn, son of Arathorn, and am called Elessar, the Elfstone, Dunadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son of Gondor. Here is the Sword that was Broken and is forged again! Will you aid me or thwart me? Choose swiftly!"

...[Aragorn] seemed to have grown in stature while Eómer had shrunk; and in his living face they caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown. (ibid, p.243)

Aragorn's claim to his heroic space engenders a tier of three responses; first, growth in stature, both literally and metaphorically. Second, a 'vision of power and majesty' that links him historically with previous kings. Only Legolas sees the 'white flame...like a shining crown'. This may be a simple foreshadowing of the crown that Aragorn will wear. In Middle-Earth, the elves are continuously associated with the spiritual level, and Legolas alone sees a reflection of this realm. The flame is comparable to the prophetic fire encircling Iulus' head at the close of *Aeneid II*, or the gospels' account of the dove descending on Jesus at his baptism. Aragorn is spiritually empowered to fulfil his role.

Aragorn is also defined antithetically by Denethor. A steward, not a king, Denethor refuses to relinquish his power. Like Aragorn, he embodies the matrix formed by power and choice, but is associated with a 'fey' mood, and destructive linguistic visions surround him:

We will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed hither from the West. The West has failed. (ibid, p.807)

In correspondence with a spiritual heroism modelled on Ephesians, where Aragorn represents the kingly side of Christ as a hero, that this is the only place in the text where 'heathen' appears is of note. In conjunction with the association of 'the West' with Christendom in literature, this suggests that Denethor represents those who will not imitate Christ in dispensing their power. This is supported by the scriptural resonance of *The Return of the King*, title of the final book.

What distinguishes between Aragorn and Frodo? W.H.Auden wrote: 'One type [of quest hero] resembles the hero of Epic; his superior *arete* is manifest to all... The other type, so common in fairy tales, is the hero whose *arete* is concealed'.<sup>64</sup> While Aragorn claims his *arete* in the text, Frodo laments the right bestowed upon him ('I wish it had never, never, been found', ibid, p.891.). His heroism is in his acceptance of his role, even though he is not a king and no great glory will follow. Unlike Bilbo, Frodo is more than a moral hero; the text is riddled with suggestions that providence has chosen Frodo to destroy the Ring: 'Behind that there was

<sup>64</sup> Tolkien and the Critics, p.46

something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker...you...were meant to have it' (ibid, p.55). When Frodo takes the task we are told:

At last with an effort he spoke, and wondered to hear his own words, as if some other will was using his small voice.

"I will take the Ring," he said. (ibid, p.263-4)

Frodo has constantly to choose to serve; he is empowered to do that in part by providence, in part by his own inclination towards courtesy. Both facets mesh when he spares Gollum, a deed performed out of pity. Frodo is defined like Aeneas in terms of his *pietas* (his right-choosing), and like Gawain in terms of his courtesy; he is frequently referred to as a 'courteous halfling', and even astounds Galadriel ('here she has met her match in courtesy', ibid, p.356). It is in Frodo that imitative spiritual heroism is most clearly expressed in *LotR*. While Aragorn has the re-forged Andúril, Frodo's key possession is the phial of Galadriel, whose purpose accents the spiritual level of his quest: 'May it be a light to you in dark places, when all other lights go out' (ibid, p.367). This echoes Psalm 27: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation'.

Like Aragorn, Frodo is seen at moments 'as though in a vision', again suggesting the spiritual ethic that permeates the fabric of the text. When Frodo spares Gollum, we read:

For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog. (*LotR*, p.604)

Again one character shrinks while the other seems taller; as with Aragorn, the comparison affirms Frodo's heroic status. Frodo is a truly sophrosynic hero; but as the Ring grows in power it stifles his ability to choose: 'Lead me! As long as you've got any hope left...I'll just plod along after you' (ibid, p.907). The arena shifts from one visible to the reader to an all-encompassing spiritual one:

No image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark, Sam, and there is no veil now between me and the wheel of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades. (ibid, p.916)

The spiritual is intensely physical for Frodo, but the reader sees only what Sam sees: 'Anxiously Sam had noted how his master's left hand would often be raised as if to ward off a blow, or to screen his eyes from a dreadful Eye that sought to look in them' (ibid, p.914). Tolkien both highlights and undercuts the unfolding heroism; he distances the reader by giving psychological action viewed second-hand, but closes the gap in giving Sam's vision of the spiritual realm. When Gollum and Frodo meet again after Shelob's lair, Sam's vision sets the scene for Mt Doom:

Then suddenly...Sam saw these two rivals with other vision. A crouching shape, scarcely more than the shadow of a living thing, a creature now wholly ruined and defeated, yet filled with hideous lust and rage; and before it stood stern, untouchable now by pity, a figure robed in white, but at its breast it held a wheel of fire. (ibid, p.922)

The key phrase here is 'untouchable now by pity': as Frodo's primary tool in his heroism of right-choosing, this manifold failure of pity distorts his heroic right to choice. The language of free will is inverted at Mt Doom to show its crucial failure: 'I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!' (ibid, p.924). Here Frodo's legacy of

right-choosing serves him; Gollum, whom he had spared, bites off the Ring and falls into the chasm, destroying it and saving his master. In this way right-choosing makes Gollum an agent of eucatastrophe, and allows him to keep his apparently irreconcilable promises to both serve Frodo and seize the Ring. Even in failure, Frodo's choice brings good. Here, eucatastrophe provides Tolkien's *felix culpa*, theoretically relieving the tale of disenchantment in this climax to its spiritual dimensions.

The spiritual nature of Frodo's growth is underlined by his treatment of Saruman back in the Shire:

I do not wish him to be slain in this evil mood. He was great once, of a kind that we should not dare to raise our hand against. He is fallen, and his cure is beyond us; but I would still spare him, in the hope that he may find it. (ibid, p.996)

Like Milton's Christ in *Paradise Regained*, Frodo returns 'unobserved' to his home; but he does not achieve the same quiet heroism. Christ sacrificially gave his life; Frodo, as Tolkien writes 'thought that he had given his life in sacrifice: he expected to die very soon, and one can observe the disquiet growing in him'.<sup>65</sup> Frodo cannot be a complete hero; he cannot become a king like Aragorn; like Bilbo he receives no recognition in his own country. Frodo's heroism makes no sense without Christ as a comparative, but Christ has not yet appeared in Middle-Earth; to be robbed of an adequate heroic comparison cultivates Frodo's disillusion regarding his own deeds; the Shire is saved, 'but not for [him]' (ibid, p.1006). The sense of enchantment reinstated at Mt Doom slides towards disenchantment in Frodo's 'disquiet', just as the literature of Tolkien's time slides from Homer to Owen when story and reality do not mesh.

#### False Heroism

It is clear that Tolkien considered heroism carefully; in that consideration he did not ignore concerns, shared with other writers, regarding the effects of literature's heroic depictions. In *LotR* characters are caught between the appeal of *kleos* and the author's decision to write based on *sophrosyne*; the Ring tempts characters with this dichotomy: Boromir sees himself leading an army to overthrow Sauron. Eówyn's love for Aragorn is 'only a shadow and a thought: a hope of glory and great deeds, and lands far from the fields of Rohan' (ibid, p.849). This false love of heroism brings neither escape nor consolation - she 'goes seeking death' (ibid, p.823). Sam's internal dialogue in 'The Choices of Master Samwise' exemplifies the conflict between Tolkien's heroism of right-choosing and literature's established heroic tradition. On finding Frodo apparently dead Sam considers canonically heroic responses: committing suicide and seeking vengeance. We can assume that these are founded on a reading of literature as Sam makes constant reference to song and story. Deciding to take the Ring he sees a group of Orcs coming towards his master's body. Again, he is afflicted by what he feels is expected of a hero:

How many can I kill before they get me? They'll see the flame of my sword as soon as I draw it, and they'll get me sooner or later. I wonder if any song will ever mention it: How Samwise fell in the High Pass and made a wall of bodies round his master. No, no song. Of course not, for the Ring'll be found, and there'll be no more songs. I can't help it... I can't be their Ring-bearer. Not without Mr. Frodo. (ibid, p.718)

Ultimately Sam's choice is not based on literature's dictates but on love for his master. In an interesting turn the height of his heroism, typified by love and service, inspires him to make his own song at the Tower of Cirith Ungol; later he becomes one of the 'chroniclers' of the story

<sup>65</sup> *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien, (London, 1995; first published 1981), p.327

itself. Tolkien implies that heroes enchanted by Christian love and 'good' heroic literature become the next generation of artists; Sam's 'visions' (see above) accent his integration with the spiritual realm of Middle-Earth. Unlike Frodo, Sam returns to the Shire at peace and enriched. In these senses, he exemplifies Tolkien's ideas of recovery and mimesis. But, despite the apparent culmination of his theory in Sam, it is in Frodo's position that Tolkien finds himself.

### **The Disenchanted?**

The hero-anxiety engendered by the Great War created a literary environment in which traditional concepts of heroism could no longer match the experience of the primary world. But there was still a need for heroes, one that Tolkien answered by exploring the nature of heroism to disperse the prevailing sentiment of disenchantment. To do this, his writings drew from a large linguistic, literary, religious and historical tradition. Tolkien's heroes try to reinstate heroic vision whilst remaining aware of the dangers of their media.

Charles Douie asked if 'the prose and poetry of this age [were] to be charged with disillusion and despair?'<sup>66</sup> While Tolkien's theories sought to show that it did not need to be, his greatest hero, Frodo, is beset by disenchantment within and without the text; in Tolkien's historical perspective and in the imminent departure of the elves, representing the disenchantment of Middle-Earth. Frodo's circumstance—caught between the heroic and the unheroic—is a motif of Tolkien's present, a summation of the Great War's disillusioning effect. In this regard, whilst epitomising so much of Tolkien's anti-disenchantment theory, Frodo is inescapably symptomatic of the conflict which he was framed to address.

*Anna E. Slack*

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<sup>66</sup> Garth, p.303

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