

ISSUE 9

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Editorial

This is not supposed to be a proper editorial—for one thing, I am not (most definitely not!) the Editor, and for another, it is three o'clock in the morning. However, there are one or two things that need saying. Firstly, and most importantly, **anyone interested in applying for the editorship of *Anor* is invited to contact the Secretary, Adam Atkinson, Trintly College.**

Why am I composing this pseudo-editorial at such an ugly hour? Because an "Event", namely the Tolkien Society's Oxonmoot, "approaches at which sales of the magazine will provide much-needed funds", and *you* the members have not actually contributed *anything*. It is now four *Anors* since an 'ordinary member', i.e. someone who is not a past or present Committee member nor an 'external' member, has contributed an article to *Anor*. Some of you must have *some* ideas that you could commit to paper—do it!

I will close by suggesting that you re-read the editorial of *Anor 8* (or in the case of new members, buy *Anor 8* (thus providing much-needed funds!) and read it for the first time), consider it, and produce a deluge of superb articles and art for the tenth issue of *Anor*.

Julian Bradfield

Review

Some light on Middle-Earth. Edward Crawford. (London: The Tolkien Society, 1985). pp 46 £2.50.

Mr Crawford subtitles his series of three essays as 'the use of scientific techniques of social analysis to reveal the nature of the world of the Free Peoples'. Later I will mention some reasons why I am not entirely happy with this description, but first I must say that despite a few minor flaws I found this book both intriguing and enjoyable.

The first two essays analyse in turn the social and economic structures of the Shire and the more traditional societies of the south (i.e. Rohan and Gondor). Both these essays make fascinating reading; Mr Crawford's command of detail and his ability to draw different aspects of the respective societies into a coherent whole is at times truly enviable. I especially liked the way he used the Hobbits' tradition of giving away presents on festive occasions as a major source of socio-economic stability. On the other hand his remarks concerning the hobbits' honesty in a similar context I found rather naive. Surely a concept such as honesty is a purely social construct which varies between cultures, and therefore the use of the concept 'honesty' to explain the stability of the culture which defines it must be circular.

The only fault of the essay on Gondor and Rohan is an excessive generality which on occasion makes it difficult to see how his system hangs together as a self-consistent reality. This, however, is probably unavoidable given the immensity of the task and the wealth of information from different periods which Mr Crawford attempts to assimilate. It must be said that I found much of the speculation in this essay to be very intriguing. The final essay in the collection discusses the logistics of the War of the Ring and I will only say that it makes it transparently clear why Sauron lost!

Now I am afraid I must come to my fundamental worries about this book and its objectives as set out in the subtitle. First of all; is this collection of essays a 'scientific analysis' as it claims to be? I fear not. As science it fails to command assent because it lacks the construction of empirical data needed to be scientifically convincing. As a social historian (of science, as it happens!) I expect to find scientific work of this nature supported by rather more in the way of empirical data than Mr Crawford presents here. Marxism as a research-paradigm may be a highly theoretical construct, but in order to be successful it needs data, otherwise it is no more than speculation. Doubtless Mr Crawford would argue that a full treatment would turn each essay into a massive tome too weighty for the average reader. In any case much of the data required (private correspondence, land transfer deeds etc.) is obviously unavailable. This is all true enough, but if this is so is it correct to label these speculative essays scientific?

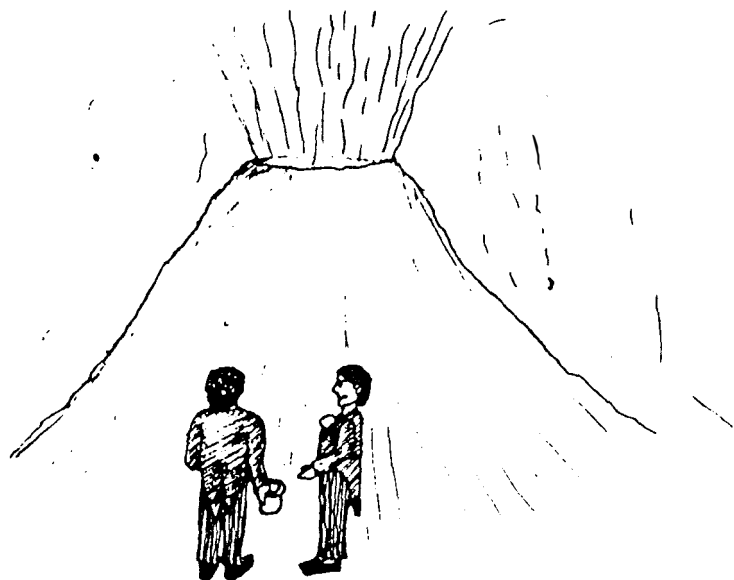
Also, Mr Crawford's frequent references to Gandalf as a kind of benign *éminence grise* of Middle-Earth politics is not particularly satisfactory or convincing from the point of view of scientific analysis (whilst being perfectly plausible when considered as part of the independent inner reality of Tolkien's world). It is particularly unsatisfactory from the point of view of the Marxist paradigm which Mr Crawford claims to follow, that social

forces should be structured by individual action in this way' rather than vice-versa.

Secondly, and more importantly, should we be looking for a scientific analysis of Middle-Earth at all? One of the functions of science is to render the extraordinary ordinary by subjecting it to the laws of a self-imposed controlled environment. On the other hand the whole point of fantasy as a subversive and intellectually revolutionary literary form is that it transcends our social categories and shows us the possibility of a coherent 'something else' beyond our conditioned bourgeois expectations. As a result, when dealing, as do these essays, with the internal consistency of fantasy, we must remember that we are dealing with an alternative reality and must therefore exercise great care in imposing the categories of our own 20th-century reality. It is my opinion that the methodology of bourgeois science is not an appropriate tool for the study of the internal world of Fantasy.

Happily, as the perceptive reader will have noticed, my two complaints cancel out in the case of this book: it tries to be science but fails, and that is precisely what saves it. In conclusion I must therefore recommend this collection of essays as a fascinating example of what fun speculation into the internal consistency of Middle-Earth can be and what surprises can result from such an endeavour. But don't follow the example of this review and take it all too seriously!

Iwan Rhys Morus



"I hope you remembered the ring."

CMM and CMMTops.

ON ELVEN SIGHT

Keen are the eyes of the elves.

Aragorn. *LotR* p. 450

There are many aspects of Middle-earth which have taxed the minds of serious students of physical science. Many of the great metallurgical minds of our time have pondered the properties of mithril and ithildin and much has been written on the tensile strength of elven hair and the radioactive properties of orcs. Yet, despite all these learned and worthy treatises, there has been, to my knowledge, little discussion of the vexing question of the visual acuity of the Quendi race. The purpose of this work is to discuss some of the relevant issues from a physical (rather than biological) perspective and to provide a framework for further detailed analysis.

As is well known, the angular resolution of any optical instrument is limited by the Rayleigh criterion to $\sim \lambda/d$, where λ is the wavelength of light and d is the diameter of the instrument's aperture. For the human eye, $d \approx 7$ mm and the shortest visible wavelengths are $\lambda \approx 600$ nanometres giving a resolution of 8.6×10^{-5} radians or 0.01 seconds of arc. Our knowledge of the resolving ability of elvish sight comes almost entirely from Legolas's description of the riders of Rohan: "... one hundred and five. Yellow is their hair and bright are their spears. Their leader is very tall ... little more than five leagues distant" (*LotR* p. 450). Assuming one league = three miles = five kilometres, the human eye would have a resolution of just 2.15 m at five leagues. This is barely enough to resolve a human being, far less estimate his height! Moreover, the human iris is severely stopped down in bright daylight, reducing resolution still further.

How then can Elvish sight better this fundamental limitation? One possible solution to this problem is that elves possessed far larger irises than men. Unfortunately, this still does not provide adequate resolution for our needs. We know that Elves appear fundamentally human from the exterior and so their eyeballs cannot be noticeably larger than normal. Hence their aperture must be limited to ~ 2 cm giving a resolution of 70 cm at 5 leagues.

An alternative possibility is that Elves could see far further into the ultraviolet spectrum than could humans. It is doubtful whether this possibility could be made to work, for the ambient level of hard ultraviolet light at the Earth's surface is very low even in direct sunlight and cannot have been higher in Middle-earth than it is now, because had it been so, the entire population would undoubtedly have perished quickly from skin-cancer.

I propose, therefore, a third solution. Whilst I admit that it is highly tentative (some might say, preposterous), it does have the advantage of explaining the available data extremely well. My proposal is that long-distance Elvish sight was accomplished by aperture-synthesis interferometry of light collected separately from the two eyes. An order of magnitude estimate shows quite clearly the viability of this postulate. If we assume that in order to distinguish between the heights of the Rohirrim, Legolas would require to resolve ~ 15 cm at 5 leagues, and if we further assume that Elves could see into the near ultraviolet (say $\lambda = 500$ nm) then we require a baseline of $(25\,000/0.15) \times 500 \times 10^{-9}$ m,

i.e. a baseline of 8 cm, exactly equal to the separation of two normal human eyes. I shall discuss in more detail how such a synthesis technique might be possible in the case of Elvish sight, but first a brief digression on the principles of interferometry is in order.

Consider a beam of light incident on two apertures separated by a distance d . At some distance behind these apertures, an interference pattern, consisting of a series of fringes, will be visible. The visibility of these fringes is defined to be the difference in intensity between the fringe maxima and minima divided by their sum. Now consider a plane normal to the incident beam and construct on this plane a Cartesian coordinate grid. The projection of the aperture baseline onto this grid determines a point (u, v) in the plane. If the angle of the baseline to the incoming light is varied whilst d is kept constant, the visibility is determined as a function of position (u, v) in the plane of the incident wavefront. An image of the source may then be obtained mathematically by the process of Fourier transforming the visibility function.

Consider now how these concepts apply to the case of Elvish sight. We can identify three axes about which the 'baseline' may be made to rotate:



The reader should note that during the course of these head movements, the Elf in question would be required to keep both eyes staring straight ahead. The reader is not, however, advised to attempt these movements for himself unless he is fully fit and has not eaten recently. It is in any case most odd that no commentators have chosen to comment on this unusual behaviour on the part of the Elvenfolk when attempting to see distant objects. It is possible, perhaps, that it was considered in some way a taboo subject for conversation. In any case, its significance would hardly have been apparent to mortals at a time when optics had not yet advanced (so far as we know) as far as the invention of the lens.*

We must now turn our attention to the problem of detection and correlation of the optical signals arriving at each eye. Here we must distinguish between two possibilities. In the first case, which I have called digital cross-correlation, the signals at each eye are detected separately by chemicals in the retinae and then transmitted to the visual cortex for processing. I do not think this is a feasible mechanism in the optical region of the spectrum, since it would require a response time of $\sim 10^{-14}$ seconds from the retina, an implausibly fast response. The alternative possibility, and the one I shall consider here, is analogue cross-correlation. In this case, the light falling on the eyes is directly channelled to some region inside the subject's head where an interference pattern is formed and detected by a 'third eye' situated inside the skull. The light could best be channelled by a fibre optic arrangement, as depicted in Figure 2 [see next page]. The fringe pattern on the third

* The only evidence we have for a knowledge of optics in Middle-earth is Saruman's statement that white light may be broken into many colours. We don't know if Númenórean science had made any significant inroads in this area of physics.

retina could then be detected chemically, as in the human eye, and transmitted to the visual cortex for processing.

Such a system raises a number of points worthy of further discussion:

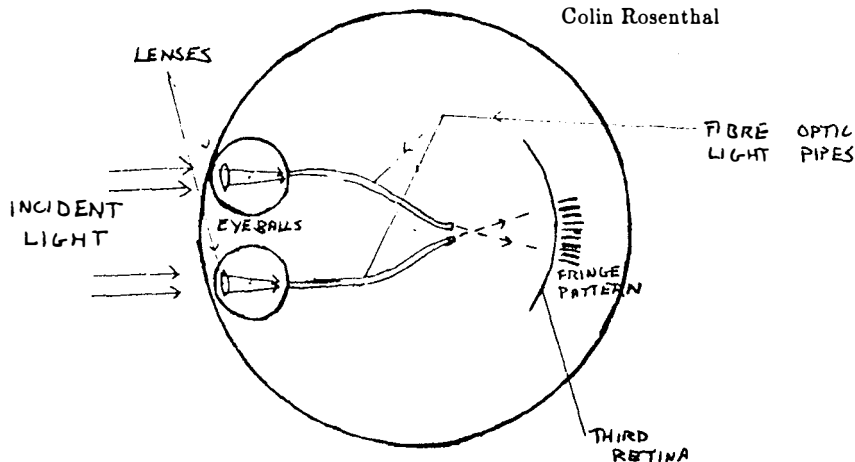
- 1) Colour vision: If the third retina contains cells sensitive separately to red, blue and green light then colour vision is certainly possible, just as in the human eye. In any case, receptor cells in the third retina would have to be highly monochromatic in their light sensitivity.
- 2) Fibre optics: I am not aware of any organism in which fibre optic systems occur. However, I have little doubt that it would be possible to find organic materials with the requisite optical properties.
- 3) Processing psychology: I have not attempted any explanation as to how the fringe pattern is interpreted in the visual cortex. Given our present limited understanding of the human visual cortex, any attempt to discuss the Elven visual cortex must be highly tentative.
- 4) Visibility phase: As the more astute reader will no doubt have noted, the optical image is not in fact the Fourier transform of the visibility function defined above, but of the cross-correlation function. Fortunately, the cross-correlation phase may be determined from the position of the interference fringes on the third retina, whilst the cross-correlation amplitude is simply the visibility defined above. Thus enough information is present for a complete aperture synthesis.
- 5) Night vision: I have not attempted to explain the almost legendary sensitivity of Elven sight at low light levels. One may identify two possible explanations: (a) the active chemicals in the third retina are vastly more sensitive than those in the human eye, or (b) the third retina acts as a microchannel image intensifier. This is clearly an area where much future research must be concentrated.

The reader will doubtless be aware that the problems posed by Elvish sight are still far from solved. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the hypotheses in this article will provide the basis for a comprehensive theory of the optics of the Elder Race.

... and light are their fingers.

Gimlet. Bored of the Rings.

Colin Rosenthal



Puntmoot Report

I must begin with apologies. First, for the fact that I am not attempting a poetic Puntmoot report along the lines of that last published in *Anor*. Second, for any inaccuracies or omissions (unintentional omissions, that is!) in this report. Due to the unfortunate timing of a May Ball, I had been awake for 27 hours by the beginning of the Puntmoot at any rate, I thought at the time that I was awake. Considering the fuzziness of my remaining memories, I'm no longer so sure!

We gathered by Trinity's boathouse, having successfully completed the EGM. The sun shone, which was a relief, as the previous days' weather had been sufficiently unsettled to get us all worried. Perhaps we would have appreciated this still more if we had known how rare such mornings were to be in the succeeding months.

Once we had convinced the 'punt-man' that there were, indeed, enough Trinity members amongst us to justify us in taking out five Trinity punts, the next task was to bail out two of these punts. (They had been taken out the previous night by another society, which shall remain nameless.)

However, the party at last moved off, the energy of those noble people punting contrasting with the lethargy of the rest of us.* As what conversation there was had little to do with Tolkien, I feel no obligation to report it...

The picnic was a great success, which was gratifying to those of us who had spent the early morning manufacturing it. Large amounts of food and drink were consumed, both in the field and in the nearby Grantchester pubs. What is it, though, about cream-cheese sandwiches which makes them consistently satisfy the equation $demand = \frac{1}{2} \times supply$?

A little excitement was provided by the efforts of a stray punter to dislodge our punts and poles. Considerably more excitement was provided by a concerted attack on the dignity of a certain ex-committee-member. [Details on request!]

After a rather wet return journey, the event was concluded; my impression, at least, was that it had been enjoyed. I believe that some people congregated in a pub later in the evening, but as I was happily asleep by then, I can give no report.

Perdita Stevens



WHAT DO YOU EXPECT
IF YOU ASK A WOOD-ELF
FOR A LITTLE HEAD?

* I dispute this claim! Although I had been awake after MUDding all night, I can clearly recall certain non-punters being anything but lethargic. A. A.

Book Reviews

First, a statement of intent. I do not intend to get bogged down in serious literary criticism: this is purely a set of short reviews of some of the recently published fantasy, so I can decide what to waste your money on ... !

OK—for starters:

The Blue Sword. Robin McKinley. pp 272. Futura: £2.50. This one nearly didn't get read. I lent it to Anne before I'd had a chance to read it, and she gave me it back after twenty pages, complaining that nothing had happened. Having read it, I can see her point. The opening few chapters remind me of nothing quite so much as *The Far Pavillions*, being set in somewhere reminiscent of India under the Empire. However, after the shaky start, it picks up with Harry, the heroine (short for Angharad), being abducted by a barbarian king. Harry learns to wield a legendary sword (suspiciously quickly), and the book builds up, predictably, to a fair-sized battle, but falls just a little flat at the end.

All in all, not bad. The characters (in particular Harry and Corlath, the barbarian king) are believable, and so are the magical powers that the Hillfolk (and, later, Harry) possess. Quite a good read.

Next, another trilogy (gulp).

The Time of the Dark, The Walls of Air, The Armies of Daylight. Barbara Hambly. pp 284, 314, 311. Unicorn: £2.50 each. I only picked up *The Time of the Dark* because I had a long train journey ahead of me. I have to admit to being pleasantly surprised by these three books, though. Not a mention of JRRT, nor a single out-of-context review quote, to be seen on any of the covers for a start.

Darwath is being threatened by its age old enemy, the Dark. The Dark are sort of shapeless amoeboid thingys, with a collective intelligence, minor magical powers, a very nasty way with people and acute photophobia. To Darwath come Gil, a history student at UCLA, and Rudy, a California biker. Ugh, I thought, not another 'visiting another world' book. Well, it is, but ... Strangely enough, it works, partly because both Gil and Rudy form attachments in Darwath, and Miss (Mrs?) Hambly manages to put over the difficulties they have, and the choices they must make, quite convincingly. Rudy discovers he's a closet wizard, and Gil learns how to swing a sword—yes, another swinging female! Rudy's mentor is the wizard, Ingold can't-help-thinking-I've-heard-the-name-before-somewhere Inglorion, around whom most of the story centres. I'm not sure I needed padding out to three books, but things progress at a reasonable pace through and the rapid succession of twists and turns in the final hundred pages make it worth wait. Read it—it's good.

And now for this issue's heavyweight:

Maia. Richard Adams. pp 1129. Penguin: £4.95. This is hard work. I say with good reason, because I started it a month ago and still haven't been able to finish it. The book is set in the same world as *Shardik*, on which it throws some more light. It concerns a peasant girl, Maia Serrelinda, who gets seduced by her stepfather, so I

slave, becomes a spy and a courtesan All good racy stuff, ~~you~~ would think, but no. Adams drags it on for about twice as long as he needs to, and ~~can't~~ seem to decide how X-rated he wants to be. It's not sexually explicit, yet its overall ~~tone~~ is . . . well . . . sort of broad-mindedly prudish. As such, it falls between two stools, and fails.

Not worth the money unless you positively adore *Shardik* and *The Girl in the Swing*. I don't.

And to follow, a rattling good yarn:

The War of Powers and *Istu Awakened*. Robert E. Vardeman and Victor Milan. pp 457, 511. NEL: £2.95 each. Here we have a strange beast—a dualogy, I suppose. In fact, although they were printed as two books, I get the feeling they were written as one. Literary merit—very little. A barbarian hero (he's a courier, actually) and assorted females (most of whom end up horizontal at one point or another) hack and slash their way through a well-constructed world, including a flying city, a race of decidedly amoral (and anatomically interesting) lizard-men and a rather annoyed demon who does his level best to wreck the place. Not to be forgotten is the sex-starved genie in a bottle. The characterisation is good, but the whole is sufficiently racily paced that it really doesn't matter anyway. Funny (killingly so) in places, and shows Richard Adams how the steampunk bits should be written.

I enjoyed it immensely—read it.

Frost. Robin W. Bailey. pp 209. Unicorn: £2.95. This got off on the wrong foot, firstly by having a cover picture of a female in a chainmail bikini (impractical as ever), and secondly by being printed on very cheap quality paper. The book itself is not so bad. Frost, the heroine, is a cursed (and thus powerless) sorceress with not inconsiderable skill with a sword, and a large hang-up over her parents (whom she killed in self-defence). (I really don't know where all these female Conans are coming from!) She gets caught up in a quest over which she has no control, and everything ends (in good high fantasy style) with a huge 'save the world' battle. If anything, it reminds me of Moorcock.

Nothing special, but worth a look.

To finish, something different:

Dragons of Autumn Twilight, *Dragons of Winter Night*, *Dragons of Spring Dawning* (forthcoming). Margaret Weiss and Tracy Hickman. pp 447, 400. TSR Inc.: £2.25. OK. Those of you who recognise the publisher should have already guessed that these are going to have some connection with Dungeons and Dragons. They do, in a big way. TSR's current mega-project is the *DragonLance* series, comprising twelve (at least) scenarios and these three books (not to mention a range of figures and a few other spin-offs). *DragonLance* is set in the world of Krynn, a world the gods have deserted, leaving the clerics of Krynn unable to perform miracles. The scenarios are very definitely high fantasy, in the style of JRRT or David Eddings, which is very hard to make work in AD&D. The books follow the scenarios, but successfully lose the feeling that the characters are part of a D&D 'party', and are actually very good reading in themselves. I can't tell you the plot, since half the people who are playing the scenarios will be reading this, but the characters 'live' convincingly, and the illustrations are gorgeous.

I'm hooked—I can't wait to start running the scenarios. Buy them (but not if you're playing in them!!!)

Mike Whitaker

Harnessin' Middle-earth or, How to Steer your Horse~

The original idea for this article was sparked off by a heated argument as to whether anyone in Middle Earth ever rode side-saddle, and that is the ultimate question which I hope to answer here. However, in order to tackle this problem, we must first consider the subject of harnesses as a whole.

Horses in Middle Earth were ridden by three different groups of people, Men, Elves, and servants of the Dark Lord (O.K., I know most of the last group who rode were men, but there were others, and they would seem to be a separate case anyway, since it is reasonable to assume that they would show less concern for the well being of their mounts than either of the first two groups.). Also to be considered are the Ponies ridden by Hobbits; I think it is fair to ignore the Warg-riding Goblins, since I can't see any self-respecting Warg allowing itself to be saddled, and I certainly can't see any self-respecting Goblin riding into battle side-saddle.

To begin with the Elves, most people, if asked, would say that Elves rode bareback, quoting from Gandalf's ride to Minas Tirith:

'I did not know you rode bare-back, Gandalf,' Pippin said. 'You haven't a saddle or a bridle!'

'I do not ride elf-fashion, except on Shadowfax,' said Gandalf.
(*TT* p. 202)

This passage would certainly seem to imply that the Elves, who of all the people of the world were most in tune with the animals, used no harness when they rode, which was not infrequently; of all the free peoples they are the only ones who are recorded as making any long journeys simply for pleasure. As an example of this, consider Arwen, who made the long journey from Rivendell to Lothlórien, presumably via the Gap of Rohan, on several occasions, simply in order to visit her Mother's kin—she must have ridden on this journey, and would also have had several companions, also on horseback.

However, there is another passage in *The Lord of the Rings* which tends to contradict Gandalf's comments above. When Aragorn and the Hobbits meet Glorfindel on the road to Rivendell, Glorfindel offers Frodo the option of riding his horse:

'You shall ride my horse,' said Glorfindel. 'I will shorten the stirrups up to the saddle-skirts, and you must sit as tight as you can.'
(*FotR* p. 223)

This paragraph appears to contradict that given above, since the reference to stirrups and saddle skirts obviously implies that Glorfindel's horse Asfaloth *did* have a saddle. In fact, Glorfindel not only used a saddle, but a headstall as well:

Strider ran from hiding and dashed down towards the Road, leaping with a cry through the heather; but even before he had moved or called, the rider had *reined* in his horse and halted, looking up towards the thicket where they stood. [*my italics*]
(*FotR* p. 222)

Thus it would appear that Glorfindel, one of the most powerful Elves in Middle-earth ("Even if you chose for us an elf-lord, such as Glorfindel, he ~~could~~ not storm the Dark Tower ..." *FotR* p. 289), not only used a saddle on his horse, ~~but~~ also a headstall.

Now I turn my attention to men, and that inevitably leads to the most accomplished horsemen of Middle-earth, the riders of Rohan. As one would expect, these superbly agile riders used saddles and bridles, as did all the other men, as can be seen when Eomer lends horses to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli:

But Legolas asked them to take off saddle and rein. 'I need them not,' he said, and leaped lightly up, and to their wonder Arod was tame and willing beneath him, moving here and there with but a spoken word: such was the elvish way with all good beasts.

(*TT* p. 42)

The issue now begins to become more confused, since as well as illustrating that the riders of Rohan used saddles, this paragraph also confuses the issue regarding the elves, since it seems to support Gandalf's statement above. However, I shall return to this matter later.

The people of Minas Tirith were also evidently not familiar with the habit of riding bare-back, as can be seen from Beregon's question on meeting Shadowfax:

'Where is his harness? It should be rich and fair.'

(*RotK* p. 34)

If the men of Minas Tirith and Rohan, who evidently cared for their horses ("They love their horses next to their kin." *FotR* p. 275) used saddles and bridles, then there seems little doubt that the servants of the Dark Lord did likewise; certainly the Nazgul used not only saddles and bridles, but spurs as well:

... and on it sat a large man, who seemed to crouch in the saddle, ... so that only his boots in the high stirrups showed below ...

At that moment the rider sat up and shook the reins.

(*FotR* p. 84)

'... Then he spurred his great horse right at me, and I jumped out of the way only just in time.'

(*FotR* p. 103)

The ponies ridden by the Hobbits were used not only for riding, but also for transporting of baggage, and as such must have had not only saddles but saddle-bags:

'I am just going to saddle the ponies, and fetch the one that is to be the baggage carrier.'

(*FotR* p. 120)

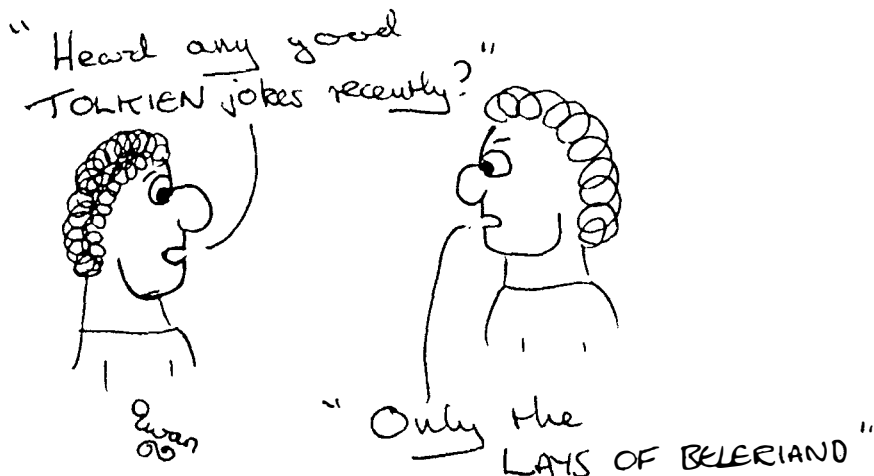
Thus all the races in Middle-earth who rode horses and ponies can be seen to have used saddles at least on some occasions, and it is safe to assume that all except Elves used bridles; in the first edition of *The Lord of the Rings* Glorfindel's horse did have a bridle, but this was corrected in the second edition to a headstall. The problem observed above regarding the question of whether or not Elves used saddles is most neatly solved if one assumes that the Elves by their natural power were capable of communicating with horses by spoken word, and thus were perfectly able to control a horse without saddle or bridle, but that in some cases they chose, whether for comfort or for some other reason, to use a saddle. In the case of Glorfindel it is also possible that it was through foresight, knowing that Frodo might have to ride his horse, that on this occasion he used a saddle.

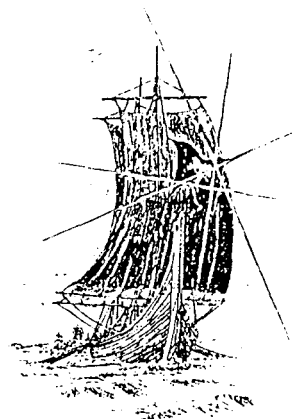
There remains the question of whether or not anyone in Middle-earth ever rode side-saddle. It seems unlikely that the servants of the Dark Lord would ever need to, since the only times they would be likely to have access to horses would be in battle; certainly it is unlikely that the women would have ridden, unless they were also soldiers, which leads on to the question of female orcs and orc reproduction, but that is the subject of another article. Hobbits would also be unlikely to ride side-saddle, for two reasons. Firstly, they tended to wear simple costumes, which would not often make this necessary. Secondly, Hobbits rarely travelled long distances, and any Hobbit lady who did have reason to travel would have done so in a trap rather than on a pony. The riders of Rohan led a life so dominated by horses that it seems probable that their dress was designed with riding in mind, so that even the formal dress of the ladies would have been such that it allowed them to ride astride. This leaves the men of Minas Tirith and the Elves as possible candidates, and while there is no direct reference to side-saddle riding it seems unlikely that this did not take place. For her journeys to Lothlórien Arwen would probably have worn a riding tunic, but from the description of her arrival in Minas Tirith:

And Frodo when he saw her come glimmering in the evening, with stars on her brow and a sweet fragrance about her, was moved with great wonder ...
(*RotK* p. 251)

I find it hard to imagine Arwen cantering up in jodhpurs!

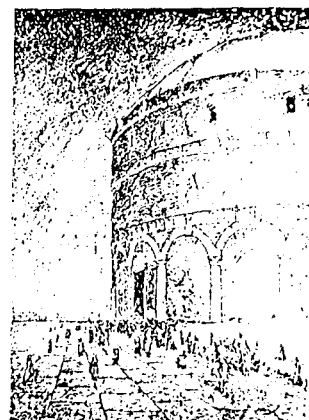
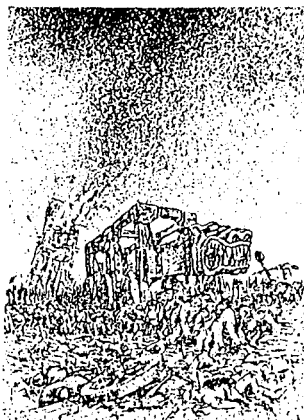
Mike Percival





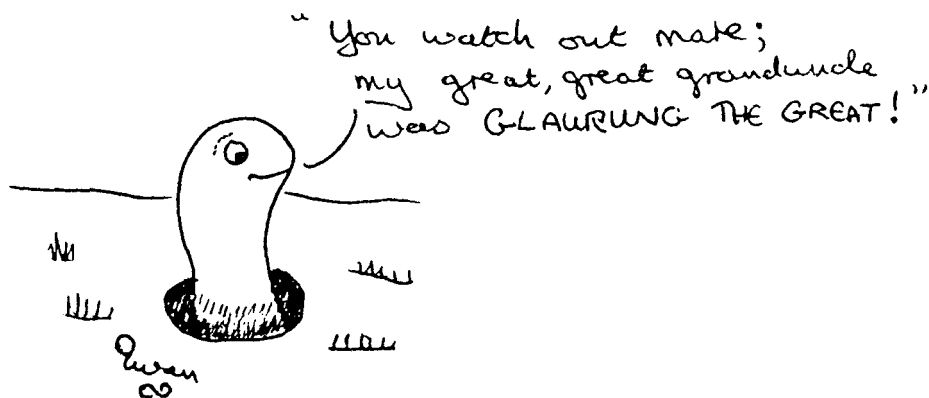
Barad Ecthelion present a set of six posters inspired by the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. The posters, size A3 (42 cm × 30 cm or 16½ in × 12 in), are drawn by Andy Jeram and Per Ahlberg and printed in black on art paper by Cambridge University Press. They depict: *Mount Doom*; *The Argonath*; *Aragorn sailing to the Pelennor Fields*; *Treebeard*; *Grond before the Gates of Minas Tirith*; *The Temple of Sauron in Armenelos*. They are available at a price of £6.00, plus postage and packing of 34p in the U. K. and £1.00 overseas, from:

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



Answers to last Issue's Crossword Puzzle

1. THARBAD *anag. of bat hard* 2. HOUSES *of Kings, of Healing* 3. RHUN *sounds like rune*
4. AEGIDIUS DE HAMMO *anag. of made housemaid about G.I. (soldier)* 5. IBUN *one bun*
6. BREAKERS *Oathbreakers, sea breakers* 7. NOLDO *not + left + do (party)* 8. ALDARION
had an obsession with the main (i.e. the sea) 9. STONE *rock, pit (stone of fruit)* 10. GLAU-
RUNG *left + Au (gold) + run (smuggled (gun-running)) in gee-gee* 11. TYELLE *yell (bel-
low) in te (musical note)* 12. RAVEN N *(point of compass) after ráve ('storm' in Quenya)*
13. ADUNAKHOR A.D. *(in our era) a King takes an hour to become, anagrammatically, a
king* 14. EOL E *(cardinal point of compass), then Lo! up* 15. MIM 1000 *in roman* 16. BO-
FUR *Black (as in pencü) + O (duck as in cricket) + fur (skin)* 17. TROLL *Olog(-hai),
and troll=sing* 18. LORINDOL *sounds like lore inn doll = wisdom pub girl* 19. AGARWAEN
Túrin Turambar (=mastered by fate) called himself this (=son of ill fate) 20. ARE $\frac{1}{100}$
hectare, sunlight in Quenya 21. SNAGA *snag a, =slave* 22. ADORN *ornate, River Adorn*
23. DRU *sounds like drew=described* 24. DÍVES *Chrysophylax* 25. MLANCO NCO' *(sergeant)
puts on alb (vestiment) upside down* 26. OVERLITHE *lithe=supple* 27. VIRIN VI *(six) right
in; Moon's case made of virin* 28. ELENÍ *hidden in here lenient* 29. YRCH *sounds like
an exclamation of disgust* 30. CREATE C *(=100=many) + re (about) + ate (scoffed)*
31. MORANNON *Ann in moron* 32. NINE *hidden in Hobbiton in Eriador* 33. GOTHMOG
moth chewed (snag.) and swallowed by Gog the giant



Schizophrenia in a Boys' Own World ?

Notes on Edwin Muir's reviews of LotR in the Observer.

A kind of popular myth has grown up concerning the critical response of the literary establishment to the first publication of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Reviews and reviewers are portrayed as falling into one of two clearly defined and mutually incompatible camps; the 'goodies' being (for example) C. S. Lewis, W. H. Auden or Naomi Mitcheson with their favourable rave reviews, whilst in the opposite camp are Edmund Wilson, Edwin Muir, Philip Toynbee and a host of others.

This myth of black and white responses probably owes a large part of its origin to Carpenter's *Biography* of Tolkien and its assertion that the critical response to *LotR* was "extreme praise from one faction, total contempt from the other." Prof. Shippey in *The Road to Middle-Earth* also propagates the myth. It must be added, however, that Tolkien himself also seems to have been inclined to see matters in a similar light, as this light-hearted piece of doggerel indicates:

The Lord of the Rings
is one of those things:
if you like you do:
if you don't, then you boo!¹

It must also be admitted that the myth is not entirely without justification. Edmund Wilson's notorious 'Oo those awful Orcs!' review in the *Nation* (14th April 1956) should be essential reading for all Tolkien fans as a prime example of the total incomprehension and even hate that *LotR* arouses in some members of the literary establishment. But reading some of the other reviews which generally appear in the 'baddies' camp shows that the reactions were not all as knee-jerk as Mr Wilson's.

Edwin Muir's series of reviews in the *Observer* covering all three volumes of *LotR* separately as they appeared is a good example. Mr Muir is usually characterised as being firmly on the 'baddies' side of the fence. Humphrey Carpenter in the *Biography* quotes several of Muir's critical remarks on *The Fellowship of the Ring* and characterises him as "[returning] to the attack" in his final review.² Prof. Shippey also castigates Muir for his lack of comprehension of the role of language for Tolkien as evidenced by Muir's mis-spelling of Gandalf as Gandolf.³

It is my impression however, on reading the series of reviews that Muir's main response to *LotR* is not antipathy and dislike, but a curious mixture of incomprehension and cautious approval. In his first review 'Strange Epic' (on *FotR*) it becomes immediately clear that Muir has very little idea how to categorise this new work. He starts by castigating the

¹ Carpenter's discussion of the critical response to *LotR* is in the chapter entitled 'Cash or Kudos' in his *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977) p. 219. Tolkien's light-hearted verse is also quoted here. Shippey's contribution is in Chapter 1 of his *The Road to Middle-Earth* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982) p. 1

² Carpenter *ibid.* p. 223

³ Shippey *ibid.* p. 3-4. This criticism by Shippey is rather unfair since he implies that the error is repeated. In fact the name Gandolf only appears once in three reviews. Has Prof. Shippey never heard of printing errors?

authors of the publisher's 'blurbs' for their excessive "bombardment of praise", but admits also that "it is understandable that the book should have received such excessive praise, for to read it is to be thrown into astonishment, and astonishment naturally begets hyperbole." A summary of the general plot and character of the book follows, and here Muir makes his major criticism that there is "a lack of the human discrimination and depth which the subject demanded. . . . [Tolkien] has no room in his world for a Satan both evil and tragic."⁴ He ends his first review with the remark that "if Mr Tolkien's imagination had been equal to his invention, and his style equal to both, this book might have been a masterpiece."

In his second review (following the publication of *The Two Towers*) Muir seems fully reconciled to the idea of reading and enjoying a book about magical events and people: "Mr Tolkien's invention of strange countries, strange peoples, curious incidents, miraculous doings, is poured out in this second volume of his trilogy as exuberantly and convincingly, in a dream-like way, as ever." The criticism of Tolkien's style apparent in the first review is now limited to the remark that "it is a heroic conception and Mr Tolkien's imagination rises to it, though his style now and then fails him." Mr Muir seems very taken by the Ents, whom he describes as "symbolically . . . quite convincing, yet they are full of character too." His final sentence is significant: "The story itself is superb, and it is not a story for boys but for everyone."

By the time his final review appeared, following the publication of *The Return of the King* Muir seems to have regretfully decided that "correct and sober taste" should win after all, and in an inexplicable contradiction of his closing sentence quoted above he castigates Tolkien for producing characters who are no more than "boys masquerading as adult heroes." Having protected his literary reputation by making this accusation at some length, Muir in his final paragraph is free to admit that he enjoyed *LotR*. "One must admire a power of invention so inexhaustible as this and at the same time so controlled . . . of its kind—and it is a respectable kind—this book can only be called brilliant."

It is difficult to see what a neutral reader of these reviews as they appeared could have made of such apparently contradictory statements other than that the reviewer seemed unable (or unwilling) to make up his mind. Equally, it seems very difficult to see how these basically sympathetic (if confused) reviews came to be cited as prime examples of Tolkien bashing. Muir, despite his criticisms of style and his occasionally rather feeble and superficial interpretations of the plot, seems quite happy with the idea of Fantasy as an acceptable literary genre, and with Tolkien's work as a major contribution to that genre. This is not in the same league as the remarks of Edmund Wilson and others of his ilk who seem to regard the very idea that people might enjoy reading about Elves and Dragons as a personal attack on their literary reputations! Doubtless the categorisation of all Tolkien's literary critics into black and white camps and producing an eponymous caricature of *Edwin Wilson-Toynbee* as a stock bogeyman for Tolkien fans makes the work of defenders of the Tolkien Faith a great deal easier. It does little, however, to further the task of assessing and answering the very real criticisms of Tolkien as a literary figure of stature which have been and are still being made.

Iwan Rhys Morus

⁴ This criticism is quoted by Carpenter (*ibid.* p. 220) but is taken out of context since Carpenter castigates Muir for failing to recognise Gollum as an example of the tragic figure he was seeking. Since Muir's criticisms were directed at the first volume in which Gollum's development as a tragic figure had not yet started, Carpenter's point is hardly relevant.

The Cambridge Tolkien Society is a University registered society whose aim is to further interest in the life and works of J. R. R. Tolkien.
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