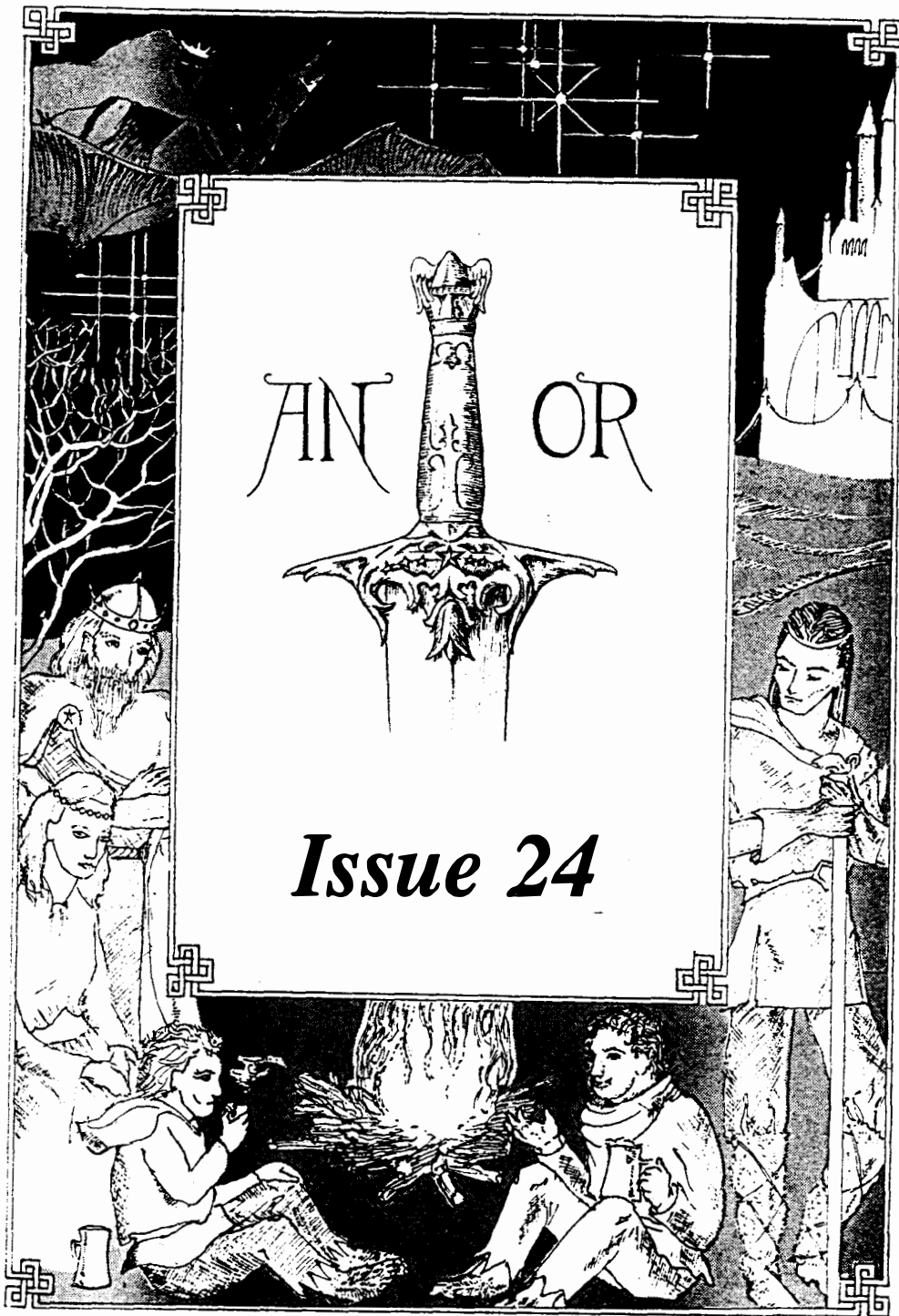


AN OR



Issue 24



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Editorial

Welcome to *Anor* 24. The lateness of this issue is largely my own fault. I assumed that because I never receive material for *Anor* until the copy deadline has passed, that setting a very short copy deadline would make no difference - more fool me! This issue's copy date is set to give even those who don't receive *Anor* until the beginning of term some time to write material ... I hope!

The Puntmoot has happened since the last issue, but I have received no report of it ... perhaps I will in time for next issue. Perhaps I will get some articles or artwork (the artwork folder is particularly skinny at the moment) before the deadline. Perhaps I will even get unsolicited material from someone who has not written for *Anor* before. Who knows? Perhaps Christopher Tolkien will give up producing the History of Middle-earth before he reaches Volume 24!

Duncan McLaren

The Mind and Spirit of J.R.R. Tolkien

*A talk by Professor J.S. Ryan of the
University of New England, New South Wales,
and of Peterhouse College*

Preamble

Those of you with rather long memories will remember that our guest speaker last year, in early February, was Professor John Ryan, erstwhile student of Tolkien's, and one of the few professional academics with a serious interest in his works (and a past contributor to *Anor*, no less!). Professor Ryan spent two weeks in Cambridge at the beginning of 1990, deep in the bowels of the University Library, researching into the educational and academic influences on Tolkien, particularly during his time as an undergraduate in 'the other place', and also his later professorial activities - including his effective occupation of the chair of Old Norse - until the period just before the publication of *The Hobbit*. He was kind enough to give the Society an early preview of the fruits of his research, some of them harvested only the day before, on the chilly and occasionally wet evening of 2nd February 1990.

The rest of this paper has been edited by the speaker from an edited transcript of the Cambridge Tolkien Society's tape of the occasion, a text only transcribed many months later.

The talk was originally titled 'The Mind and Spirit of J.R.R. Tolkien', a designation treated in the event rather loosely, and it covered three main topics, broken up by many often amusing anecdotes: of what sort are the people who read Tolkien (including the various prejudices that each group brings to the task)?; what were Tolkien's own academic interests and influences (including the people that taught him)?; and what were his professorial activities as professor in Oxford? Because of the informal and anecdotal nature of the talk, and the inevitable influence of the second on the last, the three topics tended to overlap somewhat, particularly the last two: what follows is an attempt to highlight the main points as far as possible without restructuring the entire talk.

The Readership of Tolkien

Professor Ryan began with this subject, pausing only to pour scorn on what might be called the home industry or 'waste paper basket' conspiracy to issue more and more 'unauthorized' material. This readership includes the following (far from exhaustive) list of possible approaches to his work.

First, Tolkien has appealed to romantic poets: witness the reinterpreting of his literary theory regarding secondary worlds and subcreation by W.H. Auden in his T.S. Eliot Memorial Lectures in 1967; as well as Ted Hughes, amongst others. The second group Ryan described as "lapsed Christians, uncertain Catholics, and those who walk around with the possibility of God's wrath falling on them not out of their minds", including such luminaries as Iris Murdoch.

Tolkien's theological background would appeal particularly to those with an interest in Boethian determinism: all of his work could be seen as an expatiation of the dilemmas of choice. He could also be seen as a great pacifist: Lewis claimed that Tolkien at his height was about the death of an entire generation during the First World War, something that obviously affected him deeply. The historical botanical background of the Suffields (of which Tolkien was conscious) would be of interest to many scientists, while on the Tolkien side of the family there was a very strong tradition in medicine, history and politics. Those with right-wing reactionary views would also find something for them in his work. On the continent, his works, particularly *The Hobbit*, are used as a way of coming to grips with Old English, notably by a former student of his, Simonne d'Ardenne, teaching in Liège, and also by some German academics.

There are, therefore, many different ways of approaching and understanding Tolkien (and many cultural factors which can get in the way), and not all of them favourable, by any means: Ryan related the anecdote of his contemporary Douglas Grey (ironically, later J.R.R. Tolkien Professor of Language and Literature at Oxford) being prevented by his tutor, G.V. Smithers, then Reader of Middle English, from attending Tolkien's lecture on *Beowulf* on the grounds that he was 'a frivolous man'.

Such was the hostility in Oxford academic circles at the time that Ryan himself left his copy of *LotR* unread and gathering dust for his entire undergraduate career; even in Cambridge in

1966, and despite his research supervisor's advice, Ryan was reluctant to drop Lewis and Charles Williams to concentrate solely on Tolkien in his PhD on Modern English Mythmakers. Much of Ryan's subsequent work has, he said, been a form of atonement for this early neglect.

For the future, Ryan hopes that eventually standard editions will appear, for example of his Anglo-Saxon poems, with facing translation and valid comments. Touching for once on the title of the talk, he believes that Tolkien's mind is of much greater lexical stature than that of Samuel Johnson's (a somewhat heretical view), that he is much more important than William Morris ("that won't worry anybody"), and that it is quite possible that he will supplant Ted Hughes in his feel for 'England'. He believes that the best Tolkien criticism is yet to come, though that of Auden and of Colin Wilson (the philosopher of the Angry Movement) is essential reading now and always will be.

Influences on Tolkien

Of the influences that affected Tolkien in his early years, Ryan said that the most important was "seeing England with non-English eyes". His school days were obviously also very important, not least his very thorough classical education; this, combined with his late conversion to Roman Catholicism, meant that his background was much less dominated by theology than that of many contemporary Catholics, and that he could spend much more time studying the classics and then Germanic pagan myth than many others of his generation, not least by virtue of his study pattern of 4 years given to Classics Mods, before moving to the Early English School.

As for his undergraduate life, the most important influence, both directly and indirectly, was obviously the First World War: directly because so many of his friends were killed, and indirectly because the depletion of the University population by the War inevitably led to closer contacts with teaching staff who would consequently have a greater influence on him.¹ In fact Tolkien was one of those rare exceptions that actually finished his degree before going to the front, and himself only managed to outlive many of his contemporaries on account of being held back in Oxford to give a speech as President of the JCR at Exeter College's quatercentenary celebrations, while they (his friends) were being blown to pieces in France.

On the academic side, Ryan read out a long list of the texts Tolkien studied for his Mods, all of them standard Classics texts, both literary and historical (I won't bore non-classicists with the details). Ryan suggested that Tolkien's hostility to women (in his writing at least) was in part due to his exposure to Euripides, though his marriage may also have had something to do with it.

Possibly of more interest is the list of people who taught him and the peripheral subjects he studied. In both Classics and English he was taught by H.W. Garrod, and more importantly by Gilbert Murray, probably best known (aside from his rather severe translations of Greek

1. Exeter College, for example, had only six fellows at this time.

tragedies) for his pacifist treatises, to which references can be seen in both *LotR* and *The Silmarillion*, and for his involvement in the founding of the League of Nations. Other famous names that he came in contact with include Cyril Bailey, the leading authority on Lucretius, and Daniel Jones, who may be called the 'father of (English) phonetics'. Tolkien was also friends with R.R. Marett, the social anthropologist, who not only lectured in the Classics School, but based his lectures entirely on classical literature, and was interested in the origin of religious belief, amongst other things.²

He also studied (1911-1913) Homeric archaeology, select accounts of the early Church martyrs, and was interested in metrics, an interest which stayed with him, for example in his scholarly references to English prose rhythms. His English reading was similarly expansive, but of more interest here are the sorts of standard examination questions he was faced with: though not terribly exciting to us, perhaps, the literary bent of the then examination questions on Chaucer was fairly revolutionary at the time (1915), when the main interest in Chaucer, and earlier texts, had been almost solely philological, because there was a huge amount of linguistic material - historical English grammar, Scandinavian philology and so on - in his examinations of the summer of 1915. But it was diluted with questions about literary style, for example that of Old English battle poetry. All in all, a fairly wide range of interests, to say the least.

There were also other highly cultured influences on him in his later life. Lewis, in his [much earlier (1963?)] obituary for Tolkien (ob. 1973), claimed that his greatest achievement was to bring to the perception of the English-speaking peoples the culture of the West Midlands.³ Ryan suggested that his sense of Middle English dialect and regional difference was garnered from Kenneth Sisam's *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, with a debt also owed to various authorities on East Anglia, especially (and this would appeal to Tolkien) the resistance to William the Bastard under Hereward the Wake. Tolkien was obviously keen to rehabilitate traditional Germanic material (from 100 AD - 1400 AD) in popular English consciousness. He left Classics because he felt it was a con trick used by élitists to produce an executive class.

Of the three main blocks to western culture, he believed: that the Judæo-Christian had been unavailable to ordinary men since the 1920s; that the Graeco-Roman was a 'great books' culture; and that the Germanic, a very important element, coming as it did from the land, 'explaining' folklore, and actually relevant to England, was largely ignored, dismissed and relegated to the nursery. Much of his work can be seen as an attempt to redress the balance.

One of the most important influences on his literary output, however, must have been the Inklings, that group of people sharing broadly the same literary interests, and all saturated with the traditional classical approach, for example with attention to very small textual details. They understood, too, the various genres in which he was writing, for example his

2. A connected detail is that Tolkien was one of the advisers to Robin Collingwood and Sir Mortimer Wheeler on their excavation of a major *Mithras*-type site at Lydney in Gloucestershire (1929-1932).

3. Hear! Hear! (West Midlander reporter)

Breton lay, or his Imram, and perhaps misled him into believing that the public at large also understood what he was trying to do: it was they, after all, who encouraged him to publish *The Hobbit* in the first place.

He also had a great interest in the English countryside, enjoyed trips to his brother's farm in the Cotswolds, and retained an interest in the West Midlands, particularly the area around Sarehole, where he had spent his boyhood. One of the duties he had during his time at Merton was the supervision and visitation of the college's estates in Suffolk, and this was a duty he performed with great enthusiasm. He was also obsessed with the power of promises/oaths and integrity (this is particularly apparent in *The Silmarillion*), and indeed coined some ten new 'oath-' compounds, several of which can be found in the *Supplement* (vol. 3) to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Tolkien the Academic

As for his own academic career, it appears that Tolkien kept himself rather busy, and had a profound effect on the teaching of his subject through his restructuring of the Oxford English syllabus. One of his most impressive achievements was to set up a great number of text-based early period lecture courses in the English Schools, only to find that he had thus created too much work for himself, and so he demanded more money to set up new lectureships and Chairs to ensure sufficient teaching staff to cover the courses. He is thus directly responsible for creating many notable careers in Oxford, amongst them those of Charles Wrenn, Tuvuille-Petre, Dorothy Everett, or Dorothy Whitelock, and for expanding the teaching staff exponentially. He himself chose to teach early Norse texts, particularly those of a mythological nature, and was for all practical purposes professor of Old Icelandic for the first ten years of his time as Professor of Old English.⁴ He spent an inordinate amount of time lecturing on subjects not exactly falling within the Old English syllabus, for example he lectured on Germanic prehistory and the migrations of the Germanic tribes, a subject which fascinated him, and with which he was familiar from undergraduate days, having done two papers on Tacitus, the Roman historian whose work constitutes much of what is known about this obscure subject. He also spent many years lecturing on *The Dream of the Rood* (which he preferred to call 'The Vision of the Cross', for reasons best known to himself).

An example of his unorthodoxy while Professor of Old English is his insistence on examining a thesis on the fairy-stories of George MacDonald - and this in 1933! Ryan believes this act of daring 'speaks volumes'. His (unfavourable) reputation was further enhanced by his insistence on examining theses despite his refusal to supervise: most notably, he felt himself not competent to supervise Jack Bennet's thesis on the development of Norse studies in England. One interesting change that Tolkien brought about was the direct result of his own undergraduate experience: having already done Gothic as part of his Classics Mods, he was

4. In his essay on the new English syllabus in *The Oxford Magazine*, May 1930, Tolkien said that this was the case virtually by statute - that the two jobs had fallen to the one person.

unable to do it in the English School, and so he did two Norse papers instead; as a result, under his régime everyone who did Norse in Oxford (including Ryan) also had to do two papers, and consequently read a relatively large amount of Norse verse and prose.

Another surprising fact which Ryan brought to light is that Tolkien actually encouraged the study of 'modern' (that is, later than 16th century) texts, even George Eliot and Dickens, and, though he thought Chaucer in many ways 'too late' (or "Frenchified and twerp-like"), he pushed for courses on Bacon and other political writers of the Renaissance period, a move which had a not inconsiderable effect on Lewis' career. He even invited M. Ridley to lecture on select authors from the period 1880-1920! He did, however, dislike Shakespeare intensely, not least for trivializing folklore elements such as Puck and the march of Burnham Wood, this being the kind of relegation and devaluation of Germanic folklore material about which he felt very strongly.⁵ He was keen on goblins (or 'context questions'), believing that 'language' meant 'everything that happened before 1300', and believed very strongly in unseen translations, an obvious legacy from his time as a classicist. Of interest to source-critics is the fact that he liked, and taught, *Havelock*, a work which Ryan believes lies behind the portrayal in *Tom Bombadil*, especially of Goldberry.

By way of conclusion, Ryan said that he sees Tolkien as a very important figure; a transmitter of mediaeval theology; a glorious failure in his attempt to resurrect the literary genres of another age; and a cultural phenomenon that was turned into a cult. He sees his own rôle as trying to keep Tolkien in some sort of valid perspective until a general atmosphere of serious study comes along.

He closed with a brief account of what he perceived as Tolkien's attempt to provide an informed if speculative etymology for the word 'shark' ⁶

Question and Answer

Questions were invited from the floor. First, Colin Rosenthal suggested that Tolkien's attempt at the resurrection of Germanic culture was woefully mistimed, given the appalling distortion of the tradition by the Nazis, and that this contributed to his unpopularity. Professor Ryan replied by saying that Tolkien's intention was to repair accidents of transmission, create a body of enduring myth for England, to restore the love of the countryside, and especially of trees, and to restore the respectability of folklore, in which he was not entirely unsuccessful, though a general dismissal of folklore is still prevalent. His lack of popularity as an author is probably more the result of his being perpetually consigned to children's bookshops, and not being treated as serious literature by the critical establishment, precisely because he deals with these folklore elements, elves, hobbits with

5. Tolkien attempted to rehabilitate these folklore elements in *LotR* in the form of Púkel-men and the march of the Ents on Helm's Deep and Isengard.

6. This was with reference to the use of the nick-name 'Sharkey' to refer to Saruman in 'The Scouring of the Shire', and in the footnote reference to Old Orcish. The details are rather involved for this report - if you want to know, ask me.

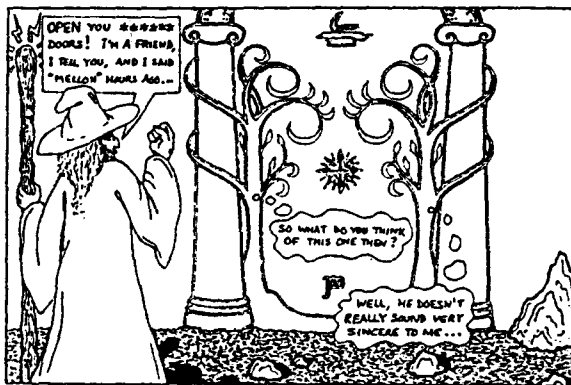
furry feet, and so on.

Paul Treadaway then asked about Tolkien's views on things Celtic. Ryan replied that Tolkien had a profound and genuine dislike for Ireland but a lifelong love of things Welsh,⁷ with a particular interest in, and concern for, the fate of those Romanized Celts who were driven into the woods (the original Wood-woses and forerunners of Robin Hood *et al.*) by the migration of the Germanic tribes after the departure of the Romans. He seems to have been appalled by the notion of any brutal invasion and of forced cultural change, particularly the effects that such traumas had on ordinary people, in whom he showed extraordinary interest.

It remains only to thank Professor Ryan for sparing the time to give us such a wide-ranging and informative talk which dealt with areas of Tolkien's life and work, particularly his academic activities, not normally discussed or widely known, many details of which had only been uncovered a few days before. It is, I believe, important for us to remember that Tolkien was not only a great storyteller and mythmaker, but also an extremely busy and influential academic. A knowledge of his academic interests and background, some of which Professor Ryan brought out for us, can help us discover additional perspectives on his creative writings, new avenues to explore, and can only enable us to continue to enjoy the books no matter how often we read them. There is much here that would repay following up in more detail.

MIDDLE EARTH REVISITED

Transcribed and edited by
Stephen Linley



7.

See, for example, his O'Donnell Lecture 'On English and Welsh', now republished in *'Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics' and other essays*.

An Excerpt From The Book Of Discovered Ales

The Tolkien Society's AGM And Dinner 1991 and Fine Malt Potage of Anglian Norwich

When Saturday 13 March dawned bright and clear¹ our intrepid heroes had already begun their epic journey through East Anglia to Norwich. For many reasons (I blame the Government!) they had been unable to make the trip the night before, and consequently - yes, o unbelievers! - had been prevented from attending an Innmoot in that ancient City. So they made sure of getting there for a little something at lunch time on Saturday, to prepare them for the tedium which awaited.

Norwich is a lovely place just to wander in, especially if, like us, you like lots of old churches and pubs. It is said that Norwich once had a church for every Sunday of the year and a pub for every weekday. We had only an afternoon in which to check them out! (It's a hard life being a roving reporter...). Not much fun for driving (or cycling, I imagine, because it's rather hilly) despite wider roads than Cambridge and (apparently) fewer pedestrians, shoppers or tourists, because the one-way system is one of the more insane I have encountered, with driving from the locals to match. And you can see the remains of the 13th century walls which decorate the ring road just as well from the pavement.

Having found our lodging, we deposited our burdensome baggage and at the time superfluous winter-type outer garments, and wandered towards the town, noting on the way a likely looking hostelry, to be visited later on. We made our way through the town towards the cathedral, agog at the scenery: yes indeed, plenty of old churches (some of them sadly neglected) and even more hostelries! Most of those that we saw were Free Houses, and those that weren't often had guest ale lists as long as the Steward's drooling tongue! Look up the entry for Norwich in The Good Beer Guide and you'll see what I mean. After a quick lunch in the grounds of the cathedral, and an expert 'quick look round' that most magnificent building, a fine example of monumental Gothic elegance, it was time to see if we could find which pub contained other TS members before the meeting. As you can imagine, especially if you know which members in particular I had in mind, in a town like that they could have been anywhere, and even those few that we found had no idea where the others might be.

Suitably fortified, it was time to go to the meeting. Not the most enjoyable three hours of my life, I must admit. The financial stuff is the most tedious. Endless discussion about whether or not to have a joining fee, whether it's fair for those who attend Oxonmoot and contribute to its surplus to be subsidizing less active members, whether to raise the subscription (again)

1. This was the second, much better dawn of the day. The first had been pathetically dull and grey.

or not, leading to a complicated vote in which the accountants' recommendation (leave things as they are, there's a recession on, you know) was accepted, probably because no one could understand the other proposals. And then came the constitutional amendments ... Really, you had to be there - but I bet you're glad you weren't!

By the time we emerged from our ordeal the weather had changed quite markedly, and we began to wish we'd brought our winter-type garments with us after all. To escape from the wind we just had to find a pub or two. A very minor detour to the route back to the B&B brought us first to Norwich's own Tap & Spile. Not the best Tap I've ever been in, but they're fairly new, so given time things might improve. Still, they served a nice pint of Norfolk Noggin. Given the weather, I was half inclined to stay and have another, but I'm glad Monica dragged me away to try out the likely emporium we'd noticed earlier. In fact I wish we'd gone there straight away. A home brew pub of recent (1987) vintage, with three of its own beverages, seven guest ales, two ciders and a good dozen bottled beers, including three different varieties of Chimay! Heaven! (well, The Reindeer, actually). Unfortunately, by now we didn't have time for more than one drink before having to get changed for the dinner. Most distressing.

The dinner itself was excellent: a range of traditional (whatever that means nowadays) Norfolk recipes to satisfy even the most discerning hobbit. Unfortunately, this being held in an hotel, the accompanying liquid was priced according to its weight in gold, not its worth ... And one of the waiters was obviously attempting to break some kind of speed record judging by the way he was serving the sweetcorn!

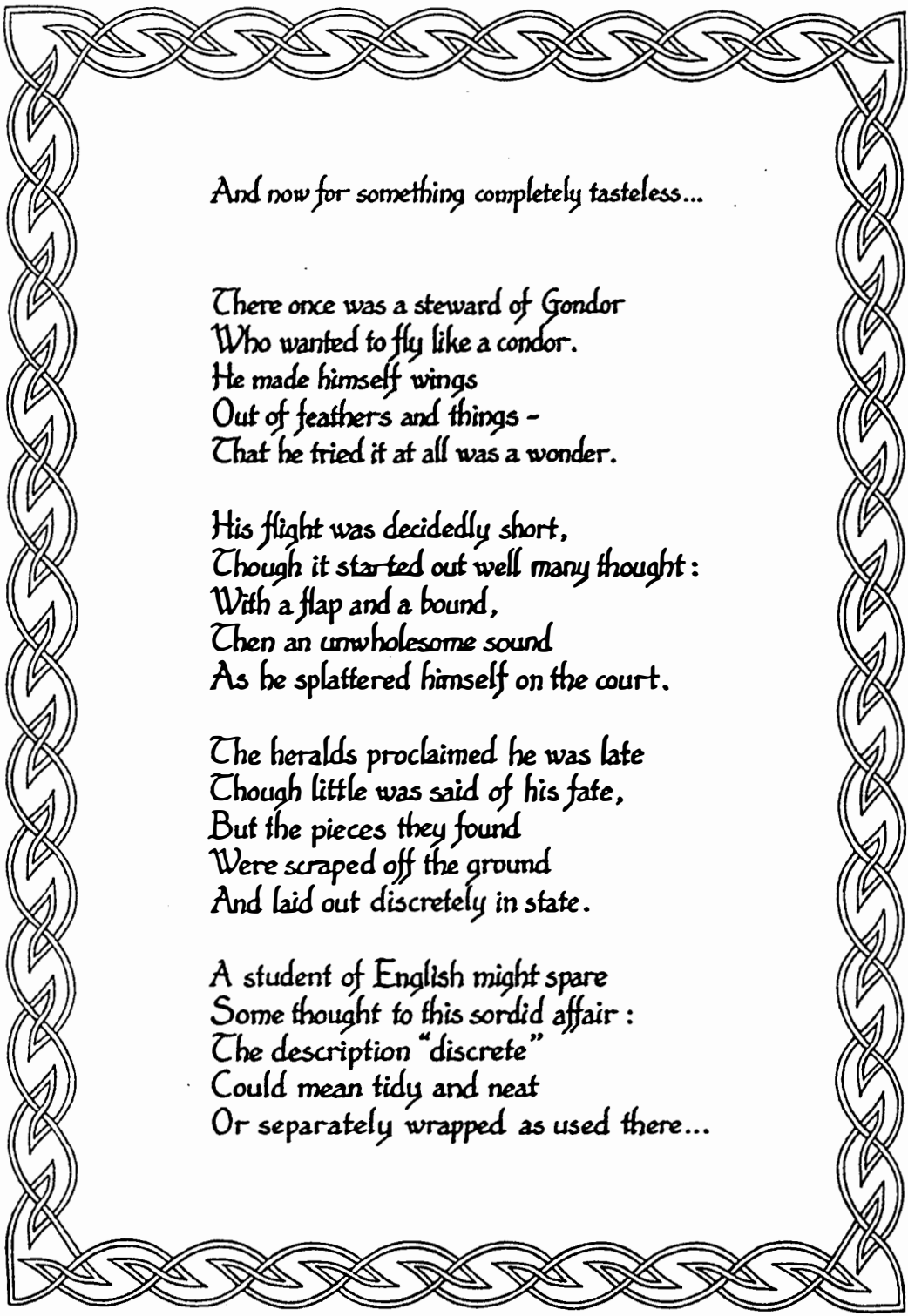
The guest of honour and after dinner speaker was Tom Shippey, who gave a characteristically lively and entertaining talk, to which I am not here able to do justice, on why he thinks Tolkien really is a great author and that maybe in a hundred years time the literary establishment might come to realise this, when at last it has freed itself from the slavish belief that post-/inter-war authors have to sneer at the old order, old concepts, and 'outmoded' idealism. Tolkien's greatness lies in the tension in his works between pessimism and optimism, realism and idealism.

The event began to wind down a little after midnight, though those who had only to stagger up a few stairs to their hotel rooms had more staying power than those of us faced with a longish trek back to our B&B in the chilly wind.

Once drivers had been paired up with hopeful passengers, Sunday's trip to Blickling Hall could begin. Needless to say we stopped for lunch at yet another fine ale-house on the way. Mike Towers came up with the admirable idea of finding a nearby campsite in the summer. The house itself was also very pleasant, a Jacobean structure which, thankfully, had not been entirely gutted by eighteenth-century neo-classical sensibilities. Unfortunately the weather was not conducive to exploring the extensive grounds.

Congratulations to Catherine and Adrian for organizing a most enjoyable weekend in a most pleasant city.

Stephen Linley



And now for something completely tasteless...

There once was a steward of Gondor
Who wanted to fly like a condor.
He made himself wings
Out of feathers and things -
That he tried it at all was a wonder.

His flight was decidedly short,
Though it started out well many thought :
With a flap and a bound,
Then an unwholesome sound
As he splattered himself on the court.

The heralds proclaimed he was late
Though little was said of his fate,
But the pieces they found
Were scraped off the ground
And laid out discretely in state.

A student of English might spare
Some thought to this sordid affair :
The description "discrete"
Could mean tidy and neat
Or separately wrapped as used there...

There and Back Again

The Jomsborg/CTS York Trip

It was a warm dark morning in Solmath when the fellowship of nine met in Minas Tirith to begin the journey north.¹ Ponies were not to be had for love nor money, so our party joined several coach-loads of travellers who were also bound for the great city of Jorvik.² Bob, our driver, welcomed the ladies and gentlemen, but totally overlooked (sorry - Ed) the hobbits. This oversight was forgiven when he called a halt mid-morning at the lodge of Granada, allowing time for the traditional hobbits' second breakfast. The driving was occasionally erratic (though a little early for miruvor) and some slight delays were caused by teams of orcs digging up the road, but soon the landscape began to change and we approached our destination.

On arrival the big question was naturally 'which drinking establishment to head for?' This had been given careful consideration prior to setting off, but we had been abandoned by Bob in an unexpected part of Jorvik. However, the discussion was brief because a 'Tap & Spile' Free House was suggested. With almost single-minded persistence we ignored the alternative attractions of that fair but wet city; and pavements, being a post-First-Age invention, were not employed. Despite the lure of food and alcohol, some of the hobbits had difficulty in keeping up - a problem which was to recur several times.

After a brief repast,³ we made our way to a point outside the Memorial Gardens where the procession of Viking and Anglo-Saxon warriors was to pass. Here the party split, with those pleading a lack of speed and shortness of breath (probably due to over-indulgence at lunch) going on ahead to the appointed battle-field. The rest of us joined the procession, answering the war cries of those ahead of us with dwarven ones and loud shouts of 'Mercia!' Intelligence proving accurate, we reached the expected battle-field (more of a small green actually). There had been concern that certain members of our party might become lost in the crowds during the march. But Monica Proudfeet, being a resourceful hobbit, had somehow managed to acquire a bonking object of the mystic colour,⁴ which, when held aloft by one of the ents, provided a suitable rallying point. Many of us then scrambled up the slopes of nearby Clifford's Tower in order to obtain a better view of the proceedings.

Initially the opposing forces spent a good deal of time posing to the bystanders. When fighting finally commenced it was clear that one of the armies was hopelessly outnumbered

1. Actually there were sixteen of us, but nine is such a nice round number!

2. Known in the modern tongue as Eboracum or York.

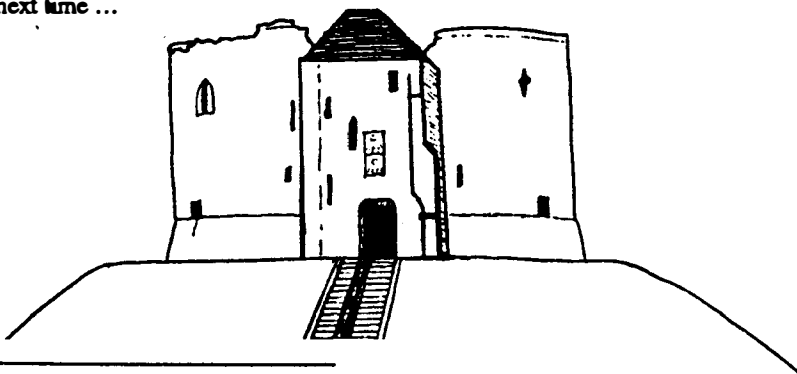
3. 'Brief' in this context should be read in a similar sense to 'swift' in the phrase 'a swift half pint', which consistently means at least two pints and at most, all night down at the pub.

4. Orange.

and out-beweaponed, and was soon slaughtered by the other. I became a little confused as to which was which, especially when the dead began to arise and leave the battle-field. My one certainty was that the invading camera-crew definitely lost!⁵ Apparently the Vikings were finally defeated, and their dead warrior-king was to star in the evening's entertainment. I sneaked away during one of the minor skirmishes and went in search of treasure to loot. It turned out that most of the supposedly public places had locked doors, parts of the city were underwater and Jorvik is rather smelly. This last was due to a combination of traffic, food shops, incense impregnated wood carvings and the Viking Centre ...

I rejoined the bulk of the party at what was known locally as 'the other Tap & Spile'. There was much eating and drinking when the various break-away groups were re-united, some having been incarcerated in (sorry, that should read 'visited' - Ed.) the infamous York Dungeon. The next event was to be the torch-lit procession of Vikings and monsters on their way to the boat-burning ceremony (featuring the afore-mentioned dead king). The slowest once more departed first, and the rest of us followed behind the torch bearers. On the way the existence of the mythical beasts ahead of us was hotly debated.⁶ When we reached the river it was almost impossible to see anything (for non-ents, that is). The disembodied narrator rather naively assumed that the participants would follow his cues, but eventually the Viking vessel was set alight while voices droned 'Odin'. It seemed to burn quite well and then the fireworks started. Unfortunately some of them never left the ground and we were all informed that we would have to depart by a longer route to avoid them.

Back at the 'other Tap & Spile' we found that several party members had carelessly been misled. This was later revealed to be because they had discovered their own source of alcohol. On the whole the drinking was a success, with shortages of several beverages being created. Everyone even made it back to the coach in time to depart on the journey home. It was dark, the hobbits were hungry again and the only stop was too brief, but eventually Minas Tirith was once more in sight and the fellowship divided to go their separate ways - until next time ...



5. For those who do not understand the anachronism 'camera' - I recommend a perusal of Terry Pratchett's *The Colour of Magic*, in which such enchantments are explained.

6. The main argument advanced in favour of their existence seemed to be that they must have, else they would not have had names.



*Roads go ever on
Under cloud and under star
Yet feet that wandering have gone
Turn at last to home afar.*

*Eyes that fire and sword have seen
And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green
And colleges they long have known.*

Susan Foord*



• With apologies from the editor for his deliberate re-arrangement of history.

The Tale of Rosa Baggins

- Father Right now, children. Time to settle down.
- Falco But Dad, it's Highday tomorrow, so no school.
- Primrose It's hardly dark outside. Please let us stay up a bit longer.
- Father No! Stop climbing on your brother and get into bed. This minute.
- Falco Oh Dad! Please can we have a story or something.
- Primrose Yes, a story!
- Father Oh alright, if you'll settle down straight after. What story would you like? How about the tale of Mad Baggins and his bags of gold?
- Primrose No, you told us that one last time. And it was boring.
- Father Well, what about Nine-fingered Frodo and the Ring of Doom? That's not boring.
- Falco No! We want a real story, not a load of rubbish about orcs.
- Father It's not rubbish. I heard Master Samwise himself tell the story.
- Falco I suppose you believed his election promises as well. 'No more taxes' indeed. And on beer, of all things. It'll be pipe-weed next.
- Father I don't see why that should concern you. Well, what story do you want, then?
- Falco How about the tale of Rosa Baggins?
- Father What do you mean? I haven't heard any tales about her.
- Falco Pull the other one, Dad. There's plenty of stories about her.
- Father There aren't any worth telling!
- Primrose Well, why did she have a baby so young?
- Father What do you mean?
- Falco Well, it's in the family trees, isn't it? Rosa Baggins, born 1256. Adalgrim her son, born 1280.
- Primrose Yes, they tried to hide it, didn't they. They put it on two different trees.
- Father She wasn't that young.
- Falco Twenty-four! That's early tweenage - still at school.
- Father Well, it was different in those days, wasn't it?
- Primrose All the rest of them waited until forty, at least!

Father Alright, so she was a bit rebellious. Not an example to follow. In fact she was the naughtiest girl in Hobbiton.

Falco Go on then, tell us about her.

Father Well, I'm not sure ... It all started with pipe-weed, you know. Terrible stuff. And you know what it does to little girls, don't you?

Primrose You don't mean ... It's just that...

Falco Come off it Dad, it takes more than pipe-weed to get a girl pregnant. Or men would soon be out of a job.

Primrose Is he right, Daddy?

Father Well, I suppose he is. What I meant was, she started on pipe-weed, and it led on to worse. Much worse. She went wandering, you know. Away for whole days at a time. Not doing her homework.

Falco But that doesn't explain why she had Adalgrim so early.

Father I was just coming to that! She took to visiting elves she did.

Falco Elves wouldn't know how to get a girl pregnant. They're too busy chasing each ...

Father That's enough of that!

Primrose What was he saying?

Father Never you mind. What I meant was, the elves were a bad influence. See what they did to Bilbo Baggins - getting all that gold and jewels, but then vanishing totally. They say he stole it off a dragon...

Primrose That's the wrong story, Daddy. We were on Rosa Baggins.

Father Er, yes. The elves were a bad influence on her, and she ended up marrying Hildigrim Took when she was twenty-four. Not an example to follow.

Falco But didn't she get married after she became pregnant?

Father Well, maybe. I think she loved Hildigrim a great deal. Not that that's an excuse, you understand. But it's the way it was.

Primrose But I love Fredegara a great deal. Does that mean that ...

Falco I heard that she didn't like Hildigrim one bit.

Father Well, why did she marry him then?

Falco It was a cover-up, wasn't it? I mean, if a teenage girl gets pregnant, they're bound to ask questions, aren't they?

Father Look, I think that is enough of this story ...

Falco It was the Old Took who did it.

Father Really? But wasn't he a bit, erm, old?

Primrose What did he do?

Falco Yes - he was eighty-nine, but still going strong. He'd had enough children by his wife, twelve I think. But he didn't stop there.

Father Who'd have thought it? Old Gerontius.

Primrose I still don't understand what he did.

Father You'll learn one day. But not too soon, I hope. Anyway, how did the Old Took end up, erm, you know...

Falco Well, it all happened at Bungo's party. He was thirty-three, so everyone was invited. He was Rosa's cousin, and of course the party was held in Hobbiton. There was all the usual food and drink. And there were fireworks - Gandalf the wizard turned up. He's not one to miss a good booze up.

Primrose What's all this got to do with Rosa?

Father Yes, get on with the story!

Falco Well, Rosa was soon out of her skull. The Old Took too was worse for wear - an easy target. Well, I reckon Gandalf put her up to it.

Primrose But I thought Gandalf was a goody.

Father Rubbish! He made a habit of corrupting young hobbits.

Falco No-one noticed Gerontius slipping off with Rosa. But they weren't seen till next morning.

Primrose Did they go off for a smoke?

Falco Yes, that as well. Rosa got a good deal out of the affair.

Father I wouldn't think it good, having a baby at her age.

Falco But don't you see? The Old Took didn't want his family to know about his exploits. So he had to pay her off.

Primrose What exploits? You still haven't told me!

Falco She had to marry his son Hildigrim, but she was Gerontius' favourite daughter-in-law, the richest woman in the Shire. As for Gandalf, he got pipe-weed for life - Old Toby at that.

Father And they all lived happily ever after. Time for bed. Now!

Primrose Thank you for the story, Daddy.

Jeremy King

The CTS AGM 1991

This year's AGM was held on Saturday 16th March and, like last year's, was well attended, even by those not going to the dinner afterwards. The minutes of the last AGM had apparently been transcribed by dwarves, slashed, stabbed, partly burned (lost, found, buried in peat and recycled as firelighters? - Ed.) and were so stained with dark blood-like colours that much of the text was indecipherable ... even to the Keeper of the Red Book. This made such an improvement that, for once, a full reading was popularly requested.

The Steward's report painted a rosy picture of the Society's year. He reported that weekly innmoots had proved a continued success, and that the CTS had achieved a sizeable presence at WorldCon. He also announced that Minas Tirith had comfortably won the Smials' Competition (Bring back the Inter-Smials' Quiz - Ed.), even without the last three months events being counted in the total.

The Smaug's report was less encouraging. It reported that increasing expenses meant that a review of membership rates was required. After some debate it was determined to raise annual subscription to £3.00 and life membership to £6.00.

Electing the new committee resulted in the election of Mark Sutton, Tim Morley, John Burnham and Graham Dann. For the first time in (some peoples' - Ed.) living memory we have an entirely undergraduate committee, and that rarity, a Bill the Pony (See what you get for changing the name - Ed.).

Finally there followed the usual plethora of motions of censure. These consisted of: Mike Whitaker: for various unmentionable reasons (tradition included - Ed.); The Mitre: for serving uninteresting beer and starting Karaoke nights on Tuesdays; and the Senior Treasurer: for not submitting the Society's accounts to the Junior Proctor. (How come I didn't get one - Ed.)

A novel approach was taken by the Steward who called for a motion of censure against himself. Like the rest, this was enthusiastically passed by the members.

Unfortunately as a result of the plethora of motions of censure, there was insufficient time for the traditional pre-pre-dinner drinks drinking session, but this by no means dampened the enjoyment of an excellent dinner. Once more Dr. Courtney excelled himself and nobody went short of good food and drink. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him once more on behalf of the Society.

Graham Taylor

Comment



Susan Foord sent me an alternative Puntmoot report:

"Well, the Can's just this river, ya know ..."

I should point out that I still expect a full report of the 1991 Puntmoot from somebody!

Gary Hunnewell wrote to me from the States early in the year, but just too late for *Anor 23*. He identifies some of the same errors as Nancy Martsch (see Comment in *Anor 23*) in 'How Bored Can You Get' but adds:

I can't remember ever getting Arbor Day off!

And:

Maxie is a soft drink taken only by New Englanders (its diet version was rated as the worst diet soft drink.) It does not taste bad while you drink it - the after-taste, however, is atrocious.

Gary also comments on the discrepancies in Gandalf's behaviour in *TH* and *LotR*:

Mercer [in an article in Mallorn] thought that one explanation of why Gandalf claimed to be unable to read the runes on the swords was to add to Elrond's importance and respect.

He adds that the apparent silliness of the Rivendell elves in *TH* arises simply because Bilbo could not understand Elvish at the time, so their songs all sounded like 'tra-la-la-lall' to him.

Susan further notes:

I'm glad someone else thinks the "Fionavar Tapestry" is dreadful - despite Uncle Mike's rave review.

Is anyone going to write in and support me on this one?

The Fantasy of David Eddings

A Critical Review

The publication of the fifth and final volume of Eddings' *Malloreon* (some two years after the fourth) led to my reading the entire sequence - these comments are the result.

We are told that Eddings turned to *The Belgariad* in an effort to develop certain technical and philosophical ideas concerning the genre of fantasy (Pawn of Prophecy, Foreword). We are not told why he continued to write the *Malloreon* (and indeed has begun to write the *Elenium*), but must assume he wishes to explore his ideas further. I intend to examine these ideas, insofar as I can identify them, and further to comment on certain aspects of his work which bear contrast with Tolkien.

I am not aware of any written source where Eddings explains his ideas. But it appears to me that he believes that fantasy requires a strong if not over-riding element of fate (expressed in the importance of prophecy as a guide to action); that the 'quest' is an (or perhaps the only) appropriate plot vehicle; that separate characters should be used to display different and contrasting human traits; and that fantasy can carry strong allegorical messages as to the 'correctness' of certain social and individual types of behaviour (it is unclear whether this is seen as its purpose).

I shall begin with fate and prophecy. These are common features of fantasy writing. Indeed, prophecy is almost an automatic consequence of the existence of magic. Even Gandalf has 'foresight'. However, Tolkien is careful about the significance of prophecy: the words of Malbeth the Seer concerning the Paths of the Dead are the nearest equivalent in *LotR* to the type of prophecy employed almost constantly by Eddings. In Eddings' work, indeed the operation of prophesy is so central, that he creates 'prophecies as characters' (a device that sometimes works). Further it is made clear (repeatedly) that unless the terms of the prophecy are met, then the quest cannot be achieved. His inability or unwillingness to develop a coherent plot to fit his prophesies leads to often literal cases of *deus ex machina*, far beyond the return of Gandalf, or even the role of the eagles in Middle-earth.

Fate, however, should be separated from prophecy, if only because it is so closely tied to tragedy - the doomed hero, bound to destroy himself and those he loves is one of the oldest character types in literature - the tale of Turin is a fine example.¹ The emotional interest in such a story derives not from the character attempting to achieve that fate, but from his attempts to avoid it. This aspect of fate is totally lacking from Eddings' work.

The quest is a common fantasy form, and even where it is not used the allied device of a sequence of physical or emotional challenges often features. I shall not quibble with Eddings

¹. In *On Fairy Stories*, Tolkien claims that 'Tragedy is the true form of drama; its highest function, while the opposite is true of Fairy-story', going on to outline the concept of *catastrophe*

choice of the quest - but, as you will see later, with its implementation.

The separation of character traits into separate individuals is one way in which fantasy writing takes an opposite position to the social novel (and the real world). It can be argued that this separation is not designed to produce two dimensional characters, but to place the interaction between different aspects of the individual into the outer landscape. Thus, in this form, interaction between characters is crucial if the reader is to gain self-understanding.²

In the Malloreon the caricature nature of Eddings' main characters is extended to entire races, such that, for example, Thulls are stupid³, and Melcones bureaucratic. Edmund Wilson's critique of *LoTR* could be directly (and much more accurately) applied:⁴

"what we get is a simple confrontation ... of the Forces of Evil with the Forces of Good ... [yet the] ... bugaboos are not magnetic; they are feeble and rather blank; one does not feel they have any real power. The Good people simply say "Boo" to them."

However, this is not my main point. Eddings in fact develops his apparently racist thesis to 'explain' the social formations of his allegorical world. It may not have been apparent from the Belgariad, but the Malloreon exhibits a direct analogy with our planet. The Kingdoms of the West are not surprisingly, the good guys - the Americans and their allies. The Empire of Malloreon is a caricature of Soviet Russia with a centrally controlled economy, overwhelming bureaucracy, a large and politically powerful military and a desire for world domination. The infiltration of their economy by capitalist market forces in the form of Prince Kheldar's trading company, it appears, is the only way in which stagnation of the economy can be prevented.

But Eddings' crude analogy is incomplete - the political system in all the countries he describes is (almost exclusively) monarchy - and with only male succession at that. Thus he succeeds in making clear his political beliefs, but fails at the level of subcreation - his world is not believable at the socio-economic level.

At the more individual level Eddings also has a clear understanding of what is correct. The most outstanding aspects are monogamy and sexism. These are combined in that marriage is portrayed as the correct state (although the sexual act is still something to be embarrassed about), but the woman's role in marriage is portrayed as necessarily taking away the freedom of the man. Within any social group, the woman's role is almost exclusively domestic, and even those female characters who are involved in the action or in discussion, are portrayed as enjoying motherhood and domesticity far more. There is not even an 'Eowyn' amongst them!

Furthermore, none of the characters really develop. Eleven years are supposed to have passed between the end of the Belgariad and the beginning of the Malloreon, yet Belgarion

2. Moorcock, in his polemic, *Wizardry and Wild Romance*, argues that this should be an aim of the good fantasy story (p. 16)

3. We should have known from the name, I suppose!

4. "Oo, those awful orcs", reprinted in *The Tolkien Scrapbook*, Running Press, 1978 pp 52-4.

may as well still be the 16 year old Garion, never having left Faldor's farm.

The only saving grace of the Mallorcon is the fact that some of the individuals, such as Zakath, Emperor of Malloreon, become characters. Indeed it seems that it is meant to come as a shock when we discover that Zakath is actually human!

But I shall conclude with Zakath, who could have been a good three-dimensional villain (like many of Tolkien's). However, his most important role (apart from getting married) seems to be to find happiness ... when he abandons his struggle for independent action and accepts his fate as a part of Belgarion's quest!

I believe that this summarises Eddings' philosophical message: 'accept your place in the scheme of things and you will be happy'. Perhaps Eddings believes this, or perhaps he has been indulging in monumental irony. Whichever is the case, personally I prefer an author who tells me to strive for self-knowledge!

Duncan McLaren



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