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Abstract

Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle-earth. J. R. R. Tolkien. Ed. by Christopher Tolkien. Reviewed by Paul H. Kocher.

The Achievement of C.S. Lewis. Thomas Howard. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

The Silmarillion. J.R.R. Tolkien. Ed. by Christopher Tolkien. Reviewed by Thomas M. Egan.

Additional Keywords

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REVIEWS



UNFINISHED TALES

J. R. R. Tolkien, Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 474 pp. Index, Maps. \$15.

All of the fourteen fragmentary stories by Tolkien here published for the first time are connected in one way or another with his major histories of Middle-earth: The Silmarillion, Akallabêth and The Lord of the Rings. Each is accompanied by a long series of Notes, some by Tolkien himself but most by the editor, concerning its date of composition, similarities or dissimilarities to writings already published, relations to other unpublished texts, and whatever else seems needful for understanding it. The whole is prefaced by a substantial Introduction discussing in general terms the text of each fragment. Everyone approaching the book would do well to read the Introduction first.

Taken altogether, the volume is a highly complex and meticulously careful piece of work. Some readers will perhaps prefer to read and enjoy mainly the tales themselves, which contain some of Tolkien's best writing, with minimum attention to the editorial apparatus. Others, more curious to learn every possible detail about him, may wish to mine deeply in the editorial portions, where they will find much new ore.

The fourteen tales (a few of them more like essays) are grouped according to the Age of Middle-earth to which they pertain, Part I embracing the First Age, and so on up to Part IV, whose tales range over several Ages.

The only two tales under Part I concern Tuor and Turin, respectively. Both are much longer and more amply detailed here than in The Silmarillion. Thus in the latter work the whole tale 'Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin' consumes only 7 pages, whereas the fragment here titled 'Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin' takes twice that number of pages merely to bring Tuor through the seven gates of the Hidden City. There it stops abruptly. Nevertheless, in this fragment the idea that a special role awaits Tuor in the future is deeply stressed by repetition. In keeping with this idea Ulmo's summoning of Tuor out of Hithlum, his appearance to Tuor in the sea at Vinyamar, and his subsequent guidance of him--all receive more space and more vivid attention. The same is true of the landscape throughout, Tuor's talk with Voronwë and others, and their thoughts during the journey that follows. So the whole account, as far as it goes, is much superior to the brief sketch in The Silmarillion. The editor dates the latter as written in 1926-30, and the expanded

account here as composed in 1951 (p. 5). He mentions also "hasty jottings" by Tolkien which show how the unfinished tale was to continue (p. 56).

Similarly, the unfinished 'Narn I Hîn Húrin' (Tale of the Children of Húrin) concerning Túrin covers 89 pages here as against 28 pages for 'Túrin Turambar' in The Silmarillion. The editor does not date the 'Narn' but implies (p. 6) that it is in part a prose translation of the early and long alliterative verse poem in which Tolkien first couched the Túrin story (Carpenter, Tolkien, p. 167). The editor also indicates that "in preparing the text of The Silmarillion" he derived much of its central section from the unfinished 'Narn'--a revealing disclosure that The Silmarillion account itself results in some degree from his own editorial work. The present 'Narn', again so far as it goes, seems to me to give a much deeper insight into Túrin's pessimistic yet arrogant mind, especially his scorn of Ulmo and the other Valar, than we have had before (pp. 156, 161). The malicious blade Anglachel, however, does not appear in the 'Narn', thus diminishing its preternatural element.

Adding to The Silmarillion's barebone summary of events on Númenor, Part II of Unfinished Tales offers a variety of materials, three times as long, which breathe fresh life into our conception of the island and its people. Among them is a completely new map of the land. But why is this printed before the Introduction, a hundred pages away from a Description (p. 165) which amplifies the map by describing at some length its component regions and cities? The Description pictures also the birds, horses, varieties of trees of Númenor, especially its golden mallorns, and goes on to dwell upon the arts and crafts of its settlers--their metal work and their shipbuilding, which develops hand in hand with their bold sea-faring. Given prominence, too, is the worship of Eru on Meneltarma, where the king and his subjects offer prayers at three seasonal festivals each year, watched over by "Manwë's Witnesses," his Eagles.

But the chief treasure of Part II is a fragment, so highly developed (some 30 pages) that it seems well on the way to completion, called 'Aldarion and Erendis' and subtitled 'The Mariner's Wife'. So far as I am aware, this tale has been totally unknown to the public heretofore. It is essentially a domestic tragedy starting with a conflict between father and son which begets a love-hate relationship between the son and his wife after their marriage. In each case there is fault on both sides, and the play of emotions in each is acutely studied. The tragedy takes on political dimensions also because the father is Meneldur, the fifth King of Númenor; the son is his heir Aldarion, later to become sixth King, while his wife Erendis is destined to give birth to Ancalimë, the seventh ruler but the first Queen to ascend the throne.

All page references to The Silmarillion are to the Houghton Mifflin hardback edition (1977); to The Lord of the Rings, Houghton Mifflin 2nd edition, 3 vols. (1965).

The cause underlying Aldarion's quarrels with both his father and his wife is his "sea-longing," which is so intense that again and again it keeps him away from home on long voyages for many years at a time, always breaking his solemn promises to return sooner. Thus he neglects his duties as Heir to the kingdom and likewise the love of his wife, until she grows too old to bear him a son to succeed him as King. The tale breaks off suddenly, but from Tolkien's "notes and jottings" (p. 205) the editor pieces together the remainder, which seems to end in the suicide of Erendis. It is a pity that Tolkien, for whatever reason, failed to finish the tale, which gave promise of becoming one of his finest.

Also included in Part II is 'The History of Galadriel and Celeborn and of Amloth King of Lórien'. This is basically a long essay by the editor, although it includes some portions written by Tolkien himself. As the editor says at the outset, there are many "severe inconsistencies" between the numerous versions of this tale. They seem to cluster most thickly around such problems as the relations between Galadriel and Celeborn, their actions in the Second Age, the date and reason for the ban placed by the Valar on her return to Valinor, and even whether Amloth is her son. The result seems to be a pervading chaos.

Much of this confusion results, however, from the editor's giving, at crucial points, almost equal credence to all the competing versions of the unfinished tale. But in fact there is one completely self-consistent and credible account which deserves pride of place as the standard one. This runs throughout The Silmarillion in its published form, continues on into the Second Age references in Appendix B of The Lord of the Rings (III, 363), and culminates in the encounter of Galadriel and Celeborn in Lórien with Frodo and his Company as related in the text of The Lord of the Rings (I, 369-94). Moreover, much of what is said there is buttressed by Tolkien in The Road Goes Ever On (p. 60), published in 1967. As for the Amloth sonship, that is sufficiently disposed of by the fact that Celebrian is named both in the text of The Lord of the Rings (I, 391) and in Appendix B (III, 363, 368) as a child of Galadriel and Celeborn, whereas Amloth never is.

The five unfinished tales about the Third Age included under Part III are all, inevitably, connected in one way or another with The Lord of the Rings and were written while it was being composed and published in the years between 1937 and 1955. Although the editor is unable to date each tale precisely, he believes that most of them belong to the later years of this period.

'The Disaster of the Gladden Fields', alluded to only briefly in the Council of Elrond (The Lord of the Rings I, 257), here narrates vividly in some half dozen pages the details of the death of Isildur, his three sons, and his small guard by an ambush of ten times as many Orcs while he is returning to his North Kingdom with the One Ring. A striking feature is the bitter repentance of Isildur for ever having taken the King from Sauron's finger. Trying to escape by swimming the Anduin, he suddenly discovers that "by chance or chance well used" the Ring has slipped from his finger. Entangled in the weeds of the river's shallows, he is riddled by the arrows of Orcs on the bank. Long afterwards Aragorn as King discovers in Sauron's Orthanc the royal circlet worn by Isildur but no trace of his bones.

'Cirion and Eorl' develops in a score of pages the history of the Rohirrim before they attained that name. Originally they were merely Northmen belonging to the House of Hador who raised horses on the plains between Mirkwood and the River Run-

ning. They made common cause with Gondor against the Wainriders coming out of the east perennially to harass them both. This alliance brought them at length to the Field of Celebrant, to which Eorl the Young led 7000 of his armored horsemen on a great ride of 800 miles southward in nine days to aid the armies of Gondor desperately beset. So far the fragment is straightforward heroic history without pause for individual characterization. Then suddenly and impressively opens out a scene in which Cirion, twelfth Steward of Gondor, solemnly grants the territory of Rohan to Eorl and his tribe as a fief forever. The oaths between them are sworn, by the names of the Valar, on the mysterious Hill of Awe where a holy silence prevails. Gradually it is revealed that here is the grave of Elendil, whose body was brought to the spot in a casket by Isildur after Elendil's death in the Last Alliance. Isildur has counseled all future rulers of Gondor to keep the shrine secret and come there for inner counsel in time of need. Tolkien's evocation of the sense of holiness throughout these scenes is masterly.

Two of the other tales in Part III, 'The Quest of Erebor' and 'The Hunt for the Ring', purport to be told by Gandalf to Frodo and his friends in Minas Tirith after Aragorn's coronation. But both are without any dialogue between Gandalf and his listeners. 'The Quest' relates how Gandalf persuaded Thoren Oakenshield to take Bilbo with him to re-occupy Erebor and displace Smaug. Most of what he says is already familiar to readers of The Hobbit and Appendix A of The Lord of the Rings (III, 358-60). Likewise familiar is the gist of 'The Hunt for the Ring', which details the search of the Black Riders for the Ruling Ring, leading up to their descent upon the Shire. In both these fragments Tolkien has evidently been forging links and filling gaps with matter preceding The Lord of the Rings as we have it.

Last of the fragments in Part III is 'The Battles of the Fords of Isen', the river flowing south from Isengard to form the western boundary of Rohan. Ambitious to conquer that kingdom, Saruman has bred a large army of Orcs and has infiltrated Wormtongue into King Théoden's hall. His chief obstacle is the eastern eored of Rohan commanded by the King's able son Théodred as guards of the strategic Fords. Without warning Saruman's Orcs descend upon Théodred, kill him, and maul his Riders. A second battle is fought when Erkenbrand brings up reinforcements, but he too is beaten and forced to retreat toward Helm's Deep. At this desperate point Gandalf arrives in Rohan to reanimate the King's spirit, and Aragorn comes soon afterwards. The emergency at hand explains why both of them are received at first with so much hostility. An Appendix outlines the military organization of the Rohirrim and also probes the causes of the enmity of the Dunlendings to them. Here again Tolkien is preparing backgrounds for The Lord of the Rings.

'The Drúedain' (not Dúnedain) of Part IV is not truly a fragment but a description and short history of a type of men bearing that name. In it Tolkien's wizardry conjures up a whole new branch of the human race much unlike any other. The individual Drúg resembled a Hobbit in being only four feet high and rich in laughter, but unlike him was ugly, heavily built, squat, hairless, and subject to fits of red rage slow to cool. Moreover, the Drúedain as a people loved solitude in the woods and lived there in the First Age rather alongside the Folk of Haleth than in any intimacy with them. In all woodcraft they were supreme, and later delighted in carving wooden figures of men and beasts, the Púkel-men of Dunharrow being their work. Among their strange faculties were a capacity for utter silence over many days on end and, especially, a foresight into the future which caused them either not to go to

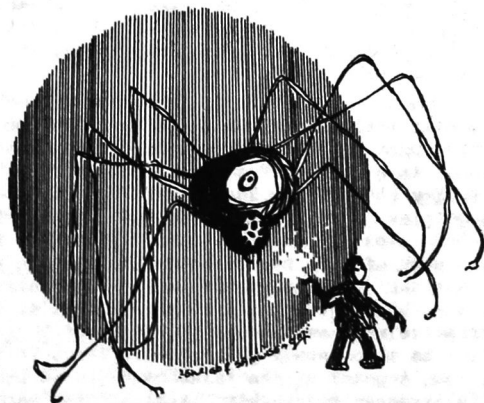
Númenor at all in the Second Age or to leave it before its drowning. In the Third Age they dwell in Drúadan Forest on the road between Rohan and Gondor, where their chieftain Ghân-buri-Ghân guided the host of Théoden around an ambush of Orcs during their ride to Minas Tirith (The Lord of the Rings III, 105-07). For this deed King Aragorn later granted his people permanent ownership of the Forest. Especially memorable in the section on the Drúedain is an anecdote, 'The Faithful Stone', which the Haladin loved to tell about their magical powers.

Part IV also provides an essay on the Istari which Tolkien wrote in 1954 while The Lord of the Rings was in process of publication and intended as part of the Index, but it was omitted as too long. It relates the sending of five of the Maiar by the Valar in the Second Age to help those resisting Sauron. A novel motive assigned for this act is the desire of the Valar to make amends for their own "errors" in revealing their true forms to the Elves (p. 389). Besides the three familiar to readers of The Lord of the Rings, the Wizards included two "Blue Wizards" named Alatar and Pallendo who went into the East with Saruman to some unknown fate. Of them all only Gandalf remained faithful to his mission. Radagast became too fond of birds and beasts and neglected Men and Elves. From what the editor calls Tolkien's "rapid jottings, often illegible" we learn (pp. 393-94) that Saruman was chosen by Aulë, Radagast by Yavanna, both Blue Wizards by Oromë, and Gandalf by Manwë. This allocation helps to explain their natures. Also Gandalf is confirmed to have been Olórin, who was described in The Silmarillion (p. 30) as "wisest of the Maiar." The travels and works of Gandalf and Saruman are traced in the essay's closing pages. Following this essay is another on 'The Palantiri which affords little new information about these "seeing stones" made by Eänanor.

Apart from the unfinished tales and essays themselves, the editor supplies a revised Map of Middle-earth which adds to previous maps all the places referred to in this book for the first time. The Index is likewise enlarged to list persons and places never before listed.

Finally, it is worth noting that only prose works are published here. The editor has chosen not to include, for example, the long verse fragments of 'The Gest of Beren and Lúthien' and the alliterative 'Children of Húrin' praised by Humphry Carpenter in his biography. The present book being quite long and complex enough as it is, the decision to omit them no doubt was unavoidable. But we may hope that such verse pieces will appear in a future volume, though this is asking much of an editor who has already labored so long and with such care, to the benefit of all readers of J. K. R. Tolkien.

Paul H. Kocher



THOMAS THE TIGER READS LEWIS THE LION

Thomas Howard, The Achievement of C.S. Lewis (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1980) 195 pp.

Over a period of about a decade, Thomas Howard has shaken the Evangelical world with a series of provocative books on the Christian life, of which Christ the Tiger is perhaps the best known in those circles. With a beautiful humility this brilliant and flamboyant writer has turned his talents to a reading of C.S. Lewis's fantasies. Perhaps one needs to know the books well to appreciate Howard's achievement fully: I suspect the more deeply baptized in Lewis the reader, the more humbling the experience of encountering this book. It permits one to see these masterpieces all over again, as one did once in the beginning. It astounds one almost as much as Lewis's own books do, and in almost the same way.

I cannot say what it would be like to read Howard's study without familiarity with Lewis, but he seems to write with the assumption that his readers will certainly have read the Narnian Chronicles, may have read the interplanetary trilogy, and very likely will not have read Till We Have Faces, judging from the amount of time he gives to the various plots. I took this book on a retreat, and it was like having the company of an angel, throwing light continually over my shoulder, refreshing and renewing my appreciation and apprehension, not of Lewis, but of the world Lewis reveals (which is the world one goes on retreat to enter, and for that matter, the world we all live in, could we but see it). Impossible not to give a personal response; false humility not to wax autobiographical! "Where were you when you first read Howard's The Achievement of C.S. Lewis?"

The meaning of the title is a tour de force in itself: achievement means "a thing achieved . . . by skill, work, courage." Exactly. This is what Lewis has done in his eleven great works of fantasy. They resonate with skill, whether they are fairy tales, scientific fiction, or retelling of myth. They reflect a life's work of reading, a diligent, continual, extraordinarily profound life of labour; and they gleam, they radiate with courage, with a daring like that of a man who flies into the sun, or looks bare-faced into the face of God. It is Howard's achievement to make Lewis's achievement clear to us.

The subtitle, "A Reading of His Fiction," reveals something too. Lewis wrote a delightful little volume, An Experiment in Criticism, which might have served as a primer for Howard. Lewis tries to find out what a "good reader" is. He remarks, "we invariably judge a critic by the extent to which he illuminates reading we have already done." (p. 122) Lewis is not very kind to critics in his book. But Howard is not writing as a critic, a literary critic. He writes as a reader, and he is a very good reader indeed. He wants to tell us not only what Lewis's world is like. He wants to tell us that the world, our world, is like the ones that Lewis shows us. He brings us the very good news that the Good News Lewis brings is true!

Finally, there is one special delight in this book: here at last is a reader who loves That Hideous Strength as fully and properly as it ought to be loved. It is a work which surpasses Orwell and Huxley. Its very power derives from what its detractors like least: its marriage of myth and modern life. The unabashed juxtaposition

of sublimity with malignity wearing modern clothes --not at all outdated thirty-five years after it was published--makes this book the masterpiece Howard shows it to be. For a book about hell on earth, it is smashingly joyous, sensorially paradisaical. It shows us the breakthrough into our dim, fly-specked, bloodstained, cramped, nail-studded world, of absolute salvational resurrection. And that includes the resurrection of the body, its sensuality, sexuality, and all.

There is a moment in which one contemplates the reading, yet again, of a beloved book. In that moment one experiences the stab of remembered joy, as Lewis did in his childhood, the mere memory of joy providing a new occasion for joy. Perhaps no other author on Lewis comes so close to striking that spark from one's flinty soul as Howard is able to do. Even so, one need not, as Peter J. Kreeft does in introducing Howard's book, diminish other writers on Lewis in order to praise this one. I cannot agree with Kreeft that we ought to "throw them away." I cannot recall ever reading any book about Lewis that was "leaden-footed or platitudinous." Where are these dull books? There is plenty of room on the Lewis shelf not only for his numerous books but for the numerous commentaries on them. Even so, Howard's book is likely to be one of those most often re-read.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

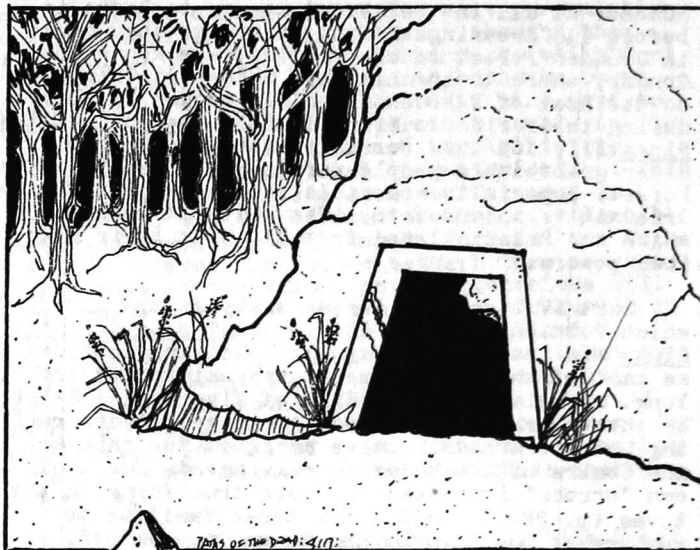
THE SILMARILLION

THE SILMARILLION by J.R.R. Tolkien. Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1977. \$10.95. 365 pp. (Ballantine Paper, 1979, 458 p. \$2.95) Dust jacket ill. by J.R.R. Tolkien.

From Tolkien's mind we generally see a small jewel of love-of-adventure, as well as humor and impish joy. The other side of his thought is characterized by the dark shadows of life which threaten to overwhelm all that exists. This latter is The Silmarillion's basic theme.

There is much of sorrow and bitterness here. There is also love and respect for the wonders of Creation. It is a strange work though and highly controversial among Tolkien fans and critics already. There will be disappointment for many who are expecting another great fictional masterpiece on the order of The Hobbit or LOTR. This work is awkward to read with its variations in style and confusing mass of material on "The First Age" and "The Second Age". Sometimes there seems too much material of names and places to absorb; at other times precious bits of information seem too small, morsels, when we were expecting huge "gobs" for our curiosity to be satisfied, literally for years. The forty-odd pages of the Index of Names with their cogent descriptions of the persons and things involved is a Godsend indeed. The two maps on the most ancient age of Middle-earth and the five genealogical tables on the great elf and human families of this primaeval era (and of course the tidbits on the linguistic creation of Tolkien) all are most welcome to amateur and scholar alike. Yet withall, there is an element of confusion, of vagueness, that can be disappointing after one has read and pondered over the other works of Tolkien.

Christopher Tolkien in his Foreword acknowledges this confusion and traces it to the fact that his father was continuously revising and adding to, and then deleting, material to The Silmarillion since 1917 (although there was a fairly complete draft by 1927!). Its very nature would make it a tremendous challenge. Great themes on the Creation of the Universe would have to sit side by side with the romance and tragedy of individual lives (especially the key piece in Chapter 19 of "The History of the Silmarils" wherein we find the haunting tale of the doomed lovers Beren and Luthien). It's a great "notebook" for Tolkien -- containing themes and characters (Elrond and Galadriel appear here for the first time) and especially background-origins which he would use and re-use in LOTR, The Hobbit and even some of his smaller



and "lesser" works. It has much of his reflective wisdom and philosophy and myth-making ability, although due to the vast time-period he is covering (many millenia, perhaps even aeons of years -- it's all in the guessing!) he cannot indulge in the elaborate character-development of LOTR. There really is no central character or single theme here. It's the origin of a world and of how Evil can develop in even the best things. There is no despair here, but the mood is one mixed with awe for the wonder of "things" (big and small alike, Tolkien touches on everything) and a brooding sorrow for the ingrained selfishness and acquisitive instinct of all intelligent beings.

Tolkien recognized this element of confusion in this last of his writings (and one in which he felt was perhaps the most important), and considered it inevitable and not at all a disaster. The origin of a world (even an imaginary one like Arda and Middle-earth!) has to have elements of vagueness and legends about it. It shouldn't be as coherent as a modern work of history (like LOTR?); the human (and otherwise) imagination should be left to wander and wonder-- and then reflect. There is a mediaeval flavor here mixed with the Biblical Old Testament tone of language. Its charm and attraction will grow with the reading and re-reading, especially if one can imagine the sources of alleged oral tales of ancient memory (as so many medieval documents say, "beyond the memory of man", and remember nearly all forms of folklore and myth are based on unverified oral tradition), and a variety of lost written records in prose and verse (the tradition of skalds and minstrels and bards was something Tolkien knew well in his mediaeval studies). Christopher Tolkien sums this up by noting that his father "came to conceive The Silmarillion as a compilation...made long afterwards from sources of great diversity...that had survived in a long tradition; and this conception has indeed its parallel in the actual history of the book, for a great deal of earlier prose and poetry does underlie it, and it is to some extent a compendium in fact and not only in theory." (page 8)

So we must leave still in mystery the origin of the Periannath (the Hobbit folk), the Istari (the wizard-beings like Gandalf), and even the delightful Tom Bombadil who gave such good aid to the Ring Fellowship in the end of the Third Age. What are we left with?

An incredibly rich work, tantalizing us for more of the details Christopher Tolkien has felt must be excised for this edition. It stretches from the Creation of Ea (the universe) by Eru (the Divine Reality of "The One"; called by the Elvish peoples Iluvatar, and modeled on the Christian concept of God -- but personified in Old Testament style) in a very short work of some ten pages called Ainulindale ("The Music of the Ainur") to the passing of the Ringbearers at the end of the Third Age. The latter is summed up in a short descriptive work called "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age", less than twenty pages long. There is too the Valaquenta, or "Account of the Valar" wherein we see briefly but beautifully described (again, less than ten pages!) the

mysterious angelic beings called the Valar or "Powers of Arda" and their helpmates -- also spiritual beings -- called the Maiar. They have the task of shaping and ordering the developing physical world of Earth and its environs (Middle-earth is of course the central land mass of Arda or Earth and is surrounded by the primal waters with only the mysterious island of Aman the Blessed mentioned as the only other land of note.). But of course there is the Atlantis legend later which Tolkien utilizes in his short (how short, alas!) two-dozen page narrative Akallabeth, or "The Downfall of Numenor".

The latter tale of the rise and fall of the great human kingdom (the greatest mankind will ever see!) is a drama which begs for a greater length and development. It cannot be. Ar-Pharazon the Golden, the last King of Numenor, can conquer Sauron the Evil but he cannot conquer his own pride. This is indeed the most terrible tale Tolkien can tell -- even in so succinct a way. His prose mastery is superb even in the shortest of works as the description of the Great Flood which Eru sends to destroy Numenor shows:

Then suddenly fire burst from the Meneltarma, and there came a mighty wind and a tumult of the earth, and the sky reeled, and the hills slid, and Numenor went down into the sea, with all its children and its wives and its maidens and its ladies proud; and all its gardens and its halls and its towers, its tombs and its riches, and its jewels and its webs and its things painted and carved, and its laughter and its mirth and its music, its wisdom and its lore: they vanished for ever. And last of all the mounting wave, green and cold and plumed with foam, climbing over the land, took to its bosom Tar-Miriel the Queen, fairer than silver or ivory or pearls. Too late she strove to ascend the steep ways of the Meneltarma to the holy place; for the waters overtook her, and her cry was lost in the roaring of the wind. (p. 279)

Apocalypse and sorrow pervade this work and it is due to Tolkien's craftsmanship with words that we never weary of the soaring horror of the destruction. In this the very jarring effect of different tales and even styles helps us.

Of course the heart of his work is the more than two-hundred page Quenta Silmarillion itself, "The History of the Silmarils". Here indeed is the quintessential drama and conflict of The First Age. The earlier sources have shown us the plan of harmony and order designed by Eru for the world of Being. But the will to dominate always appears in his creatures. Tolkien is always careful to stress the innate dignity of all things in Creation, animate and inanimate alike. Even Melkor/Morgoth, the first Dark Lord, had this innate dignity of Free-Will. Pride and self-assertion twist themselves into perverting all beings that are foolish enough to consent to their own perversion. Thus arises the "Bent World", from spiritual beings like Melkor and Sauron (originally Ainur or "Holy Ones") to elf-folk like Feanor (the creator of the Silmarils or Jewels-of-Power from the light-primordial of the two Trees of Valinor) to monsters like Carchareth and Werewolf and Glaurung the Dragon, and finally down to the foolish struttings of poor human kind. If it's any comfort here, Tolkien makes his sources all spring from Elfin records and the Elves (the 'First-born' of Eru; mankind is on a lesser level as 'The Followers' -- we lack the gift of near-physical immortality the Elves have) have really the center-stage if anyone does.

The battles and deeds of glory (and shame) are here aplenty. Tolkien does not preach. He likes a good tale of deeds of valor and marvel as the storytellers of old did. He knows the folklore and myths of ancient/mediaeval Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon culture and certainly weaves them in without being obvious. His Mythos reflect many themes and ideas from Classical tales of Greece and Rome while retaining a Hebraic moral flavor. Indeed, the assumptions through all his works here show the influence and ideas of the Natural Law philosophy and theology of Mediaeval Catholicism. (Vatican II seems to have weakened these unfortunately in too many ways!) Thus he upholds the concept of "Free Will" side by side with the belief that all things, good and ill alike, are interwoven in a grand design we may call Providence. Pure chaos -- even in Evil -- cannot exist.

Individual stories are introduced both to give relief from the prose descriptions of grand and terrible cosmic events (especially Morgoth's several wars against the Valar and Elfin folk) and to illustrate Tolkien's belief in the worth and ultimate importance of the individual being. Thus we get the horrible tragedy of Turin Turambar, a human warrior with a shade too much arrogance for all his basic decency. Like a Greek play of old, we see him fall down into murder and incest and finally, the despair of suicide. Tolkien's prose isn't gory in its detail but even its majestic leisurely cadence can portray the waste and horror involved all too adequately. Dialogue is infrequently used but when it is, it is effective. Chapter 19 on the beautiful tale of suffering and final (metaphysical?) triumph of Beren and Luthien shows this quite well. All the bitterness involved when two different cultures and peoples come to touch their differences are seen in the dialogue of the Elf-King Thingol with the human hero Beren who for love of the beautiful royal daughter Luthien will undergo incredible suffering and even death to best Morgoth and steal a Silmaril jewel from his Iron Crown.

What a world this is! From the Edenic paradise of Valinor and "The Lands of the Blessed" (perhaps St. Brendan's Isle of legend?) to the Cold Waste of Angband where Morgoth the Dark Enemy rules to great realms of Beleriand, Numenor and Gondor and the kingdoms of the Noldor (all those elfin peoples with their intricate family lines!) And of course the rise of Sauron after the defeat of Morgoth by the Valar and his final exile into the Ultimate Abyss of eternal suffering. Here we find the origin of the Orcs, the Balrogs, and the infinite variety of monsters we meet in LOTR -- each with their own definite and unique "style" of horror. Glaurung speaks with the irony proper to the evil craft of the Father of all Dragons. Ungoliant the great Spider-beast walks the earth to challenge all for mastery. And under the earth? Dante's Inferno would be graced by such as these!

It's not as easy to read as The Lord of the Rings perhaps, but its fascination is even greater. The countless battles and deeds of dark reknown involving the Eldar and Edain mirror a world where values of absolute right and wrong work and count in reality. Beauty and terror seem partners here -- but not ultimate despair. It's the kind of book that will annoy a great many, but send them back again and again. Tolkien's Middle-earth is a hard but worthy world for our imagination to plumb. It's worth the search. Let us hope to be worthy for the work.

Thomas M. Egan

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award

Due to expressed interest from some members, the Society will reinstate The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, dependent on member support and participation.

To nominate a work for the 1981 M.F.A. one must be a current Society member. To qualify, the work must have been published in America for the first time during 1980. Works published in other countries previously may qualify if they were published for the first time in America in 1980. Each member may nominate up to five works. The five works receiving the most nominations will be announced in the April issues of Mythlore and Mythprint. Votes must be postmarked by July 20, 1981. Those members who have not voted by mail may do so at the Mythopoeic Conference in August. The work receiving the most votes, providing the total number of votes cast is more than 10% of the current Society membership, shall be announced at the Conference. If there are not a sufficient number of votes, no award will be given.

The Council of Stewards shall choose the recipient of The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for a work which in their judgment is an important nonfiction scholarly work on Tolkien, Lewis, and/or Williams published within the three years preceding the year of the award. Member suggestions for this award are solicited.

Nominations for the M.F.A. and suggestions for the M.S.A. should be sent as soon as possible to the Recording Secretary: George Colvin, 3500 Lou Ella Lane, Riverside, CA. 92507.