



AN OR

Issue 30

Editorial

*Sing now, ye people of the tower of Anor,
for the realm of Sauron is ended forever,
and the Dark Tower is thrown down.*

Mae govannen and welcome to Anor 30! More than once I have wondered what exactly I was letting myself in for when I took the heavy red folder that constituted the archives of Anor. I foresaw sleepless nights and editorial nightmares... and a significant reduction in essay marks for the rest of the term.

But not all of these things have come to pass; if Galadriel's mirror has taught us anything it is that visions may be deceptive. Any unpleasantness that *did* occur is easily compensated for by the joy that I have had in receiving and reading the articles that are set in these pages for you to ponder. You will see articles that speak of the CTS and its doings of late, followed by some silliness and not quite serious pieces, followed by the seriousness; an essay on Samwise Gamgee, and a thoroughly thought-through article examining Peter Jackson's handling of the book thus far. Two of this issue's articles were contributed from overseas... There truly is no excuse to keep you from showing the world that facet of Tolkien's grand mythos that you see, be it serious or no.

As the last sentence may have warned you, I'm already on the look out for things to put in Anor 31. Anor is, it seems, a strange creature; it appears every couple of years, promises to stay, and then vanishes, snark-light, until the next time. Only with your help can it be captured, so keep writing!

My thanks go, of course, to the contributors who made putting Anor 30 together the gentle burden that it has been, and to Matthew Woodcraft, my predecessor, who has been immensely helpful with all the questions that I've been able to throw at him. *Hannon le*, Matthew!

As the year wanes towards Peter Jackson's last foray into Middle-Earth, let us hope that he does as well as he has done so far (for in my opinion he has created an exceptional vision of the book). And let us remember the man himself; one who has brought so many fellowships together through a tale of one broken in all places but the heart. Above all, my thanks go west, to the harbour where I hope Tolkien enjoys a pipe... with an agreeable hobbit.

Anna Slack, Editor

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The Tolkien Society

The Tolkien Society was founded by Vera Chapman in December 1969, "to encourage the appreciation of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien". It is registered in the UK as an educational charity (Number 273809). This year the TS has been celebrating its coming of age, as it has been in existence for 33 years. Since the CTS is the Minas Tirith smial (local group) of the TS, I thought a short article on what the TS does (and maybe why you should join it) would be a good idea. After all, two of the current trustees of the TS are CTS members, and Oxonmoot is a good time for CTS people to meet each other in the summer.

While it is often announced as "The UK Tolkien Society" or "The Tolkien Society in England", the society acts world-wide. There are members in every country in the European Union, and most other European countries. There are members in North, Central and South America, Asia and Oceania. Currently, there are over 1,200 members, from Japan to Ireland, from Australia to Russia.

The TS holds gatherings throughout the year. There are three national gatherings annually. Firstly is the AGM and Annual Dinner, held in the spring at a town or city in the UK (the 2004 event will be in Lincoln). The AGM does what you might expect - we elect the Trustees, and discuss the running of the Society. I am one of the nebulously-titled "Officers without Portfolio", and my "not Portfolio" varies in size from year to year! In the evening, we assemble for dinner (rumours that the Annual Dinner is on the same date as the AGM to encourage attendance at the latter are completely unfounded!) The dinner is, for those who like to do this, a chance to dress up. Not as elves, dwarves, but in formal suits, and posh frocks. Formal dress isn't compulsory - the TS is very diverse here, as in many things. Like at the CTS's annual dinner, we face West first, and remember Numenor that was. Unlike the CTS, we have a guest speaker after the dinner, usually someone well-known talking about how Tolkien's works have affected their life and work. They sometimes attend the post-dinner room party, too!

The second event of the year is the Seminar, which is held on a summer weekend at venues around the UK (and occasionally overseas). Talks, ranging from the very serious to the very silly (with the very satirical sitting somewhere in the middle) are presented on a Tolkien-related theme. The second day is usually filled with a visit to a historic site or other local event to interest or entertain. A few years ago the CTS hosted a very successful seminar, which was followed by a super-size puntmoot. Whether starting quite so early after a substantial mead-tasting the night before was a good idea or not is still a matter for debate...

The third and largest gathering of the Tolkien Society year is Oxonmoot, which is held over a weekend in late September (usually as close as possible to the 22nd, Bilbo and Frodo's birthday), in an Oxford University College. Events are many and varied, and may include talks, slide shows, a guided walk around historic Oxford, and an evening party with an opportunity to present music or drama or take part in a creative costume masquerade, or simply socialise and enjoy the company of like-minded folk. On Sunday we visit Wolvercote Cemetery to remember J.R.R. Tolkien and how his work has brought us and many others together. It is a great time for making new friends in the Society - and meeting old friends again. On many occasions, Tolkien's daughter Priscilla has hosted a lunch reception in the hall of the college, where she has been presented with gifts and takes the opportunity to speak with many of those present. Various CTS members have built a solid reputation for the quality of their room-party on the Saturday night.

The TS also produces two regular journals. Amon Hen appears six times a year, and contains Tolkien-related news, reviews, letters, artwork and articles humorous and serious. Mallorn is published annually and contains more academic articles and essays. Nearly all the material appearing in these journals is the work of Society members, often giving them their first opportunity of presenting their work to a wider audience.

Joining the TS gets you free copies of Amon Hen and Mallorn, as well as priority booking (and cheaper rates) for TS events, including the big Tolkien 2005 conference in Birmingham. The last couple of years have seen an increasing CTS presence at TS events, particularly Oxonmoot. Long may it continue!

Matthew Vernon

Gaffer's Tales

News from the Sub-Committee

The Shire

That, for those of you as yet unaware of it, is the name of the newly formed (and completely unofficial) sub-committee of the Cambridge Tolkien Society. Why, I hear it asked, was such a body formed, and what does it actually do? Well, the big-wigs on the Committee proper (the capital 'c' denoting, of course, its hallowed importance) really don't tend to have the time to do the following kind of stuff, most of them verging towards important exams and all...

Tree-Planting

So Sam planted saplings in all the places where specially beautiful or beloved trees had been destroyed, and he put a grain of the precious dust in the soil at the root of each...

Not that we literally go out in force about Cambridge and raid the plant shops in order to scatter Galadriel-goodness all over the city, but we are attempting to get more involved with the rest of the world and indeed within the society. So we're branching out, as it were (permission to groan granted). Very un-hobbit-like, we know, but evidently Minas Tirith has had some formative influences on us of late. It's all Elessar's fault. What we're currently up to is detailed below.

Basis of the Democracy

Not strange women hurling swords out of lakes, we promise. Here are some of the key personnel;

The Thain: Chairman of the Sub-Committee, *Thea Wilson*

Master of Buckland: Rallier of Hobbits and Propaganda Minister (Co-ordinator), *Becky Corlett*

Master of Bag End: Accountant (because Bag End is full of riches, you know...), *Esther Miller*

Keeper of the Book of Westmarch: Secretary of the Subcommittee, *Anna Slack*

Those of you who auditioned for the Big Read in November will know us as the scary four that were sitting at the end of the table and inviting you to make a fool of yourself.

Cunning Plans

The Shire is the party responsible for several things going on at the moment;

One: Involvement in the BBC Big Read:

As you all no doubt know, The Lord of the Rings is within the top 21 of the nation's best loved books, holding its head among such other works as *Birdsong*, *Jane Eyre*, *1984*, *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* and <gulp> *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. The BBC approached us and asked if we were doing anything to support our book – to which we (mayhap Tookishly, but we shall see in good time) responded that we were putting some sketches on at the end of term for the Society. The BBC expressed an interest in filming these, although as we go to press it is still not clear whether they will or not. Thus began the manic process of script-writing and

casting that went on in week 5, producing three sketches to be performed on Sunday 7th December (be there!); *A Sort of Prologue*, *The Old Forest* and *A Farce in the Dark*. There will be a write-up on the outcome of this (doubtless) amusing event in Anor 31.

Two: An Adaptation of The Lord of the Rings:

We are currently in the process of acquiring copyright permission to use the scripts of the 1981 Radio 4 adaptation of Tolkien's book, with a view to doing a read of it ourselves for charity at the end of the academic year. Both authors (Brian Sibley and Michael Bakewell) have contacted us and given us the go-ahead, and we await with baited breath the word only of the Tolkien Estate. The Shire will keep you posted as to how this proceeds, but so far it looks promising. If permission is obtained, voices and commitment will be required, and members of the society will be pestered accordingly.

Three: The Reduced Lord of the Rings:

A project scheduled to go ahead towards the latter end of next academic year (2004-5). Still very much in the works. Anyone wishing to turn their hand to scribbling something for this is welcome to do so, and is encouraged to contact the Keeper of the Book of Westmarch with their findings.

It is the Shire's hope that we can get the society a good deal more involved with all sorts of things. Anyone with ideas for more cunning plans should contact the Keeper of the Book of Westmarch (aes42@cam.ac.uk). We'd love to hear from you!

Anna E. Slack

The world is a great place, but love of Tolkien springs up everywhere in it. Our Elvish Officer, Philippa Steele, has been corresponding with the Peruvian Tolkien Society for several weeks. Here, for the delight of the CTS, is a glimpse at the doings of a folk west of the sea...



The Peruvian Tolkien Society

It was the year 2001 when four friends with similar interests in Tolkien's literature decided to create a cultural association dedicated to the study and dissemination of the work and universe of J.R.R. Tolkien. This is how Jose Agustin Ortiz, Rita Vera and Alberto Vera founded the STP - as in its initials in Spanish. "Sociedad Tolkien Peruana" or Peruvian Tolkien Society - along with Alcjandro Rebagliati. Sineldor from the Argentinean Tolkien Association. The STP was recognized as a cultural association by the Tolkien Society in July 2001 and on October 15th . 2002: it was recorded in public records as a cultural association without profit purposes.

The STP defines itself as a cultural association, whose main purpose is to study and spread the work of Professor Tolkien through debates and events, until being able to organize activities in schools and universities. Currently, it has 280 members. It counts with a main domicile, in Av. Benavides 443, department 104-B.

- Associate Members

Among the members there are associates that pay two annual fees. Each month they meet at the Board of Directors, where they review the minutes of the Commissions and their advance and activities. The associates may have access to the "mediatheque", multimedia library with books, music CDs, movies, magazines and other items. This library is located at Carla Ciurlizza's (Galadriel), where the Board of Directors meet.

- Ambassadors

There are also the ambassadors, representatives of the STP before other societies in the world. Currently they have ambassadors in Germany, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, United States, England, Italy and Mexico, and soon in Brazil.

-The Commissions

The Commissions are self-directed teams that develop one field of Tolkien's universe. Currently, the STP distributes its work according to the interests of its members in the following groups: Languages Commission, Reading Circle, Theatre Commission, Role-Playing Commission and Web Commission.

Languages Commission

Studies the languages of the Middle Earth and its learning. The main study language is Quenya, through the analysis of the language, as well as its writing (Tengwar). Likewise, phrases which appear (by order of publication) in writings by Professor Tolkien are being analyzed. Recent groups of the Commission will be in charge of such languages as Sindarin and even the Black language.

Reading Circle

Its main function is to study and transmit Tolkien's work, so as to have a better comprehension and interpretation of it. In their meetings, Tolkien's work and elements that

inspired the creation of the Middle Earth are considered. Currently the last chapters of David Day's *Tolkien's Ring* are being analyzed, and the next book will be *The Silmarillion*. One of the Circle's functions is the development of literary work in its members, in which the increase of individual quality through elocution (to read out loud) and narrative exercises will be motivated.

Theater Commission

One of the most original commissions of the STP is maybe the Theater Commission, openly spreading Tolkien's work through "clauñ" (Spanish word for *clown*) version parodies, a theatrical category created in Argentina. Its name comes from the English word clown written as it sounds in Spanish. The characters look like traditional clowns only and exclusively in the use of the red nose. The objective of a *clauñ* work is that each actor develops his or her own clown, through the interpretation of a character far from his or her own personality, often turning to improvisation, and other resorts. Within their activities, the participants learn to develop their scenic skill and to express themselves, to work as a team and develop their artistic talent, always maintaining discipline.

In the last council the play *A Common Day in Mordor* was performed, and currently several passages from *The Silmarillion* are being prepared.

Role Playing Commission

The Commission that currently has the most members and whose main subject is the fondness of role-playing. The Commission divides in several groups, known as parties, most of which use D&D games (Dungeons and Dragons), due its world wide dissemination. On the other hand, a group centered on MERP (Middle Earth Role Playing) has been created. Currently, this Commission has a straight relation with Peruvian Role Group Dragones del Sur (*Dragons of the South*) and now promotes the Role Playing event that will take place on January 2004 in Huancayo.

Web Developing Commission

It develops and maintains the image of the STP on the Internet, one of the media where the STP has been searching for new members and from which it connects with new organizations and societies interested in the diffusion of Tolkien's work worldwide. Its responsibilities are the maintenance of the web page, calendar of events, national and international news, among others.

Events

Each year the STP organizes the Great Council, on which it is shown to the audience the work realized by each commission, opening its registration to new members.

During the year, the Mátatulda takes place. It is the welcome to all new members, in which both new and current members introduce themselves and during the event every commission exposes their work before new members. Another activity is the Essëcilme, that is realized in July commemorating the anniversary of the Society, where members present their tokiendil name, which identifies them inside the Tolkien Society. Both activities take place at Crypto pub, which collaborates with several STP activities.

Gabriel Cavassa

With thanks to Flavia Cavassa, Liza Nuez del Prado, Gianfranco Bosso, Oscar Rengifo, and all the members of the Sociedad Tolkien.

Tuesday the 21st of October, 2003 was a veritable day of doom for the Fellowship; Elrond had told them that they could not foresee what they might each meet upon the road, but they had had no idea quite how matters would resolve themselves.

Riding Gwaihir into Mordor had seemed such a good idea in Rivendell. But as the Misty Mountains came into view, the great Windlord began to tire and grow weak. The fellowship, in great concern, knew that the load had to be lightened, or they would fail in their quest to save Middle-Earth.

What follows is Gwaihir's (in some places partial – it was a very traumatic experience, you know) recollection of that final and tragic debate, a debate where the altruism of the fellowship truly came to its fore, and it was clearly seen how much regard they held for each other. Never has philia had such noble embodiments...

The Eagle Debate

Round 1: *In which each member of the fellowship generally defended themselves. Many were the arguments based upon gravitational advantages.*

Legolas, Prince of Mirkwood: I'm brave, I'm light, I'm good at fighting – I can shoot flying Nazgul. Check out the snow action! Vote Legolas... No, don't!

Gandalf the Grey: Observe my authority! I am the only one keeping this fellowship together, and my wisdom is paramount to all. I am the only one who can truly face a Nazgul, and my staff makes a very useful weapon.

Gimli, son of Glain: Only member of the fellowship who could even possibly resemble a woman. You can't throw me off, for discriminatory reasons.

Frodo Baggins: I am the Ringbearer, and the Ring was entrusted to me. As a hobbit I weigh very little and am of little impediment to the fellowship.

Meriadoc Brandybuck: I'm just a cute little hobbit, and not that heavy really!

Peregrine Took: As the only Scottish hobbit in the fellowship, getting rid of me would be a gross injustice and cause a huge loss of cultural diversity in the Shire. Positive discrimination, that's what it would be! Besides, I want to see the Shire again.

Aragorn, son of Arathorn (who is called Elessar, the elfstone, Dunadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son of Gondor): It is imperative that I remain after the destruction of the Ring to become the rightful King of Gondor – who else will be King if I am thrown off? Boromir? Furthermore, I am needed to protect the hobbits. Who looked after them at Bree? Where was Gandalf during the nasty incident at Amon Sul?

Boromir: I'm a great arrow-sink; I mean, just look at me at Amon Hen. Who else can take out that many orcs?

Samwise Gamgee: As Frodo's loyal companion through all adversities, I stand for everything that the Ring does not, thematically; devotion and loyalty and friendship. Did I mention I cook?

The Hallowed Stuff: Stuff being such things as Legolas' shampoo, Sam's strawberry bubble-bath, Aragorn's 'Still not king' broken sword, Gimli's over heavy armour... I cannot stress to you enough the importance of stuff to the fellowship!

The Weakest Link: Stuff (predictably)

Famous Last Words: None – well, it was comprised of inanimate objects!

Round 2: *After dumping the stuff, the fellowship thought that it was safe. But on the other side of the mountains, weariness struck Gwaihir again...*

Gandalf: I am still a great figure of authority on this Eagle, and I am the only one that can a) talk to it and b) knows where we're going.

Gimli: Now that my weapons are gone I'm not actually all that heavy, you know.

Frodo: Still the very sweet innocent hobbit that everybody loves. You couldn't really throw off me, could you?

Merry: You couldn't separate me from Pippin, could you?

Pippin: Just look really closely at one frame in FOTR, and you can see that I am the only musical hobbit in the Fellowship. Who, I ask, who will write the amusing songs about Orcs and pipeweed once we return? Me, I shall. Can you truly face losing that?

Aragorn: I have no desire to take the Ring; my desire is only to rule over Gondor when all this has run its course. Ergo, I am not a threat to the safety of the Ring. I ask you to consider the rest of the Fellowship; four hobbits. Am I the only one that notices some redundancy there? Would anyone notice if we lost one or two (or four) of them? As for the representatives of men; Boromir (if we may call him a man), is not to be trusted. He claims that as he knows of the desires of the Ring that he is the better equipped to prevent himself from taking it, but I put little faith in this assertion. He has openly admitted his treachery to this company!

Boromir: Get rid of a hobbit! Wretched wastes of space. And may I point out that Aragorn is trying to take over the world? I, on the other hand...

Sam: I am disturbed by the amount of anti-hobbit feeling. May I point out that it is the four hobbits that defeat the great evils in the world between them, and ensure the future of the age? Frodo destroys the Ring, Pippin saves Faramir (and thus Eowyn), Merry stabs the Witch-king and I deal Shelob a nasty blow 'the last child of Ungoliant to trouble that unhappy world', and all that. The hobbits are vital to the fate of Middle-Earth, and it is the hobbits that will record it all in the Red Book that my family will keep.

Legolas: I'm loyal and brave. I can follow even in such tortuous places as the paths of the dead. I would resist the evil of the Ring like Galadriel... Oops!

The Weakest Link: Aragorn, son of Arathorn... etc.

Famous Last Words: Aaarghhh! You fools... for you shall be the ones to witness the horror of Boromir's rule in Gondor! [splat].

Round 3: *And so it was that a great lament was sung on the passing of Aragorn, and to Boromir was entrusted the task of scribing the sad news to Arwen... A terrible question was then asked of the remaining Fellowship; where would they go if they could follow their heart's desire, and what luxury would they choose to take with them whilst abandoned on a desert island?*

Gimli: On a desert island I would take Legolas, my very good friend. As to my heart's desire...

Frodo: I would go back to the Shire, and I would have to take Sam with me.

Merry: The Shire, with Pippin.

Pippin: Where would I be if I were where my heart dwells? The Green Dragon. And there is a lovely young hobbit-wench who works there... What is this inexplicable animosity I see manifesting itself in Sam? No, no; Rosie was a fantasy, she's yours Samwise. On a desert island... Why, Merry of course (though not in THAT way), some weed would I share with Merry and whomever else was stuck on the desert island with... Oh yeah, and I'd need my ukulele.

Boromir: To see Gondor made great again!

Sam: If I could be granted my heart's desire, it would be to see the Ring destroyed and my dear Frodo healed of all the terrible things that keep happening to him. Truly healed, I mean. As to the desert island... I hope Rosie forgives me, but it would be Frodo, my dear master.

Legolas: On a desert island I would take my shampoo... As to my heart's desire; I would take Gimli to the Undying Lands. And when it comes to musical talent... Did I mention I rock, Pippin?

Gandalf: I must confess that I am a little hurt by the fact that the hobbits seem to have forgotten me so far... But if I could go anywhere in Middle-Earth, however tempting Valinor sounds, you would find me in the Shire, having tea and smoking a pipe with an agreeable hobbit... Bilbo or Frodo. say. On a desert island, I would take my staff.

The Weakest Link: Pippin

Famous Last Words: Bloody ukulele. If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine!

Round 4: *Pippin's identity as a dark lord of the Sith finally revealed, the twist of the debate went on to see philia at its finest.*

Frodo: Although I love you all deeply and would never have wanted any of you to be thrown off, I'm afraid that were I forced to choose it would have to be Boromir. He very clearly wants MY Ring which was given to ME, and we all know what he would do with it.

Merry: Boromir!

Boromir: This Ring has evidently got a very serious hold on Frodo and I do not believe that we can trust someone who is being puppeteered by that wizard over yonder. I say we throw Frodo off and use the Ring to save Gondor!

Sam: Having heard Boromir's vicious and unjustified slating of Mr Frodo... Off with Boromir!

Legolas: Look; Sam is clearly delusional about Frodo, Frodo is possessed by the Ring, so the real Frodo is already dead. Merry has slated my singing abilities, so he's evil. Boromir could work real good in Gondor. And Gandalf... *would float like a feather to the ground!*

Gandalf: Although Legolas is annoying (beauty products and all), Gimli is too heavy and Merry is superfluous, I have to attack Boromir. Firstly, he keeps on making such vicious attacks on Frodo; secondly, he wants the ring a bit too much; thirdly, I had master plan: Frodo would take the ring and destroy it, Sam is needed to help him (so they have to stay). Aragorn would be King of Gondor (kind of problematic now he's dead)... Plan B would be to get Faramir as Steward (for this purpose Boromir must be destroyed!)

Gimli: Since the choice appears to be between Gandalf's world order, and Legolas and Boromir's world order, and I can see which way the wind is blowing... Boromir.

The Weakest Link: Gimli

Famous Last Words: Oh well.

Round 5: *In those dark times after Gimli's passing, it was supposed for a moment that the Ring was entirely good... What would each of the remaining fellowship do with it?*

Merry: Well, if the Ring is utterly good... Um, don't know.

Boromir: Use it to utterly vex Sauron and rebuild Gondor to its former glory.

Sam: Whether the Ring is good or evil, it could still work great evil in the world. Nobody has a right to that kind of power but the Valar. We should destroy it anyway.

Legolas: I am no leader and would have no desire to keep it for myself. I would give it to Boromir for the reconstruction of a glorious new Gondor, especially now that Aragorn is gone...

Gandalf: I agree with Sam; I would find out who claims the Ring is good (sounds like the sort of thing that Saruman would say), and would probable destroy it anyway. Now, I've heard a lot of

accusations about evil master plans, and it basically all boils down to this: either you can have my master plan (supported by Elrond and Galadriel - the most wise and powerful people on earth), which has the added bonus of saving the cute hobbits; or you can have pretty-boy, self-obsessed Legolas and psychopathic Boromir running Middle Earth - who are you going to trust?

Frodo: I would give it to one of the wise. It would not be mine to decide.

The Weakest Link: Boromir

Famous Last Words: You fools! Fools I say!

Round 6: *Boromir's departure seemed to cause a great rift in those left, and weighed heavily upon all their hearts... Who should be thrown off next?*

Sam: If it comes down to it; send me instead of Mr. Frodo.

Merry: Sam – since he so kindly volunteered!

Legolas: Don't listen to Sam, that's the argument he won with last year! Hurl the wizard off - Gandalf would float like a feather to the ground!

Gandalf: Legolas

Frodo: Legolas.

The Weakest Link: Frodo (gives the Ring to Sam).

Famous Last Words: It's been really nice knowing you all and being part of the Fellowship - Goodbye.

Round 7: *Remind us again what virtue of yours gives you the right to remain on the Eagle?*

Sam: My devotion.

Legolas: My courage.

Gandalf: My wisdom and connection with the Valar.

Merry: My cheeky grin. I'm also the only hobbit not languishing in grief!

The Weakest Link: Merry

Famous Last Words: Oops...

Round 8: *Nearing the vales of Mordor, the spirit of Fellowship returned to those who remained, and they asked themselves which of their companions they would rather see bearing the Ring to the cracks of Doom.*

Gandalf: Sam (can't trust Legolas!).

Legolas: Sam. (can't trust Gandalf!)

Sam: Er... Really awkward position... still sobbing... It would have to be Gandalf, because he was as a father to Frodo (next to Bilbo, of course).

The Weakest Link: Sam

Famous Last Words: Gandalf, see this through, for Frodo's sake. Coming Mr. Frodo!

Round 9: *The Eleventh Hour Plea. Orodruin was in sight, but who would make the final move?*

Gandalf: I fought the Balrog, faced the Nazgul etc. Legolas just spends all his time trying to look pretty!

Legolas: Gandalf can't take the Ring, anyway. through him it would wield a power too great and terrible. he has admitted it himself! And he would float like a feather to the ground!

The Weakest Link: Gandalf

Famous Last Words: Well you've made your bed now you have to lie in it! Enjoy your future with Dark Lord Legolas!

And so it was (for the first time in a long time), that Legolas, Prince of Mirkwood, despite the grievous loss of his companions and the still more grievous loss of his hair products, came to the pinnacle of Mount Doom, and saved Middle-Earth when all was thought lost. His final words?

Still the prettiest!

The Players:

Stuff: Naath (Helen Cousins)

Gandalf: Thea Wilson

Legolas: Esther Miller

Gimli: Jack Vickeridge

Aragorn: Michael Smith

Boromir: Nicholas Taylor

Merry: Gemma (missed the surname – many apologies!)

Pippin: Richard Smith

Frodo: Philipa Steele

Sam: Anna Slack

Anna E. Slack

What if... The Fellowship never went through Moria?

After some exhaustive debate, the following scenario was decided upon:

The Fellowship leave Rivendell set for the pass of Caradhras. Defeated by snow on Caradhras, they head for the gates of Moria. On the way they are attacked by Wargs and Merry is killed. The next night at the gates of Moria Merry is not there to supply the crucial clue to Gandalf. Unable to open the gates, they head for the White Mountains.

They cross the Mountains and arrive in Fangorn. There, Saruman (who has been tracking the Fellowship) personally attacks them. Saruman and Gandalf get into a major wizard-fight! The Fellowship make a run for it. On the edge of Fangorn the orcs catch them. Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas and Gimli deal with the orcs while the hobbits (bravely) run away.

Gandalf wins the battle with Saruman, revealing himself as Gandalf the White. With the help of the Ents, he sacks Isengard.

Frodo, Sam and Pippin are lost in Rohan. They meet Theodred (who is now not-killed), who takes them to Edoras so that Theoden can deal with them. In Edoras, Grima has worked out that something has gone wrong; he decides to hide in the Shire until things die down. The hobbits arrive in Edoras, where Frodo convinces Theoden to let him go. Theoden gives the hobbits food and a boat. The hobbits follow the river to Ithilien where Gollum catches up with them.

Meanwhile, having spent a couple of days destroying the orcs, Aragorn & co realise that the hobbits have gone. They track the hobbits through Rohan but suddenly find that their tracks disappear and are replaced by horses (which all go off in different directions). They decide to head for Minas Tirith (it's probably where the hobbits are going anyway). In Gondor, they meet Faramir who recruits them to help at Osgiliath.

Gandalf, in Isengard finds the *palantir*. Foolishly he looks into it and reveals himself to Sauron. Unable to battle with him as well as Aragorn, Gandalf reveals that the Ring is in the company of the heir to the throne of Gondor who is heading for Minas Tirith. Wracked with guilt, he recruits the Rohirrim and heads for Gondor at breakneck speed.

On discovering that the heir to the throne of Gondor is in Minas Tirith, probably with the Ring, Sauron abandons his plan to wait and build up his forces and sends everything he has to attack Osgiliath. During the ensuing battle, Aragorn cuts off the hand of the Witch King, allowing Legolas, or Gimli, or both (reports are confused!) time to kill him (thus neatly filling the 'no man shall kill him...' prophecy). The forces of evil, having lost their commander, are defeated and retreat, leaving Ithilien to be recaptured by the good guys. Gandalf arrives with the Rohirrim (including the disguised Eowyn). The forces are divided – some to protect Osgiliath (led by Faramir), some (led by Boromir and Aragorn) attack Minas Morgul, and some (led by Theoden and Gandalf) to follow the orcs and attack the Black Gates.

In Ithilien, the combination of Frodo and Pippin's friendship brings Smeagol out. Smeagol reveals (when Pippin asks him exactly how he got out of Mordor) that 'there is another way...', and takes the hobbits through Cirith Ungol. But, instead of betraying them, he gets them safely through. The four head off across Mordor towards Mount Doom. The journey is fairly uneventful (just a bit more moaning than in the book), as all of Mordor has been emptied.

Here, luck leaves them. The Haradrim arrive, and with yet more orcs, begin an epic battle with Theoden Gandalf et al, outside the Gates of Mordor (during which Theoden is slain). Meanwhile, the Corsage of Umbar attack Minas Tirith (left undefended). Minas Tirith is reduced to ashes (Denethor is slain).

Frodo, Sam, Pippin and Gollum at this moment arrive at the Cracks of Doom. The Ring is destroyed. It is a moot point what happens to the Hobbits:

1. Frodo goes all evil and puts on the ring. Sam and Pippin get involved in loud (possibly violent) and distracting quarrel (Pippin's all for throwing Frodo into the Cracks of Doom and saving the world, Sam doesn't see the point of saving a world that doesn't have Frodo in it...etc.). Smeagol, listening to this argument, suddenly realises that the hobbits want to destroy the Ring. Gollum wins out, he bites off Frodo's finger and gets the precious. During his happy dance of victory, he trips and falls into the Cracks of Doom. At the last minute, before being engulfed in lava, the hobbits are saved by Gandalf on (you've guessed it) the back of an eagle.
2. The Cracks of Doom can't stand up to the weight of an extra character, and collapse, sending all the hobbits (plus Gollum) and the ring to a fiery end.
3. Pippin, overcome with curiosity, takes the ring from Frodo, is attacked by Gollum and they both fall into the Cracks of Doom.
4. Gollum and Frodo in a struggle to the death over the ring, fall into the Cracks of Doom.
5. Frodo and Sam fall into the Cracks of Doom for some reason.
6. Frodo and Pippin fall into the Cracks of Doom for some reason.

I'm going to assume that it's 1. (for the very objective reason that I came up with that idea, plus it's the only one that gets both Pippin and Frodo out safely).

In the nick of time, the forces of evil are destroyed. Aragorn & co. are in the midst of rejoicing when word comes from Minas Tirith that it has been destroyed. Undeterred, Aragorn takes the Throne of Gondor (and marries Arwen), setting up a new city in the rebuilt Osgiliath. He sets Boromir the task of rebuilding Minas Tirith and then appoints him steward. He sets Faramir (and Eowyn) the task of making Minas Morgul lovely again.

The hobbits (eventually) make it back to the Shire, to find Lotho Sackville-Baggins and Grima Wormtongue developing industry. They don't have much trouble in returning the Shire to a rural ideal. Grima is reformed by Frodo and becomes a worthwhile member of society (Lotho goes off and sulks).

Thea Wilson

Did you get all that? No? Well, here for the real buffs among you is a comparative timeline of the 'What If?' debate along with what actually happened...

Comparative Timeline

Date	Tolkien	What if?
December		
25	The Company leaves Rivendell	The Company leaves Rivendell
January		
8	The Company reach Hollin	The Company reach Hollin
11, 12	Snow on Caradhras	Snow on Caradhras
13	Attack by Wolves in the early hours. The Company reaches the West-gate of Moria at nightfall.	Attack by Wolves in the early hours. Merry eaten.
14	Night in Hall 21	Arrive at Moria in early hours, unable to open the Gate.
15	The Bridge of Khazad-dum. The company reaches Nimrodell at night	
16		
17	The Company comes to Caras Galdhon at evening	
25	Gandalf casts down the Balrog and passes away.	
27		The Company arrive in Dunland
28		The Company attempt to get through the White Mountains
February		
1		The Company arrives in Fangorn. Saruman sets off from Isengard to confront the Company.
4		Meeting with Treebeard
5		Battle between Saruman and the Orcs and Gandalf and the ents. The rest of the Fellowship flee
6		The Fellowship are caught by orcs on the edge of Fangorn. The hobbits escape.
7		Gandalf casts down Saruman and reveals himself to be Gandalf the White. He and the Ents head for Isengard. Aragorn defeats the orcs and sets off in pursuit of the hobbits.
8		The hobbits meet Theodred and are taken to Edoras
9		Aragorn discovers the disappearance of the hobbit's trail. He and Boromir agree to head for Minas Tirith.
10		The hobbits arrive in Edoras. Frodo persuades Theoden to help him.
11		Gandalf and the ents arrive in Isengard and destroy the city. Grima realises that

12		something's wrong and flees for the Shire. The hobbits set off from Edoras. They are given a boat and set off down the river
14	The mirror of Galadriel. Gandalf returns to life, and lies in a trance	Gandalf finds and looks into the <i>palantir</i> . Reveals to Sauron that the ring is with Aragorn and that Aragorn's heading for Minas Tirith
15		Gandalf sets off for Edoras.
16	Farewell to Lorien.	Gandalf arrives in Edoras.
22		The hobbits arrive in Ithilien and meet Gollum
23		Gollum swears to help Frodo.
25	The Company pass the Argonath and camp at Parth Galen. First Battle of the Fords of Isen; Theodred son of Theoden slain.	Smeagol reveals to Pippin how he got out of Mordor. The hobbits agree to set off for Cirith Ungol.
26	Breaking of the Fellowship. Boromir slain. Merry and Pippin captured. Aragorn sets out in pursuit of the orcs that evening.	The Muster of Rohan.
27	Aragorn reaches the west-cliff at sunrise.	
29	Merry and Pippin escape and meet Treebeard. The Rohirrim attack at sunrise and destroy the Orcs. Frodo descends from the Emyn Muil and meets Gollum.	
30	Entmoot begins. Eomer meets Aragorn	Gollum leads the hobbits into Cirith Ungol
March		
1	Frodo begins the passage of the Dead Marshes at dawn. Aragorn meets Gandalf the White. Faramir leaves Minas Tirith on an errand to Ithilien.	Gandalf arrives in Minas Tirith, discovers that the battle will be at Osgiliath.
2	Frodo comes to the end of the Marshes. Gandalf comes to Edoras and heals Theoden. The Rohirrim ride west against Saruman. Second Battle of the Fords of Isen. Entmoot ends in afternoon. The Ents march on Isengard and reach it at night.	Faramir leaves Minas Tirith on an errand to Ithilien. Meets Aragorn and Boromir. They agree to head for Osgiliath
3	Theoden retreats to Helm's Deep. Battle of the Hornburg begins. Ents complete the destruction of Isengard.	Gandalf and Rohirrim arrive in Osgiliath. Passage through Cirith Ungol successful. Hobbits set off across Mordor.
4	Theoden and Gandalf set out from Helm's Deep for Isengard. Frodo	

	reaches the slag-mounds on the edge of the Desolation of the Morannon.	
5	Theoden reaches Isengard at noon. Gandalf sets out with Pippin for Minas Tirith. Frodo hides in sight of the Morannon, and leaves at dusk.	The battle of Osgiliath. Witch-King killed by Legolas/Gimli. Ithilien recovered
6	Aragorn overtaken by the Dunedain in the early hours. Theoden sets out from the Hornburg for Harrowdale. Aragorn sets out later.	
7	Frodo taken by Faramir to Henneth Annun. Aragorn comes to Dunharrow at nightfall.	The Army splits. Aragorn and Boromir to attempt an assault on Minas Morgul. Faramir remains to protect Osgiliath. Gandalf and Theoden lead force to capture and destroy remaining orcs.
8	Gandalf reaches Minas Tirith. Faramir leaves Henneth Annun. Aragorn sets out from Erech and comes to Calembel. At dusk Frodo reaches the Morgul-road. Theoden comes to Dunharrow. Darkness begins to flow out of Mordor.	Corsage of Umbar sets off.
9	The Muster of Rohan: the Rohirrim ride from Harrowdale. Faramir rescued by Gandalf outside the gates of the City. An army from the Morannon takes Cair Andros and passes into Anorien. Frodo passes the Cross Roads, and sees the Morgul-host set forth.	
10	Denethor sends Faramir to Osgiliath.	Attack begins on Minas Morgul.
11		Corsage of Umbar arrives and attacks Minas Tirith
12	Gollum leads Frodo into Shelob's lair. Faramir retreats to the Causeway Forts. Aragorn drives the enemy towards Pelargir.	Gandalf and Theoden's force met by the Harradrim. Battle ensues. Battle of Minas Morgul not going well. Hobbits arrive at the bottom of Mount Doom.
13	Frodo captured by the Orcs of Cirith Ungol. Aragorn reaches Pelagir and captures the fleet.	Gollum falls into the Cracks of Doom. The ring is destroyed. Fall of Sauron. Minas Morgul captured. Hobbits rescued by Gandalf on Eagle.
14	Samwise finds Frodo in the Tower. Minas Tirith is besieged.	Message comes that Minas Tirith destroyed.
15	The Witch-king breaks the Gates	

	of the City. Denethor burns himself in a pyre. Battle of the Pelennor. Theoden is slain. Aragorn raises the standard of Arwen. Frodo and Samwise escape and begin their journey north along the Morgai.	
16		Army arrive at Minas Tirith, they destroy the pirates.
18	The Host of the West Marches from Minas Tirith.	
19	The Host comes to Morgul-vale.	
24	Frodo and Samwise reach the feet of Mount Doom. The Host camps in the Desolation of the Morannon.	
25	The Host is surrounded on the Slag-hills. Frodo and Samwise reach the Sammath Naur. Gollum seizes the Ring and falls in the Cracks of Doom. Downfall of Sauron.	

Thea Wilson

Tourist Sindarin

1. Saying your name: Man eneth lin? / Man es lin? – 'What is your name?'
X eneth / es nin – 'My name is X'
2. Greetings: Mae govannen – 'Well met' Suilad / Suilaid – 'Hello'
Gil sila erin lu govaded vin – 'A star shines upon the hour of our meeting'
Navaer – 'Goodbye' Hennaidd – 'Thanks'
Hannon le – 'Thank you' Aniron I dulu lin – 'I need your help'
3. In the hotel: Gerich ham a chanad dy? – 'Do you have a room for four nights?'
Sam edaid u-cheneth – 'A double room without a window'
Annach aes? – 'Do you serve food?'
Manen anann gero dorthad? – 'How long can I stay?'
4. Getting around in Middle-Earth:
Pedithach nin i vad an i Drann? – 'Will you tell me the way to the Shire?'
Na gador ossi? – 'Is there a dungeon around here?'
Mas i adab Elrond? – 'Where is Elrond's house?'
Mas i-nor-rdh-raich? – 'Where is the cart station?'
5. In a shop: Gerich lembas? – 'Do you have any lembas?'
Geron bangad virian am mbass? – 'Can I trade money for bread?'

6. Describing yourself:

Im edhel / elleth / adan / bess / naug / perian / orch – 'I am a(n) elf / she-elf / man / woman / dwarf / hobbit / orc'
Geron finnel valthen / throg / varan / garan – 'I have golden / brown / golden-brown / red hair'
Golthon – 'I learn' (ie, I am a student)
Geron X ennin – 'I am X years old'

7. Numbers: min – 1 canad – 4 odog – 7 caer – 10
 tad – 2 leben – 5 teleth – 8
 nelod – 3 eneg – 6 neder – 9

NB. For now, we'll add numbers based on a decimal system (though it's possible that they would have used a duodecimal system) eg. 19 – neder a caer (I'm still working on numbers over 19!)

8. At the police station: Im mammen – 'I've been robbed'
Awarthannen virian nin – 'I've lost my money'
I vellon nin si dangan na orch – 'My friend has just been killed by an orc'
9. At the fuel station: Gerich aes adh roch nin? – 'Have you got foor for my horse?'
I rach nin narchant am i vad. Gerich aderthad e? – 'My cart has broken down up on the road. Can you repair it?'

10. Chat-up lines:
pulled'

Mabo goll lin, meleth, le gannen – 'Get your cloak, love, you've

Bado si a mibo nin! – 'Come here and kiss me!'

11. Insults:

Ego! – 'Get lost!'

Bado mibo orch! – 'Go kiss an orc!'

Le ion / iell-e-balrog thaer! – 'You abhorrent son / daughter of a

Balrog!'

Philippa Steele

A Very Serious Critical Review Of 'Bored of the Rings'

(with lots of shiny buttons to make it interesting)

I was recently informed by a friend in the CTS that there exists on the Net the 'Very Secret Diaries' of the Fellowship (also featuring contributions from Ringwraith #5, Saruman and Gollum). Apparently the entries revolve around things like Legolas' vanity, Boromir's jealousy towards Aragorn and Aragorn's inexplicable attraction to a certain Ring-bearing hobbit. They are highly amusing. I enjoyed them (*subliminal advertising alert*).

Bored of the Rings is also highly amusing. It is a masterful parody, featuring those fabulous characters that we all know and love. Boggies such as Dildo Bugger and his nephew Frito, along with his gardener Spam. And of course the 'discredited Rosicrucian' Goodgulf. One could devote a whole article to listing the interesting and amusing names contained in this volume, but if one does that, one risks being as boring as a very boring academic who has, in fact, just written a paper on 'Boredom And Its Causes'. So one won't do that.

The story (rather surprisingly) is incredibly similar to *The Lord of the Rings*, in that it involves a Ring, a pint-sized hero and supernatural creatures. And the narrative route is broadly similar. But of course, as with all humorous books, there is no plot, only a pretext. And on the way to the Zazu pits of Fordo Frito and his companions entertain us richly. The first truly hilarious encounter is with Tim Benzadrine who slips them some dodgy mushrooms, with predictably surreal consequences. In this section we also begin to see the capable imitations of Tolkien's poetry, with the immortal '*O slender as a speeding freak! Spaced out groovy tripper!*' There are some other (frankly unprintable) variations on this poem, which are even more amusing.

The book is also noteworthy for its irreverent characterisation of the Ringwraiths, posing as waitresses in a burger bar and being forced to pay extortionate rates on a toll bridge, to name but two dubious activities. And of course, towards the end, things just begin to get a little bit *silly*...

In conclusion, I can only say that, provided you don't hold Tolkien's masterwork in such reverence that you fear to tamper with its hallowed pages by sullyng them with your gaze, then this spoof is worth a look. I doubt there's anything in here to offend any Tolkien fan (would I have produced such a favourable review otherwise?). If you want a little light relief from heavy Tolkien analysis, and enjoy the National Lampoon/American style of humour which surfaces in places, then read *Bored of the Rings*. It may just be worth your while.

Richard Smith

In the first of a series of reports, Sarah Arnold looks at the all-elusive female characters in Tolkien's mythology.

Women in Tolkien Aren't All Boring!

Tolkien's books are remarkably lacking in female characters – true. But the female characters he does write are not all wilting violets with about as much personality as that 24p economy bread you get from Sainsbury's. In fact, most of Tolkien's girls are independent women who don't stand for nonsense and on some occasions, display a good deal more sense than some of their male contemporaries.

Tolkien post-feminist icon of the issue: Nerdanel

In case you've forgotten, Nerdanel was the one and only Mrs Fëanor, although as of late, I imagine she's reverted to using her maiden name again...

She was the daughter of the famous Noldorin smith Mahtan (who basically taught Fëanor everything he knew about making things), and so rather than receiving a stereotypical 'feminine' education, she learned about metalwork and sculpture, and became a great artist. She was also an expert at reading and understanding people; it was her influence which kept Fëanor's rather explosive temper under control for many a long year – and considering he was the elf who brought ruin on a whole nation and had a fall-out with the Valar, you've got to give her credit for that, if nothing else.

She had to bring up not just one, but *seven* children virtually single-handedly while Fëanor got carried away with his various pet projects – considering elves come of age when they're fifty, that's no mean feat! Tolkien describes her as "more patient than Fëanor", and I for one would call that something of an understatement – that woman must have been a saint to put up with him for so long!

But even she wasn't about to be messed her about indefinitely. She'd already had a major argument with Fëanor over naming their two youngest children (according to Tolkien's later writings, she was all for giving them both the same name, but Fëanor wouldn't stand for it). This ultimately culminated in her forecasting doom for one of her own sons, much to Fëanor's irritation. As he got more and more difficult, she got sick of constantly being the one who was expected to calm him down again, and very sensibly upped and left.

Unlike plenty of her contemporaries, she had the good sense not to blindly follow Fëanor on his crazy quest, despite the fact that this meant she'd have to be separated from her sons. She wasn't afraid to answer back to her husband when he was hurling accusations at her about how she should be "a good wife" and follow him to Middle-Earth – and I think, in retrospect, she had a point!

OK, so maybe Nerdanel never went charging across the countryside of Beleriand waving a sword and slaying Balrogs left, right and centre, but I am obliged to point out that she should still be alive at the end of the Third Age, whilst Fëanor and the overwhelming majority of his exiled entourage was not. That seems to demonstrate a much more impressive display of good sense than anything Fëanor ever tried.

Girl power? I think so.

Sarah Arnold

Middle-Earth Community College
Principal: Sauron, the Dark Lord
" Education for All "

- **Mapreading for Nazgul** - do you often find yourself having to ask for directions ("Shire...Baggins")? Details to be confirmed.
- **Home accounting** - keep track of your money. Taught by a dwarf representative. Fee: 5 gold pieces.
- **Nail care for wizards** - a manicure course taught by Saruman the Wise. Fee: one magic ring.
- **Hair care for elves** - tips for keeping your tresses smooth and shiny, even in the midst of a fight. Taught by Legolas Greenleaf. Fee: to be confirmed.
- **Skin care for Uruk-hai** - learn how to get rid of unsightly blemishes and put makeup on effectively. Taught by Lurtz. Fee: 2 halflings.
- **Oral hygiene for cave trolls** - an example-based course taught by Frodo Baggins. Free of charge.
- **The Bree Diet** - get thinner fast! An invigorating food plan and exercise regime recommended by gatemen everywhere. Fee: one new gate.
- **Scientology for elves** - a workshop taught by Elrond Hubbard. Fee: trust in men.
- **Counting songs** - including "*One, Two, Tie My Shoe*", and "*4 Hobbits In A Bed*". Taught by Aragorn, son of Arathorn.
- **Gandalf-o-matic floor polisher** - product demonstration by Saruman the Wise.
- **Gwaihir Airlines** - product demonstration by the King of Eagles.

Lucy McWilliam

It is known that the palantiri were used to communicate one with another in the elder days when they were all still known and not shrouded by darker hands. The editor was recently contacted by a lore-master of Gondor, who had found these transcripts deep in the library of the city. What follows are conversations intercepted by the palantir in the elder days of the world, when men and elves had access to a technology that has resurfaced in modern times; the mobile phone.

Silmarillion SMS

At Helcaraxe

Fingon: "Maedhros, hi, it's me. I was hoping you'd be able to persuade your dad to come and pick us up..."

Not a chance, you say?...

Still annoyed about what my dad said to him.

I see...yeah, I know some of the erm - references he made to Feanor's personal habits were blatantly untrue, but they were spoken in the heat of the moment...

Look, Maedhros, it's absolutely freezing here, we can't go home, and my moisturiser's frozen solid. Can't you just try and talk to him?...

He's gone surfing?...

Well that's just peachy. We're all freezing our butts off in Helcaraxe, and Feanor's *surfing*.

Well, give him my love!" <*snorts and hangs up*>

Turgon in Gondolin receives text message:

"hi Turg, it's Fingon. Hvnng sum problems w/vermin at Fen of Serech. Can u help? dont txt me back just come - very busy here. cu l8r Fini"

A Domestic

Earendil: "Hiya darling, it's me..."

Yes, I'm just pulling into the Mouth of Sirion. I'll be home in half an hour...

I know, I'm sorry. I don't *mean* to keep working late, it's just that some of these remote islands take a lot of travelling to get to, and when the traffics's bad...

Yes, I'll pick you up a dessert and some wine on the way...

Yes, love you too. Say hi to the kids...

Bye sweetheart."

Another Domestic

Mablung: "Beren?"

Beren: "Is that you, 'Blung? The line's a bit crackly!"

Mablung: "That's not the line. That's the door breaking to pieces! Doriath's got a bit of a dwarf problem, and they're making something of a mess here."

Beren: "I'm sure Thingol can cope...how much damage can a few dwarves do?"

Mablung: "That's kind of the problem. A *lot* of harm. Thingol's dead. The

dwarves pulled him to pieces."

Beren: "That's bad. How's the mother-in-law taken it?"

Mablung: "She told me to phone you, then disappeared."

Beren: "Women, honestly...just when she'd be useful. So what's going on there...<crackling>... 'Blung? 'Blung?"

Mablung: <screams> <line goes dead>

Beren (to himself): "That Girdle of Melian always did wreak havoc with the signal."

Phone rings again, to theme tune of James Bond "You only live twice."

Beren: "Hello, this is Beren, Legendary Re-embodied One-Armed Bandot of Ossiriand."

Lúthien: "Would you stop calling yourself that? I've had half a dozen Nandor round just this morning asking for you to autograph their longbows. But look, there's a load of dwarves parading past the window making a terrible racket. I've sung a few of them to sleep, but then they started handing out caffeine tablets and nothing's worked since."

Beren: "And you want me to...?"

Lúthien: "I don't know! Just make them go away! They're going to make my soufflé collapse with all their stomping feet!"

Beren: "All right, but I have to call in at Doriath first."

Lúthien: "Are you going drinking with Mablung again?"

Beren: "Well, I wasn't intending to..."

Lúthien: "If you're not back by eleven, I'm locking the door and you can sleep in the porch. Last time you two went out together, I bet the Valar themselves could have heard your drunken singing!"

Beren (resignedly): "Yes, sweetheart."

Lúthien: "Oh, and send Mummy and Daddy my love."

Beren: "Darling, that could be..."

Lúthien: "I know Mummy always pats you on the head and ruffles your hair, but you'll get used to it. Mablung did. And I know Daddy has that whole Silmaril fixation going, but he's really not so bad once you get used to him. Now, make sure you're not out late."

Beren: "Darling..."

Lúthien: "Don't 'darling' me. I didn't bring you back from Mandos so you could tour every pub in Beleriand, you know. Dior's coming to visit tomorrow, and I don't want you wandering around with a five-o'clock shadow and a hangover."

Beren (meekly): "Yes, sweetheart. Bye sweetheart." <hangs up>

Sarah Arnold

On the Art of Moviemaking: A Guide to Blockbusters for Beginners

(Inspired by Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings Films)

The rumour has it it's quite hard
(And some maintain it's a true art)
To make a movie that will sell -
But follow this - and all is well!
In any case, do not get stressed -
Fat slice of luck will do the rest.

First - SCREENPLAY. ...you can write, but look,
Still better - grab a famous book
The plot you'll follow - parts you can
(With best regards for author's plan)
Discard/enlarge/distort at will
Slap on suspense for distinct feel
Of REAL MOVIE STYLE - no dust.
But, back to basics. First you must
Strip all the chaff of useless twists,
Too complex plots and endless lists
Of strategies and subplots sleek:
Abandon all, for you must seek
The essence.

So, a HERO's band
Goes on a quest to foreign land.
The reason for it you may keep
Or else your viewers fall asleep
But do dispense, to save the day,
With deadlock choices in their way
For, like or not, you soon will find
Dilemmas bore the youthful mind
Keen for straight action, breathless chase.
Bank heavy on the latest craze
Of CGI, bluescreens - it's hot.
For these effects cue in DARK LORD.
Don't be afraid of battles, friend -
The local army'll lend a hand
Fulfil their dream of days long gone -
To strut with funky makeup on!
So do include for DARK LORD's HORDES
Green spiky hair, tattoos, and cords
Strung with some bones (cracked skulls are best) -
A bit of mud will do the rest

You must ensure, don't forget
That these criteria are met:

The key proportion HERO : BEAST
(One to ten thousand, at least)
The crucial item: HERO's SWORD
(And woe be to the DARK LORD's HORDE
And any weapon he shall meet!)
If HERO's traced by gunship fleet
My word, tough luck, but SWORD is best -
Let skilful dodging do the rest!
And Item Three: The SIDEKICK's Fate -
Heroic death when it's too late,
A flowing speech (strategic stops
So you can hear viewers' sobs!)

What now you ask - oh, skies above!
The key ingredient is LOVE!
The GIRL the HERO wants to wed
Is kidnapped/married/has a dad
Who hates the HERO - or at least
Does not include him in the list
Of future husbands, or if not
Then she's immortal, and his lot
Is with the rest of us, alas -
But I digress. For this to pass
As author's scheme (as like as not
The author really forgot
To add romance to HERO's quest) -
Let actors work on it. You rest.

Oh yes, no journey is complete
Without LANDSCAPES - to compete
With other rivals in the field
Of new design is to be killed.
Take as your basis therefore
Ideas that have worked before.
The viewers won't (they're rather meek)
Suspect you of sufficient cheek
To lift designs from famous stuff.
A coat of paint should be enough
To pull off masterful disguise.
In any case, you can be wise
(kind to environment, you bet!) -
Just use some of the last year's set!
And if you are still not impressed
Let ADVERTISEMENT do the rest!

Yevheniia Mikheenko

Pierced by Starlight Tolkien's Development of Samwise Gamgee

'I am learning a lot about Sam Gamgee on this journey.'
(Flight to the Ford, The Fellowship of the Ring)

Out of all the characters that Tolkien introduces into his vast epic there are dozens that one could choose to write upon, and many that could be considered far more important than the Gaffer's son. Although *The Lord of The Rings* is a tale that charts the changes sparked by events in all the characters, from Aragorn's acceptance of his determined role to Frodo's understanding of pity and Gollum's peripeteiac rise from moral degradation and fall back into it, it is Samwise that changes the most. Indeed, he is often considered by many to be the 'hero' of the tale proper, despite the fact that it is not his story any more than it is anyone else's. But in Sam Tolkien has captured a hero's journey¹ after Campbell's definition of it, and it is this that I want to take a (sadly, necessarily) brief look here.

Sam Gamgee was sitting in one corner near the fire, and opposite him was Ted Sandyman, the miller's son; and there were various other rustic hobbits listening to their talk.

'Queer things you do hear these days, to be sure,' said Sam.

'Ah,' said Ted, 'you do if you listen. But I can hear fireside-tales and children's stories at home, if I want to.'

'No doubt you can,' retorted Sam, 'and I daresay there's more truth in some of them than you reckon. Who invented the stories, anyway?...'

(The Shadow of the Past, The Fellowship of the Ring)

This is our first meeting with Sam, and there is not a great deal that can be said about him. Tolkien has characterised a certain dialectical sense about him that continues throughout, mainly achieved through such idiosyncracies as 'if you follow me' and so forth. They are parts of speech that are superfluous to the words of almost all the other characters. Sam is the *everyman*, the character with whom we can most readily relate, the ordinary person through whose eyes we see all the events of the plot unfold, and many of the other characters. He knows very little about what moves the world, but he has a great interest in the higher things of song and story. He accredits truth to the rumours of dark things that are heard 'even in the heart of the Shire', yet he is reluctant to stick to his proverbial guns. It is clear that there is a sense of poetry in him, a desire to express things with the eloquence mastered by the elves. But this is only a facet of his character. His key motivating factor is kept quietly in reserve by Tolkien until the time that it is needed. *'But Sam had more on his mind than gardening,'* we are told; *'After a while he sighed, and got up and went out.'*

In a tenuous way we can here link Frodo and Sam together in a kind of role-reversal, if you will. Sam is not 'whole' before the adventure begins, and seems to be somewhat of an outcast in his ring of society. He is defined in terms of thoughtfulness and things that are not generally believed. At the same time, Frodo seems fairly whole - although he and Bilbo are both called 'cracked' by Sandyman, Frodo we know is accepted in the circles in which he moves, by, for example, the Brandybucks. The journey is to change them both, but Sam, destined to go forward into the fourth age in a position very similar to Aragorn's (for Sam, too, will be the leader of a land rebuilding itself after destruction at the hands of Sauron and Saruman), has all to

¹ For more on the hero's journey in mythologies world-wide, see Joseph Campbell's (tough and heavy) book 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces'.

discover. Frodo, carrying about him an 'elvish air' (a point reiterated on many occasions), is to 'diminish, and go into the West'.

Evidently in a thousand-page tale there are hundreds and hundreds of quotes that could be used to illustrate how Sam moves from gardener to mayor, from servant to 'friend of friends', and from 'jester' to 'warrior', and I shall have to skate lightly over points that I could merrily dwell upon for a very long time. But one of Sam's most striking features is a strange lyricism; strange in comparison with the accent and register of speech he is normally given;

'They are sailing, sailing, sailing over the Sea, they are going into the West and leaving us,' said Sam, half chanting the words, shaking his head sadly and solemnly.

(The Shadow of the Past, The Fellowship of the Ring)

It can hardly be denied that here we see the result of what we come to learn has been greatly Bilbo's doing; Sam has been 'learning his letters' from Bilbo, and learning a great deal about elves. Right from the outset we see the beginnings of Sam's somewhat peculiar interest in poetry – I only call it peculiar because it seems out of keeping with the often comical character that we see the rest of the time. Indeed, it comes as a surprise even to those who know him well;

Suddenly a low voice murmured:

*...But long ago he rode away,
and where he dwelleth none can say;
for into darkness fell his star
in Mordor where the shadows are.*

The others turned in amazement, for the voice was Sam's.

(A Knife in the Dark, The Fellowship of the Ring)

In fairness, as Sam then admits, this poem is one of Bilbo's; he has learnt it. He also goes on to say that '*There was a lot more, all about Mordor. I didn't learn that part myself, it gave me the shivers.*' An ironic comment if ever there was one to be found, for he will learn far more about Mordor than perhaps he would like. He acknowledges the depth of the history of Middle-Earth at this early stage more than any hobbit except Frodo and Bilbo, and does so chiefly through this use of song. He is linked by Tolkien to a *scop*, a bard in the tradition of *Beowulf*, but he must undergo a rite of passage from the singer of songs to a central figure in one. It is an idea that perplexes him somewhat; '*I wonder what sort of tale we've fallen into?*' (The Stairs of Cirith Ungol, The Two Towers). He must go from the outside of the tale to the inside, a journey that he finds particularly difficult, for he is not endowed with any especial help in the heroic sense of the Icelandic sagas, neither is he armed in the way that the heroes of other epics are. In this way Tolkien is doing much as Virgil did when he wrote *The Aeneid*; he is taking the ashes of the old heroic conventions and inverting them to create a new heroism, just as he takes the old theme of the quest and inverts it in the journey to destroy the object of power, and not to claim it. However as a hero, what Sam is endowed with is a very full (if subconscious) understanding of *philia*², and a huge desire to serve because of that. It is this *philia* that is his elven blade;

² The Greeks had different words for different kinds of love; *eros* was romantic or erotic love, *agape* the love that God has for us, and *philia* the deep love between friends, a love in ancient times thought to supercede love between men and women. It is a distinction that is mostly lost on a modern audience, but it is this latter love that Samwise exemplifies.

In that hour of trial it was the love of his master that helped most to hold him firm; but also deep down in him lived still unconquered his plain hobbit-sense: he knew in the core of his heart that he was not large enough to bear such a burden, even if such visions were not a mere cheat to betray him.

(The Tower of Cirith Ungol, The Return of the King)

Sam has grown immensely by the time that he must face his tempting by the Ring, and he comes through on a par with Gandalf, Galadriel and Faramir. But what has caused this change? For if we compare his level-headedness here to how he reacts upon encountering the mirror of Galadriel, we see that he has changed indeed;

'Hi!' cried Sam in an outraged voice. 'There's that Ted Sandyman a-cutting down trees as he shouldn't... I wish I could get at Ted, and I'd fell him!.. There's some devilry at work in the Shire..' Then suddenly Sam gave a cry and sprang away. 'I can't stay here,' he said wildly... 'I must go home!'

(The Mirror of Galadriel, The Fellowship of the Ring)

In this example again it is to be love of Frodo, as so many times before, that keeps this unlikely hero where he is required; for Sam is an even more unlikely hero than Frodo. During his journey Sam learns the value of temperance, a quality particularly impressed upon him by Faramir.

I would argue that it is primarily due to the influences of one character that Sam grows in the way that he does, and the character that I wish to point to is Gollum. For Sam and Gollum are two extremes of the same persona, opposite ends of the same axis. Both serve Frodo and call him master, and both in many ways seek to see Frodo survive above all else. It is in Gollum, however, that Sam must face aspects of both himself and his master that disgust him. Although he may not realise it, Sam's anger towards Gollum is born not only out of jealousy but also out of fear. He sees the deep connection in service between himself and the wretched creature that guides him, and in the same way as Frodo is moved to pity through an understanding of what Gollum has borne, Sam is moved by fear to hatred, calling him names and treating him generally badly.

The key turning point in Sam is at Cirith Ungol. Faced with Gollum's betrayal Sam is finally able to justifiably lash out at him; but he too in his way betrays Frodo by leaving him in the hands of the enemy, just as Gollum intended to do;

'It's my guess you won't find much in that little fellow,' said Gorbag. 'He may have had nothing to do with the real mischief. The big fellow with the sharp sword doesn't seem to have thought him worth much anyhow – just left him lying: regular elvish trick.'

(The Choices of Master Samwise, The Two Towers, my emphasis)

All unwittingly Sam has betrayed Frodo in trying to serve, just as Gollum does trying to serve himself. I find it interesting that notions of worth, treachery and deceit (*worth, lying, trick*) lie so close to each other in this small passage. They bring up ideas of betrayal – and we must remember that it is an orc passing these judgements, a creature with whom we would not necessarily identify loyalty of any kind. Sam realises that, unlike Gollum, he cannot serve two masters and that, despite the implication of chapter's title (The Choices of *Master* Samwise, my emphasis), the only mastery that he can have is in deciding whom he will serve;

'I wonder if any song will ever mention it; How Samwise fell in the High Pass and made a wall of bodies around 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. My place is by Mr. Frodo. They must understand that – Elrond and the Council, and the great Lords and Ladies with all their wisdom. Their plans have gone wrong. I can't be their Ring-bearer. Not without Mr. Frodo.'

(The Choices of Master Samwise, The Two Towers)

As in many tales before, Sam understands that in the conflict between oaths it is loyalty to his master that is paramount. Sam is *indomitable* (the word is used to describe him when he faces Shelob) in that he is mastered. It is a curious (and very Christian) paradox. It is interesting that at this turning point in Sam's journey and in the course of the quest that his thought should rest on songs – for the conflict which Sam experiences here is deeply rooted in the tradition of story. Sam is willing here to sacrifice all that he loves himself for Frodo's sake, even the quest. Ironically it is this decision that saves Middle-Earth – the decision that the life of one person is more important than all of it. It is one of Sam's crowning moments. The phrasing that Sam uses about his imaginary song ('*how [he] made a wall of bodies around his master*') is extremely epic, bringing to mind *The Battle of Maldon* or the Homeric epics, for song was the medium of both these cultures. Even so, Sam moves away from that – and given that his literary tradition up to this point has been focused on deeds being remembered in song (cf. the conversation on stories before entering Shelob's lair), this act is even harder than it at first appears. It can be noted that on every other occasion that this choice arose (Moria, Lothlorien and Amon Hen, for example), Sam chose Frodo and did so relatively easily. But on none of those occasions is his mind on songs and being remembered as it is here, and on none of those occasions is the conflict in oaths so great, and the decision so important. Yet even though Sam gives up his place in the tradition of song here, he is later reinstated to it at the field of Cormallen. Tolkien is creating a new kind of hero, one that he commented was based upon the batmen of the First World War, and he is showing that the old ways of celebrating such heroism, story and song, are still of vital importance, even in our own culture (which, of all the cultures of Middle-Earth, is closest to the Hobbits and the Shire). Tolkien holds up Sam as an example of the courage of ordinary people; the people whose knowledge of heroism comes from the song and story of elder days, as Sam's does. By doing so Tolkien shows that we can all attain our places in them.

Sam follows into the tower of Cirith Ungol to rescue his master, knowing full well that he is periling all and that he has no hope. It is as he reaches the head of the tower 'weary and feeling finally defeated', and is plunged into darkness by his dying torch that something happens to him. At first, 'moved by what thought in his heart he could not tell', he sings old songs from the Shire, and the Shire comes to his mind, bringing unbidden 'words of his own... to fit the simple tune';

*In western lands beyond the Sun
the flowers may rise in Spring,
the trees may bud, the waters run,
the merry finches sing.
Or there maybe 'tis cloudless night
and swaying beeches bear
the Elven-stars as jewels white
amid their branching hair.*

*Though here at journey's end I lie
in darkness buried deep,
beyond all towers strong and high,
beyond all mountains steep,
above all shadows rides the Sun
and Stars forever dwell:
I will not say the day is done,
nor bid the Stars farewell.*

(The Tower of Cirith Ungol, The Return of the King)

This is arguably one of the finest poems in *The Lord of the Rings*, and its final verse prefigures Sam's encouragement in *The Land of Shadow*, where the single star in the cloud wrack causes 'even the fate of his master' to cease troubling him – a huge feat. This defiant song in the very heart of Mordor and darkness shows how much Sam has come from the song of the troll, or from his need to stand in a particular way to recite poetry as he does upon seeing the Oliphaunt. It was once commented that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric', and maybe to sing a song such as this after Shelob and all that Sauron has done to Middle-Earth is barbaric in the same vein. But Sam here is doing what many soldiers have always done when their hope seemed gone; he takes recourse to something higher than himself, to the enduring quality of song and to the *starlight* that transfixes him even in verse of his own imagining. Sam's weapon is and remains his voice and his altruism, an altruism sharpened after his recognition of himself in Gollum. Saruman's observation of Frodo in *The Scouring of the Shire* can be applied; Sam has grown. When he next encounters Gollum Sam has the opportunity to slay him, but his hand wavers, and he finds that he cannot. In this moment Sam has 'no words to express what he felt', but it is his action that shows how he has changed. He is not perfect by any means; he still aims a kick at the retreating Gollum. But he feels pity for him at last. It is an understanding and a growth that he would not have felt if Gollum's treachery had not caused him to bear the Ring.

Sam's growing does not end at the cracks of Doom, and his role in the ending of the tale is to be both bitter and sweet. He is an agent of the book's eucatastrophe³, its pinnacle moment of joy, and is also the one through whose eyes we see the diminishing of the elves, and the parting of the other characters. Like so many soldiers from the wars, Sam must return to the Shire and go back to the day-to-day grind as though nothing has happened. It is not something that he is comfortable with, as we can see by his thoughts that it is not right that nobody cares what Frodo has done, and by the quietly sorrowful sense in the closing paragraphs of the book, which I think encapsulate this well. Sam must be whole again, and must grow enough that he can go on in the Shire without Frodo. Although we do not know for certain how well he accomplishes this, we do know that he also passes to the west to take his place with his master again. It is, as I have said, Sam's love for Frodo that shows in him the highest starlight; for it drives him forward through every obstacle, even in the most desperate of moments. At the end of all things, Sam has grown enough to wonder about the future of the tale, beyond himself and his master;

'What a tale we've been in, Mr. Frodo, haven't we? I wish I could hear it told!... And then everyone will hush, like we did, when in Rivendell they told us the tale of Beren One-Hand and the great jewel. I wish I could hear it! And I wonder how it will go on, after our part.'

(The Field of Cormallen, The Return of the King)

I have not had enough time to do a thorough investigation into one of Tolkien's most beautiful characters, but I would like to wind down with a quote from *The Field of Cormallen*;

'Well, if this isn't the crown of all!' [Sam] said. 'Strider, or I'm still asleep!'

'Yes, Sam, Strider,' said Aragorn. 'It is a long way, is it not, from Bree, where you did not like the look of me? A long way for us all, but yours has been the darkest road.'

Sam's road is indeed dark, but he prevails through fellowship. It is the love between friends, whether it be Frodo and Sam, Merry and Pippin or the love that keeps Gimli and Legolas by

³ For more on Tolkien's eucatastrophe, see *Tree and Leaf*, especially the epilogue to the essay 'On Fairy Stories'.

Aragorn on the Paths of the Dead, that is the highest heroic virtue in Tolkien. And as the greatest exponent of this virtue, it is Sam that grows to take the hero's place. The closing words of the entire book are his, and they link in with a poem that runs through both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*; *The Road goes ever on and on*;

But Sam turned to Bywater, and so came back up the Hill, as day was ending once more. And he went on, and there was a yellow light, and a fire within; and the evening meal was ready, and he was expected. And Rose drew him in, and set him in his chair, and put little Elanor upon his lap.

He drew a deep breath. 'Well, I'm back,' he said.

(The Grey Havens, The Return of the King)

Sam returns from his journey immensely changed; but it is not the end of all things. One road leads to another, and in the years that follow, we know that Samwise Gamgee is to grow more and more, until he can grow no more in Middle-Earth, and joins his master across the sea in the greatest journey of them all.

Anna E. Slack

Flatland in Middle Earth

How Dumbing Down Tolkien Hurts Us All

Two movies down and Tolkien is current; current, that is, in movie format. The movies are big – walking along Durban's beachfront the other day a friend of mine crouched down, carefully examined some footprints in the sand, and declared that the Uruks had headed East, and were taking the Hobbits to Isengard! You gotta ask yourself.

How good are the movies, people ask? Does it matter, and if so, why? Assuredly, the movies are good; they are big and bold and vivid and it's hard not to surrender to them. But, for me, this story has been treasured in the imagination for too long, and close scrutiny is required to answer the question. To answer it, we must ask another – what does a storyteller do? What is the purpose of a story? According to one Native American definition, the storyteller is "the person who creates the atmosphere in which wisdom reveals itself". Too often, this dimension is overlooked in Tolkien's work, which is regarded primarily as an elaborate and absorbing piece of entertainment. Perhaps Tolkien's simple linear prose, judged against that of modern literature, strikes us as simply too naïve to offer anything of value; a ripping good yarn and nothing more. Perhaps, compared to the Peter Hoeg's and Arundhati Roy's, the old Professor's reportage is just too rustic. Swamped by hyper-complex literary genres, perhaps we have been seduced by the lie that mere intellectual sophistication is self-validating. Even if such nonsense were true; the sophistication of prose, and the purpose of a story... these are different beasts.

There are, of course, in our age of jaded retrospective biographical character assassinations, also questions about Tolkien himself. Scholars like Andrew O'Hehir (see Salon.com), conclude he was a "complicated man who wrote a strange and sad book, whose complex of meanings we will likely never determine". O'Hehir correctly notes that Tolkien's tale is, after all, "not a triumphalist fantasy", but "a vale of tears". What such analysis underacknowledges is that the vale of tears is also, if that's what you need it to be, "a place of soul-making". Looking back, we may pose all manner of reservations about Tolkien's antiquarian predilections, his Edwardian conservatism, his damn-nearly female-free story, and myth-elevating retro-romanticism. Such perspectives must be leavened with our knowledge of his direct acquaintance with tragedy and loss, all of which informed his work. Also, we must remember that Tolkien lived the life of his time, and that we cannot judge yesterday by the standards of today, as many would have us do. Certainly, Tolkien was not privy to our current awareness of both the dignities and disasters of a modernity towards which he harboured a poignant ambivalence. For all this, we are left with an undying devotion to his tale, and the question, why?

One answer is that any experience of great literature "must end in private possession, just as it begins". Tolkien's epic is delivered not through the adroitness of his language, but through the resonance of a story that illumines our own subjectivity. This is something that the avant-garde postmodern literati may do well to remember.

It is for these reasons that I do not entirely like the first two Lord of the Rings movies. It is not because my expectation that they would be like the book was disappointed. I had no such expectation – we all knew that the story would of necessity be summarized and reduced, and that

some of our favourite parts would be overlooked. This was to be expected, and could have been forgiven. But, after seeing the films, one is left pondering that the selfsame talent that improved upon the book was equally able to betray it; that in moments of surpassing addition and banal subtraction the genius crafting the former was sufficiently venal to perpetrate the latter. Principally, it was this that pushed me backwards, because Jackson must have known better. The question is this – why was Jackson unable to protect the story? Why did he dumb it down to supposedly secure its appeal to the non-cognoscenti, to those who would never know that the story became, at times, a spaghetti western in front of their untutored eyes.

In preserving more of the truth that Tolkien achieved in the most dramatic of moments, the film would not simply have been a good one, but would also have authored something that we need. It could have shown that our culture can survive understatement, and that subtlety can nail you with its power. It could have shown that dialogue reveals more to moviegoers of themselves than high tech indulgence. It could have given us real characters, like Shakespeare did, on small wooden stages in Elizabethan England in the 17th century, playing to audiences who had nothing but their own imaginations to transport them. Instead, in his worst moments, Jackson turned our precious into a parody.

As if to provide a benchmark against which to measure forthcoming disappointment, the first movie grounds itself superbly in its early scenes. Who could not love Jackson's Shire? The unabashed affection with which Frodo and Gandalf embrace in the opening moments is a fresh and touching addition. Who among us does not know, deep down, that the hug is the most underrated gesture of all, speaking volumes while it goes beyond words. I was aware, watching this, that Tolkien could never have offered it, and that Jackson had used his screen to add magic. Another early scene offers a close up of Gandalf's face as he greets Bilbo, and gravely observes.... "you haven't aged a day". The understated concern in this gesture is wonderful. For those who know, these five words grimly allude to Gandalf's dawning suspicions about the ring, and its poisoned conferral of longevity. A hug, a softly spoken line.....shivers down your spine. Jackson followed this with other allusions to his grasp of the book's brilliantly ominous early chapters.... "it has been called that before, but not by you"; Bilbo's difficulty in parting with the ring. Tolkienites in the palm of his hand.

The film further shines in its equestrian deployment of the Elven Princess Arwen, who in Tolkien's hands remains characterless and barely known. Her rescue of Frodo and her defiance of the Ringwraiths aside, Arwen, as she cradles the stricken hobbit in her arms, wins our acceptance with affect, with the prayer that reveals the breaking fullness of her heart - "Any grace that I have been given, may it pass to him". Thus, we do not begrudge Jackson his departure from Tolkien's way; but to take us with him he must offer not simply a different unfolding of events, but a closer view of the characters through whom events unfold. This is the recipe that redeems, and throughout the first two movies. Jackson often seemed to remember this, only to forget.

The first major disillusionment for the cognoscenti concerns the Council of Elrond, for which, in fairness, Jackson may perhaps be forgiven. In my edition of the book, the council runs from pg. 256 to 288, and is pure dialogue. It is, nonetheless, one of the book's most riveting episodes. Here, under the grim insistence of Gandalf the Grey, the power and menace of the Ring is finally spoken to Elves, Dwarves and Men – all of whom have taken too long to awaken to their peril. The reasons for this chapter's impact are complex and drawn out, and do not lend themselves to summary. Much as we balk at the puerile squabble Jackson gave us, and its falsification of both participants and plot (ditto the undignified scrap between Gandalf and Saruman in Orthanc) we

must perhaps accept that the gathering in Rivendell, adequately handled, would have required a movie of its own. Just remember this though, movie-goers – when Frodo offers to take the Ring, he is not competing for airtime... Middle Earth speaks through him from the depths of the Book's deepest silence, a silence that Jackson seemingly could not hear.

For worshipping first-time readers of the book, Tolkien starts to pile on the pressure in Moria, and in the Dwarf Lord's Halls of Stone Jackson both touches the tale with genius, and delivers it into the crass, clichéd cleavage of Hollywood's bosom. Tolkien's rendition of the serpent in the pool is pure understatement – one tentacle, pinpointing the ringbearer; a fact so chilling that Tolkien's Gandalf keeps it to himself. Jackson gave us a re-run of 'The Kraken', wasting minutes of his precious three hours. Of the Cave Troll, Tolkien shows us a single foot, and in the thrall of his storytelling we require no more. Jackson gave us another re-run, this time of 'King Kong'; this was Tolkien reduced to Pokemon.... our worst fears realised, time to slip out for more popcorn.

To his eternal credit, however, it is in Moria that Jackson goes eyeball-to-eyeball with Middle Earth. In my copy of the book, it happens on a dog-eared page 69. If it is possible to understand myth in terms of 'sacred truth', as many claim one can, and Tolkien did, then this, surely, is the closest he comes. Here, one finds the following, spoken by Gandalf: "... it abandoned Gollum. Only to be picked up by the most unlikely person imaginable: Bilbo from the Shire ! Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought". I can't remember just how much of this our director gave us, but he gave us enough. Counseling Frodo in Moria, McKellan revisits one of his earlier roles as Prospero in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', a servant of wisdom, penetrating and sublime. Gandalf alludes to something (grace ?, teleology ?) behind the Ring's existence which, even by Tolkien, is broached but once, briefly, at the book's beginning, and then left unspoken. At one level, under the sway of his increasing influence, the Ring was, as Gandalf warned, "trying to get back to its master". And yet, a deeper design was at work to keep open-ended the fate of Middle Earth. There was a space of ordained possibility in which the Fellowship would exercise free will; play their parts, without foreknowledge, in a hazardous gamble. We know, that for all his power, Gandalf did not anticipate the end of Sauron's realm until the very moment at which the Ring-bearer fulfilled his quest. To no one was prescience given.

How like our own lives this is. Pundits of the Perennial Wisdom, seemingly from Lao Tzu to Lipkin, tell us that we are held in perfect safety, in the loving embrace of Spirit (Tao, Brahman, Godhead etc.), and that somehow "all will be well". But we do not glimpse this until we step up to the plate and find the courage to dare our own interiors. It may be true that we are held ever within the grace of a purposive Kosmos; but the future, paradoxically, is not guaranteed. It is ours to create - as Frodo intuits when the telos of Middle Earth speaks through him: "I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way".

Clearly, neither Tolkien nor Jackson conceived the import of Gandalf's words in precisely this manner. Legitimately, other interpretations may be offered and debated. But in presenting them, both author and filmmaker offer material that "refers beyond itself", a platform from which "meanings may expand and reverberate within the reader". This is what storytellers do.

And then, as if this were not enough, Jackson brings us to the Bridge of Khazad-dum, for which Tolkienites, surely, will love him forever. Gandalf's dialogue-faithful challenge to the Balrog

takes place on a high, deadly plane of moviemaking. Boromir's restraint of Frodo as he struggles to run back to the bridge, the final, dazed flight from Moria, the hobbits' grief on a rocky plain in the pale sun – these scenes speak – they tell us that the company were shattered by shock and sorrow. Interiors.

The 'Two Towers' (the book) enlarges upon one of Tolkien's central themes – the role of sincerity as an arbiter of communication; the power of truthfulness enacted in communion amongst similarly deepened subjects. This wherewithal of verity to recognise itself, almost as an act of faith, while around it suspicion and mistrust grow strong, is understated but persistently illustrated by Tolkien. Nowhere is this dimension more redemptive than in the meeting of Aragorn and Eomer on the plains of Rohan, and that of Frodo and Faramir on the borders of Gondor. When Eomer, beset by betrayals, elects to risk aiding Aragorn, his decision is spoken thus: "Yet you speak the truth, that is plain: the Men of the Mark do not lie, and therefore they are not easily deceived". This act of recognition unleashes a loyalty between these men, who, finally, ride together to the Black Gate of Mordor.

Similarly, when Frodo is captured by Faramir in Ithilien, his account of himself elicits the same resonance: "If hard days have made me any judge of Men's words and faces, then I may make a guess at Halflings!" Faramir's freedom from the allure of the Ring is later revealed, when Sam accidentally exposes Frodo as its bearer: "We are truth-speakers, we men of Gondor.... *Not if I found it on the highway would I take it.*" Here, Faramir's steadfastness bespeaks the nobility he discerns in the bearing of his captives, and moves him to comfort Sam: "If you seem to have stumbled, think that it was fated to be so. Your heart is shrewd as well as faithful, and saw clearer than your eyes. For strange though it may seem, it was safe to declare this to me. It may even help the master that you love." In fact, it is this nobility that resists desire for power that is the bedrock of Gandalf's strategy to outmaneuver his terrible foes. His counterintuitive proposal to destroy the Ring is defended thus in Rivendell: "...let folly be our cloak, a veil before the eyes of the Enemy! For he is very wise, and weighs all things to a nicety in the scales of his malice. But the only measure he knows is desire...and so he judges all hearts". That Jackson denied these lines to his Shakespeare-seasoned McKellan is mind-boggling. That aside, the Wizard's tactic relies on hearts able to hold steady before the tests of fear and temptation, and to recognise similar honour in others. Thus, freed of possessiveness, Faramir enacts, in communion with his captives "a veil before the eyes of the enemy". In both these scenes, it is the self-knowledge through which subjects discern truthfulness, and place faith in an instinctive mutual accord, that moves the reader. These qualities enable Faramir to override the confusion and lust that claimed his brother, and, like Eomer, he places his own life in danger to help his captives. Crucially, then, it is the depth of subjects that forestalls their growing peril. Anyone who has loved the book and seen the movie will know that this was lost on Jackson, who provided Eomer and Faramir with slots in a plot, but no place in the story. Thusfar, he may as well have left them out.

Perhaps Jackson's shallowest interpretation concerns the Fellowship's journey to Edoras, where, in the book, they offer healing to the ageing King Theoden, helping him to glimpse the integration that is possible when despair is finally faced, and acted upon. Gandalf's entry into Meduseld is surely one of the most dog-eared, re-read, memorised, play-acted and beloved of scenes. The verbal swordplay between Gandalf and Grima alone would have been worthy of Gielgud on a stage, and Jackson does not do it justice. It is the scene's interiority, however, that moves one to repeated re-readings, to soliloquys in the shower – If Gandalf is the psychologist, then the reader becomes a willing patient, partaking of the therapy that Theoden is offered. While Tolkien's Gandalf illuminates the terrifying existential freedom that lies in the power of choice, and exhorts Theoden to embrace it, Jackson offers us a join-the-dots spell-mongering

exorcist. Theoden, one of Tolkien's great heroes, is reduced to a passive recipient of unwelcome guests, upon whom an interiorless transmogrification is wrought. For those who have been succored by the real story, this cannot be. When Tolkien's Theoden confronts somnambulism to face his age, the death of his son, and the peril of his people, he declares, as did Faulkner: "...between grief and nothing I will take grief". In essence, Theoden accepts Gandalf's earlier advice to Frodo, "all we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us". Each time these inner contours are flattened, the audiences' chance to illuminate its own inwardness is similarly withheld. When Tolkien's Gandalf commands the doorwardens of Meduseld, "Open ! The Lord of the Mark comes forth !" he is acknowledging the attitudinal courage that permits one to proceed in spite of fear, replacing paralysis with agency. We know from earlier scenes, that McKellan unmuzzled could have made our spines tingle with these words. Stephanie Zacharek (see salon.com) notes that 'big movies' make a "human sacrifice of their actors", and, with respect to 'Fellowship of the Ring', absolves Jackson of this charge. Such absolution does not apply to 'The Two Towers', in which McKellan's "Shakespeare-seasoned tongue" has all too little to say. Tolkien's Theoden is aware of his own rebirth.... "Go, Eowyn sister-daughter ! The time for fear is past". It is notable that this is not simple fortitude, but something else - existential heroism - the determination to proceed "when there is no reason left for hope, no rational justification for bravery". The context in which such courage has meaning is, in many ways, the very bedrock of Middle Earth. When facing death on the Fields of Pelennor, Eomer laughs as he speaks the following words.

"To hope's end I rode and to heart's breaking:
Now for wrath, now for ruin and a red nightfall !"

Gandalf's skill at Edoras enables him to offer the motivation for which no rationality exists, and it is only after Theoden begins to awaken that he is taken into the Wizard's confidence, to be told of the hope of which the enemy "has not guessed". Wizard though he is, Gandalf's power at Edoras is an intensely human wisdom, one in which everyone - dimly, or clearly - may glimpse their own possibilities. It is the role of literature and music to offer such visions of renewal; to show the reader, as Theoden realised, that "he is the one who must go on constituting the meanings by which he lives". Thus, Tolkien's Gandalf is not memorable for wizardry, but for his deep humanness. Seemingly, Jackson did not understand this.

In contrast to the above, and in fairness to Jackson, he is equally able, when it occurs to him, to add meaning, deftly and economically. His remake of Saruman's Richard the Third-like spy, Wormtongue, is perhaps his subtlest touch. As with Arwen, this detraction from the original is welcome, because it adds dimensionality where Tolkien did not. In a scene in which Saruman commands his army to leave not one of Rohan's inhabitants alive, a single tear runs down the traitor's cheek... for Eowyn ? We do not know, and nor does this matter. Jackson has rendered unto a human his complex, contradictory humanness, which, after all, by definition, he must possess. In contrast, Tolkien's easy demarcations of good and evil appear less real. Credit where credit is due.

A further criticism is that Jackson too often robs the tale of its gravity. *The Lord of the Rings* is, finally, a tale of surpassing loss, a bitter elegy to a vanishing age that leaves those remaining with no final refuge from change and decline; the world of which Saint-Exupery wrote "Your abode is your act itself. Your act is you..." Perhaps this is why Tolkien's tale turns so on the conduct of warriors. What does it mean to be a warrior ? Precisely this: "The warrior needs no place to stand". In contrast, Jackson's presentation is sometimes too clean and bright in its grandiosity,

and speaks too little to the notion of dread. His travel-brochure landscapes, while awe inspiring, convey little of the bleak, brooding desolation through which Tolkien's characters passed. At the human level, as one example, Jackson's portrayal of Aragorn is too light. While Jackson's Aragorn is well cast, I cannot get away from Tolkien's, who, albeit young in the reckoning of his Numenorean lineage, was fifty years old at the time of the War of the Ring. In Aragorn, Tolkien offers a character who had spent most of his life alone, and imperiled, attempting to forestall a growing evil in landscapes that Jackson did not show. We sense of Tolkien's Aragorn that his long exposure to jeopardy and loneliness had left him exhausted, weather-beaten and careworn. Aragorn may be compared with Gandalf, in that his labours on behalf of the free peoples of Middle Earth, and his awareness of the malice that was growing, had both taken their toll. The book suggests that there is a price to be paid for both knowledge, and exposure to evil. While Jackson's Aragorn grew on me, he came alive when Jackson chose to downplay the dwarf-tossing, stunt-performing Samurai in favour of his character's subtler aspects. Aragorn's farewell to Frodo on the slopes of Amon Hen, his hands enfolding Frodo's, who in turn holds the Ring - his simple rendition of "I would have gone with you to the end"; this scene stopped the hearts of Tolkienites everywhere, as Jackson provided Joseph Conrad's "glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask". The unexpected gift, as always is an interior; a scene that may be "inwardly-appropriated".

We are left with this. Any presentation of interiority helps render into awareness our own; any emotional intelligence to which we are exposed affirms the necessity of this dimension in our own lives - when a story is reduced to a mere sequence of events then there is little place in it for the part of us that would come to know ourselves. If we are not offered visceral interiors, then any sequence will do, as attested to by the formulaic assembly line of Hollywood's recipe-driven facsimiles. This is diversion, not art; it provides the same kind of relief as the cell phone that rings just as we begin to get uncomfortable with our own presence. Reveal the psyche, however, and the same scene has endless relevance, as the timeless persistence of poetry, art and literature confirms. Tolkien, rated by many a non-published critic as a good storyteller if not a great writer, was loved by his readers because he presented Middle Earth through the medium of endless detail and intimate acquaintance. And the take-home aphorism here is that intimate acquaintance, finally, is self-acquaintance, because interiors, sincerely revealed, are usually mirrors. The relationship between literature and education implies, as Maxine Greene states, a "mode of awareness which is imagination" in which a reader takes an interior journey in which she "helps to create the universe disclosed by the author". In doing so, the reader "must constitute the aesthetic object towards which the characters and the events of the plot seem to point". Simply put, what this means is that a story can summon its readers to see themselves more clearly and trust themselves more fully. I recall a rare instance of nerve as a student, when, pretextless and awestruck, I invited a lecturer from another faculty to lunch. Determined to "die in my footsteps", albeit, I anticipated, of temerity, I embarked upon the appointed hour, reciting the Bene Gesserit incantation against fear from Frank Herbert's 'Dune', because that's what I was reading at the time. One of the dudes in my block of flats jump-starts his day with REM's 'Walk Unafraid', and I sing along while mucking out yesterday's Jungle Oats pot. Sartre said of literature: "the end to which it offers itself is the reader's freedom". Everyone has something... or should. All of us lead lives in which Gandalf's advice to Theoden must be heeded: "To cast aside regret and fear. To do the deed at hand". The point is this - sometimes it matters what kinds of stories you've been told.

Its dignities notwithstanding, we are burdened with a culture that is recklessly superficial, mimicking TV soap operas more closely with each passing day. It is little wonder that most people can no longer tell the difference. One defense against this vacuously juggernauting

shallowness is the invitation to introspection, to emotional literacy. Stephanie Zacharek, writing for salon.com notes that such a possibility must arise from the conviction that if you give "audiences the greatest you have in you", that "they will respond". I would add that when a story offers this, then the most ardent of plot-loyal purists will overlook its deviations from the original. For the quirky loyalists to whom Tolkien gave metaphors that resonated, this was perhaps his greatest gift. In his best moments, Jackson's offerings were equal, and we acknowledge this. For me, however, the film's best and worst aspects do not sufficiently resolve themselves; there is no distillation of triumph and disappointment that sits easily. Furthermore, if you haven't read the book, then the film's failures and successes cannot even be separated. Jackson has gone on record as saying "that millions and millions of people should be exposed to the source, to this brilliant man and what he created". Correct.

Mark Mattson

The Cambridge Tolkien Society and Anor

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