ARCADIA

In Memory of
Father Ian Boyd
C.S.B.

The journal of the
Catholic Studies Program
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E D I T O R I A L B O A R D

Volume XIV- August 2024

ARCADIA

A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

Arcadia - A Student Journal for Faith and Culture offers a vehicle by which University Undergraduates can contribute to the ongoing "dialogue between the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and all areas of contemporary culture." Special issues showcase the fruits of the Catholic Studies Program's many initiatives. *Arcadia* is published annually at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

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Father Ian Boyd, C.S.B.
January 23, 1935–January 10, 2024

> 'Human life has all the characteristics of a story. We are characters in a story told by God. Like a novel, it has an ordered plot, meaning everything in our lives is significant and providential.' --Ian Boyd, C.S.B.

Father Ian Boyd, a priest of the Congregation of Saint Basil and an internationally recognized Chesterton scholar, died in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, on January 10, 2024. He was the author of *The Novels of G. K. Chesterton* (London 1975). For many years, he was a Professor of English at St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan. From 1999–2020, he taught at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

He received a B.A. from the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada (1956), an S.T.B. degree from the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, Canada (1964); an M.A. from the University of Toronto, Canada (1965); and a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland (1970).

As a young child, he became acquainted with the works of G. K. Chesterton when reading his father's copy of *G. K.'s Weekly*. Chesterton was present at every stage of his life, and for the last 50 years, he devoted his work to writing and lecturing about the life, thoughts, and body of work of G. K. Chesterton. In 1974, while at St. Thomas More College and after attending the Centenary Conference of the Birth of G. K. Chesterton, he founded the G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture and its widely recognized journal, *The Chesterton Review*.

In 1999, at the invitation of Monsignor Robert Sheeran—then President of Seton Hall University—Father Boyd brought both the Institute and the journal to Seton Hall in South

Orange, New Jersey, where they are permanently housed in the Center for Catholic Studies. From 1999 to 2018, Father Boyd taught various courses, including Sacramental Writers: Chesterton, Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis, among others. At the invitation of universities, study centers, and various organizations, Father Boyd traveled all over the world sharing his knowledge of Chesterton and his circle and his scholarly work, inspiring a new generation of Chestertonians. He lectured across the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, Australia, and Japan.

In addition to lecturing about G. K. Chesterton, Maurice Baring, Paul Claudel, Charles Péguy, Hilaire Belloc, and others, he also lectured on the subject of "Sacramental Themes in Modern Literature." Among the Christian authors whose work he discussed are T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, C.S. Lewis, Flannery O'Connor, Piers Paul Read, Muriel Spark, and Evelyn Waugh. In 19th-century literature, he was also interested in the work of such authors as Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

In 2019, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Institute at Seton Hall University and the 45th anniversary of its foundation, a permanent plaque and exhibit was installed at Seton Hall University's Walsh Library.

After 47 years as President of the Institute and Editor of the Review, Father Boyd retired in 2020. He was named President Emeritus of the G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture and founding editor of *The Chesterton Review*.

In 2022, the G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture produced "A Chestertonian Conversation with Father Ian Boyd," a 27-minute documentary screened online on December 13, 2022.

Father Boyd's Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Saturday, January 20th, at St. Andrew's Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Archbishop Richard William Smith presided. Glenn McDonald, C.S.B., preached. Kevin Storey, C.S.B., the

Basilian Superior General led the Final Commendation. Interment was at Holy Cross Cemetery, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The year 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of both the G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture and *The Chesterton Review*. We invite you to visit our 50th-anniversary page, where you can learn more about our work during our first 50 years: https://www.shu.edu/chesterton/anniversary.html.

To learn more about the life and work of Father Ian Boyd and to view the documentary, we invite you to visit our In Memoriam page: https://www.shu.edu/chesterton/in-memoriam-of-our-founder-father-ian-boyd.html

A Remembrance: On Father Boyd's Shoulders, We Stand as We Continue his Legacy

Twenty years ago, I was working in financial services in New York, and after a visit to Seton Hall, I mentioned that it would be wonderful to work in a place devoted to learning in a Catholic environment. My then 13 year-old son simply remarked: "Well, just get a job at Seton Hall." He made it sound so easy! So, we looked at all the positions open, and the one that I felt would be of interest to me was the one at the G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture.

I knew who Chesterton was. I had read some of his writings, and the posting seemed intriguing. So, I applied in early June … the only thing was that the posting had already been open for a few months. (I thought it had not been taken down or that it was a position that was difficult to fill.) I did not hear anything at all until September when I received a call from the University asking for a time to meet.

By then, I had almost forgotten about the application—but I gladly scheduled the interview. What was there to lose, I thought … nothing! However, I did not know then that there would be everything to gain.

I had a lovely meeting with Father Boyd and a couple of other people before I left. When my husband asked, "How did it go?" I replied, "I hope it went well, but frankly, I have no idea!" However, they were all very nice. Father Boyd was wonderful. He gave me a few Chesterton Reviews, and if it does not work out, I will read more Chesterton."

Two or three weeks went by, and I did not hear anything until mid-October when Father Boyd called me directly to offer me the position. I immediately said, "Yes!" And I started two-weeks later. I had the great privilege and honor of working very closely with Father Boyd for just about twenty years—

knowing him, without a doubt, made an impact on my life. He was a great presence, not only physically at 6'4" but more importantly spiritually. His respect and regard for others, for fairness, for compassion; his great intelligence and intellect, his sense of humor and deep faith in God, in Our Lady, and the certainty that everything would be OK. It has changed my life and that of my family.

Father Boyd devoted his professional life to studying and promoting G. K. Chesterton—the work of a lifetime. For our Chesterton work, we traveled around Europe and South America as well as many other places. He was always received with joy and admiration—sometimes, there would be a "welcoming committee" with a sign at a train station in Italy or an airport in Argentina. Father Boyd was Chesterton's modern Father Brown—a great presence all over the world.

He received invitations to lecture from all over the world; he encouraged and inspired younger generations all over the world to read, study and live the Chestertonian way. He was the key for the Chesterton revival—for people everywhere to discover and/or rediscover Chesterton. The work of his Chesterton Institute and *The Chesterton Review* were a great source of pride—and we are committed to continuing this work, as we stand on Father Boyd's shoulders.

I always felt that Father Boyd had an angel on his shoulder looking after him. Regardless of the difficulties that he encountered due to his health, he always managed to bounce back. I used to tell him that to me he was the "bionic man"—as he bounced back every time, with energy and enthusiasm. Although we know how fragile his health was, there was always the hope of him getting better. But knowing him, I know that he is now resting in peace, under the veil and protection of Our Lady and from there his spirit will guide us to continue his legacy for many years to come, as we now celebrate the 50th anniversary of the work he began.

On a personal level, I will always miss his nurturing nature, his great sense of humor—he always had great stories to share, his reciting poetry (which was amazing), his presence, and the feeling that it was all going to be OK. Oh! And our shared birthday celebration dinner every January 23!

I will be forever grateful for his mentoring, guidance, friendship, and the trust he deposited in me when he appointed me to be the Director of the Chesterton Institute. I will always remember and treasure every Chestertonian adventure with Father Boyd—adventures that always made a mark and changed people's lives. He was respected, admired, and beloved by everyone he met.

I have just returned from a Chesterton Conference where people of all ages, backgrounds and places approached me to share a memory of Father Boyd, and how he inspired them to get to know and study Chesterton and his generosity in sharing his knowledge and giving guidance.

Seton Hall University, the Chesterton Institute, and the Chesterton community around the world very much miss the presence of a holy man.

Chesterton wrote that "joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian," and the very last sentence of the book reads: "There was someone thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth, and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth."

Father Boyd walked our earth with deep faith, joy, and mirth. I shall strive to do the same.

Gloria Garafulich-Grabois
Director, G. K. Chesterton Institute for
Faith & Culture
Managing Editor, *The Chesterton Review*
& *The Lonergan Review*

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Unity and the Margins

The 2024 Catholic Studies Program essay contest invited the students of New Jersey's high schools to reflect on a challenge and an opportunity for Christians today: accompanying those on the margins as a way to give living witness to the Gospels.

In October of 2023, the Synod of Bishops considered "the question of whether there are limits to our willingness to welcome people and groups, how to engage in dialogue with cultures and religions without compromising our identity, and our determination to be the voice of those on the margins and reaffirm that no one should be left behind." This question was intended to lead to productive paths forward as the Church seeks to support all the baptized in authentically sharing the Gospel.

At the conclusion of their session, the bishops published a letter summarizing their causes in the hope that the missionary role of the Church will continue to be fulfilled by the faithful from all walks of life. In their letter, the bishops emphasized that everyone can make a valuable contribution to sharing the Christian message and promoting human dignity.

Significantly, they noted that those in leadership roles in the Church must "listen to those who have been denied the right to speak in society or who feel excluded." They asserted that the young, the old, indigenous peoples, victims of abuse, and members of other marginalized groups all have unique and crucial gifts to share as we seek to live in a spirit of communion and with the purpose of a common mission.

Reflecting on Pope Francis's emphasis on the importance of accompanying the marginalized and on his teachings on compassion, empathy, and social justice, which are rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus as witnessed in the Gospels, students submitted essays considering how we collectively

and they personally can heed the Synod's call to greater

communion and unity through accompanying the marginalized. The winning essays not only show great insight but also give readers glimpses into the lives of local New Jersey high schoolers, who are full of faith and hope.

2024 Essay Contest Winners

First Place: Joseph Dachnowicz – Ridge High School
Runner-up: Nesa Shamdasani – Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child

Accompanying Those on the Margins: A Challenge and an Opportunity

Joseph Dachnowicz

"Strive to be more like Christ"—the theme of my church's Youth Ministry puzzled me. Should I imitate Jesus's humility? meekness? selflessness? As we delved into the Gospels, I realized there's much more to Jesus's story than docility. To the dismay of the Pharisees, he befriended lepers, Samaritans, and sinners. To be like Christ, we must be empathetic missionaries; we must be globalists, understanding that the people who attend Mass do not entirely represent the Catholic Church, and we must be activists, reaching out to "accompany" those who have been forgotten, isolated, and marginalized.

Exactly how does a 17 year-old "accompany" those on the margins? Pope Francis put it best by urging each of us to develop compassion, a quality that moves empathy into the action zone. Calling compassion "the language of God," he contrasts it with "the language of man"—indifference.

I began to reflect on my own service—I had prepared meals for the homeless, and I served as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, trying to lead a Catholic life, but had I really accompanied the marginalized on their journey? Hardly! Determined to understand those different from me, I volunteered with Unified Sports to coach basketball for special needs children. Each Sunday after church, I discovered how much these children, whom Pope Francis calls "the treasure of the Church," had to offer. How much richer would our Church be if the faithful truly embraced these treasures, if we ourselves were all unified, under God.

Last year an opportunity arose to "accompany" a distraught freshman. The boy's dad had passed away suddenly, leaving just his mom and him. The town initially rallied around them, but indifference soon set in. Some months later, I found him,

alone in the halls. I asked him to join me on the track team; he agreed. Over the next months, I watched him blossom. When the hurdle squad suddenly lost a runner, "my freshman" stepped up. Together, we won and shattered the school record. It was a monumental high for the boy, and I felt as if I'd literally accompanied a forgotten soul. Fast forward to a few months later; life played out differently. My young friend had begun to use alcohol and got into trouble one night. I found myself getting angry, thinking about all I had done for him. Then I began to realize I was making the situation all about me, not him. I have a wonderful dad; this boy's dad was snatched from him. I thought of Pope Francis's observation, "We're not called to serve merely in order to receive a reward, but rather to imitate God." My friend was coping with his pain in a destructive way; my duty was to listen, share his pain and extend my hand. In my car, he broke down, crying that everyone, including God, had left him. We talked for a long time and made a pact that this would be the final night like this. I check in every week, and he has thrived since then. What I did was not extraordinary, an act that many others could do as long as they don't succumb to the prevailing indifference defense: "It's not my problem."

These experiences were little epiphanies for me, motivating me to find new ways to help the vulnerable, especially families fractured by death. I saved money from my job, and I have been investing it diligently. I decided to use my investments for a greater purpose and give money back to those in need by establishing the CURA (Latin for "concern for others") Fund. The most recent recipient, a young widow raising a family on her own, cried, praising God, when she received the surprise check. We never know how much others need our help. It is our duty to help another with no hope of a reward, because that's what Jesus would do.

My journey to be more like Christ has been a meandering one, marked by many lessons. Just as each experience has enriched my life, many other young people would gain immensely from similar experiences if the Church gave a

greater focus to compassion. Perhaps, a "Good Samaritan" week, akin to the Responsibility Week held in schools, would spur an outpouring of compassion for the marginalized. In that way, we'd be fulfilling Pope Francis's message to university students: "This old man now speaking to you also dreams that yours will become a generation of teachers!

Teachers of humanity. Teachers of compassion…. Teachers of hope." Onward, to meeting the challenge!

Accompanying the Marginalized: A Bridge to Build Community

Nesa Shamdasani

Every morning, we have the privilege of engaging in a daily routine that includes brushing our teeth, showering, and accessing clean water from the comfort of our homes. However, these seemingly simple tasks are considered luxuries to many around the world. The pursuit of universal health and hygiene is a cause I am deeply committed to.

My journey began during my freshman year of high school, when I regularly commuted through an underprivileged area. Waiting for my second train every morning at Newark, I witnessed people struggling to access these fundamental necessities. During my junior year, I participated in a social innovator program my school was offering in relation to the University of Pennsylvania. Through this program, I began to research the issue of health and hygiene, reaching out to organizations and the communities in the area I once referred to as my "transfer station." Connecting with individuals on a deeper level, I took a stance on this issue and founded my own charitable organization: URights.

Through URights, I connected communities with health and hygiene products distributed at local churches and organizations. This helped establish my belief that access to these products should be a universal right.

Over the past four years, my academic journey has been at an all-girls, Catholic, private institution. Even though I'm a Hindu, I actively participate in campus ministry, offering a new perspective to the faith life in the Oak Knoll community. Concurrently, every Saturday, I delve into my roots at Vivekananda Vidyapith, an Academy for Indian Philosophy and Culture. This institution, which I have been a part of since kindergarten, is a space where I reconnect with the traditions, celebrations, and values of my Indian heritage.

Since I was a little girl, I have always pondered my dual identity. The hyphen in "Hindu-American" suggests a fusion of two distinct cultures, yet they initially felt in stark contrast with one another.

In my initial two years at Oak Knoll, I felt disconnected from the predominantly Christian community, characterized by prayer at assemblies, teammates praying before sports games, and theology classes—activities unfamiliar to me. During that period, I intentionally distanced myself from the Christian identity to uphold my own Hindu faith.

Breaking into the barriers of "Hindu-American" junior year, I had hit upon a crucial moment. I found my mind drifting to the numerous gatherings at the Hindu temple with my family. Although the surroundings differed—the symbols, rituals, and architecture—the underlying essence is eerily similar. Regardless of the medium of our spiritual expression, there's a commonality that binds us all. This was the moment I started to embrace the duality in my life and began participating in Masses and prayer services.

In theology classes at school, I find myself discussing my Hindu faith and conversely, sharing Christian values at Vivekananda Vidyapith. These cultures, seeming distinct at first glance, have seamlessly become intertwined in my life. It has allowed me to bring traditions like an interfaith prayer service—where many religions come together to share and reflect during the Thanksgiving holiday—to my Oak Knoll community.

The Catholic community I have been a part of for these past four years, along with my Hindu values, has been the guiding light in my life, helping me to consistently put into perspective the idea of "service for others." Learning and sharing from both faiths has allowed me to look at every situation in life through more than just one lens. Today, I am grateful to wear the hyphen in my identity with pride. It stands not as a divider, but as a bridge connecting two

worlds of understanding.

As I continue my academic journey in college, I want to dive into the issue of health and hygiene on a larger scale.

Conducting comprehensive research on community health and the impact of society will guide me through exploring potential global solutions to this critical problem. I strive to gain more practical experiences in community struggles and look to collaborate with organizations dedicated to addressing these issues. I aspire to use my education to bridge communities, just as I was able to find a bridge in my own identity.

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A Collection of Seton Hall Student Essays: Exploring Religion Through Fantasy Literature

At Seton Hall University, all Core Signature III/Engaging the World courses invite students to address questions of meaning—questions about the significance of human life—questions that are central to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, exploring them in a discipline. The course Engaging the World: Religion and Fantasy—Lewis, Tolkien, and their Precursors, taught by Nancy Enright, Ph.D., Professor of English and Director of the University Core, gives students opportunities to examine these important questions in connection with the study of literature, specifically the fantasy literature of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and some of those many texts which may have been or definitely were an influence upon them. In each of the texts explored in the course, religious ideas are not only present in but central to the text.

The students examine biblical and theological ideas present in each text, especially in light of Tolkien's definitive essay "On Fairy Stories," in which he asserts that all "true fairy stories" reflect the Christian Gospel, what he calls the "evangelium," in their depiction of *eucatastrophe*, a term he coins for the "good catastrophe" that involves a turnaround from almost complete loss to a miraculous and unexpected redemption. Christ's death and subsequent resurrection are, according to Tolkien, the prototype for all stories of eucatastrophe.

This collection of essays by students who have taken this course in recent semesters clearly shows the conversations into which writers of fantasy literature invite readers, even generations—and centuries—later. Our students' literary analysis, undergirded by their experiences of faith, show the perennial significance of this classic literature, as it supports and inspires the search for deep meaning, generation after generation.

"Heaven and Earth Are Full of His Glory": Why Christians Believe in God

Amanda Grace

From stories about Arthurian knights to fictional mighty lions, the Christian faith makes an appearance in numerous literary masterpieces. As one of the most known religions of the world, many people hear "Christianity" and recognize the word, but fewer know what it means to be a follower of Christ. With nations ridden with war and hate, many people wonder why Christianity is so profound and if the religion truly provides people with an outlet of hope. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* translated by J. R. R Tolkien and The Voyage of *The Dawn Treader* written by C. S. Lewis, both Sir Gawain and Lucy express their faith in a Christ figure throughout their journeys. The two characters provide insight to readers as to why they believe in their designated symbolic or literal Christian God. Following their example, Christians believe in Jesus because He watches over and cares for humans not only on earth, but also in heaven. In other words, He answers human cries and prayers for help during their earthly life and allows them access to heavenly life by sacrificing Himself on the cross. To promise a heavenly life for generations of people to come, Jesus endured unimaginable pains on Earth. The history of how Jesus was crucified must be explored to better understand the premise of the Christian faith, which, in turn, inspires the two great works of literature discussed in this paper.

Jesus gained great fame, both positive and negative. The Jews in what is presently known as the Middle East were patiently waiting for the Messiah to come and save them, and Jesus was the answer to their waiting. Performing miracles and preaching God's word, Jesus showed time and time again that he was the One the Jews had been awaiting. Despite His wondrous deeds and shared wisdom, the rise of negative attention from religious and government officials led to His death sentence on the cross. Nailed to wood on a Friday

afternoon, Jesus underwent inhumane treatment and mockery before taking His last breath as a human. A few days later, He fulfilled God's prophecy of resurrecting and opening the gates to heaven for Him and all His faithful followers.

Peter, one of the writers of the Christian Bible, proclaims, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits" (1 Peter 3: 18-19). Jesus, the "righteous," willingly died for the "unrighteous," or all humans dead and alive, in order that they may see God's glory after their life on earth ends. Jesus conquered the unconquerable by being the first human to resurrect from the dead, proving that He is the son of God. As a result, His resurrection allowed for other humans to resurrect from the dead, too. Before Christ's harrowing of hell, as described by St. Peter, the souls of the just people were "imprisoned" because they were not in full communion with God until Jesus entered their dwelling and saved them.

Essentially, He was the key for their salvation; He had to die in order to free them from their sins that were denying them entry into God's kingdom. Because of Christ's salvific actions, Christians believe if they live out their lives faithful to God and loving toward all people they meet, they, too, will be saved and welcomed into heaven.

The notion of salvation granted by God is a pivotal idea in one of the most popular children's series today known as *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Appearing in every book of the series is a lion named Aslan who represents Jesus Christ. In the first book, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Aslan is killed under the orders of the white witch, the villain of the book.

However, he comes back to life and storms the witch's castle to free all of the creatures she turned into statues, resembling Christ's crucifixion and Peter's writings. Upon entering the castle, Aslan breathes life back into a statue of a lion: "For a second after Aslan had breathed upon him the stone lion

looked just the same. Then a tiny streak of gold began to run along his marble back then it spread.… Then, having caught sight of Aslan, he went bounding after him and frisking round him whimpering with delight and jumping up to lick his face" (Lewis 168). Aslan's choice of freeing a fellow lion first is significant, since Aslan sees a lot of Himself in that statue. Though this quote highlights a physical parallel between the two lions to illuminate the idea of comparison, the quote alludes to a charismatic and emotional connection between the two lions. In other words, the person who seeks Jesus with a sincere heart, as shown through their words and actions to other people, will be saved. Highlighting another connection, the gold streak in the lion statue resembles Aslan's relationship with the other lion since Aslan has gold fur. A part of Aslan, or extrapolating the symbolic significance, a part of Jesus is in the first lion, allowing the lion to be redeemed. Since Aslan is known as the savior in Narnia, the saved lion was ecstatic to see Him, as shown by the lion's bodily and verbal language. The "bounding" and "frisking" are significant word choices because the narrator shows the freed lion could not contain his excitement and appreciation for Aslan for saving him. The lion also shows his admiration for Aslan by trying to lick/kiss his face, which is considered one of the highest forms of praise from a lion. The freed lion does not try to hide or hold back his excitement since he knows he is granted another life by the mercy of Aslan. Likewise, Christians believe the day they are reunited with Christ will be glorious, and many wait in anticipation to praise Him forever.

When Christians can't fulfill their own needs, they turn to an existential power, that being the Christian God, that could potentially help them in times of distress. A main reason why Christians believe in God is because they believe He truly answers their calls in times of desperation. One of the most popular forms of asking God for assistance, healing, and miracles is through prayer. Critics of Christianity tend to question the point of praying if God knows everything about a person at all times. Additionally, some critics rely solely on human power and will to solve an issue instead of trusting an invisible aide. These same people wonder if God sees a person

in distress, then why would He wait until the person says the word before helping them. Brian Davies in his article "Comment: The Power of Prayer" provides an answer to the critics' questions in the following: "So, why bother to ask God for things that we want? Because God can give us what we want, but cannot give us what we ask for if we do not ask for it" (3). Davies vouches that Christians must be explicit with their desires from God instead of expecting Him to give them what they want without asking Him. However, the author leaves out the complexity of receiving God's help. God is not a genie who grants wishes in a matter of seconds. Rather, He grants the requests He sees most fit on His time. If God sees a true need to intervene in a situation, he will not leave His followers stranded. Though He is selective about how and when He will answer prayer requests, Christians should not fear how simple or grand their requests are. In the end, God will answer their calls, no matter how big or small, in the way aligned with His vision for them. This principle is shown when a little girl asks for God's intervention on her journey and He provides instantaneously.

In the fourth book of the Narnia series, *The Voyage of The Dawn Treader*, Lucy, the main character, calls out for Aslan's help during a time of peril. While aboard *The Dawn Treader*, the characters on the ship enter a cloud of darkness and face uncertainty about the direction they are going in. Even the most knowledgeable characters on board feel a sense of fear and despair regarding their whereabouts. Seeing the crew in shambles, Lucy calls out to Aslan, saying,

> 'Aslan, Aslan, if you ever loved us at all, send us help now." … There was a tiny speck of light ahead, and while they watched a broad beam of light fell from it upon the ship.… At first it looked like a cross.… In a few moments the darkness turned into a greyness ahead, and then, almost before they dared to begin hoping, they had shot out into the sunlight and were in the warm, blue world again.' (Lewis 102–03).

In the first part of the quote, Lucy directly addresses Aslan, making her intentions clear to him. She is also specific with her prayer when she asks for help "now" instead of at any other point on their voyage. Again, God/Aslan is not a genie, but He sees a need to intervene and respond to Lucy's prayer at that moment, so he sends a literal glimmer of hope for the passengers on board. After Aslan gets the attention of the passengers with the beam of light, he makes his presence even more obvious by transforming the light into the symbol of the cross. By providing the passengers with an explicit image of his assistance, Aslan fills the people on board, especially Lucy, with comfort and trust in Aslan's guidance. Lucy's prayer is fulfilled in the final part of the quote when the passengers escape darkness and see light again. The emphasis on warmth and sunlight has a direct connection to Lucy's faith; because she trusts Aslan to save her and her friends from the situation at hand, she is filled with a sense of warmth and light. Her direct prayer leads to a direct answer from Aslan, corroborating Davies' conclusion that Christians must be explicit with their desires in order to receive a response. When Christians receive answers to their prayers, they, too, are filled with warmth and are motivated to continue their faith journey.

In a comparable way, Sir Gawain is motivated to continue on his journey when he receives direct answers to his prayers. Sir Gawain in *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight* is a faithful man who constantly relies on God's guidance throughout his year-long journey. Gawain trusts God and His plan for him as he sets out to get his head chopped off by the Green Knight. With Christmas approaching fast, Sir Gawain longs to spend the holiday in a church where he can properly praise the Lord. His prayer was quickly answered as he explicitly prays to God and receives his desire in return:

> 'And therefore sighing he said: "I beseech thee, O Lord, and Mary, who is the mildest mother most dear, for some harbour where with honour I might hear the Mass and thy

> Matins tomorrow. This meekly I ask, and therto promptly I pray with Pater and Ave and Creed."… The sign on himself he had set but thrice, ere a mansion he marked withing amoat in the forest.' (52)

Just like Lucy, Sir Gawain explicitly calls on God to lead him the way to a place that celebrates Mass. Juxtaposed to Lucy, Gawain calls upon the mother of God to double up the power of his prayer. Gawain's use of "beseech" in his prayer points to the idea that he is serious and desperate about his intentions, given the fast pace of the days going by without any sign of shelter. Also, he takes his faith very seriously, as he views listening to the word of God as an "honour." Nevertheless, he recognizes his smallness in regard to his place with God as he requests God's help "meekly." There seems to be a back-and-forth attitude with the contrast of meek and prompt as he sees himself as small but prays with great strength. Since God listens to the desperation of Gawain and recognizes his humbleness, He grants Gawain a place to celebrate Mass within a few moments. Gawain recognizes a need to depend on God because he cannot depend on himself to find a place to celebrate with other Christians. For allowing God to take full control of the situation, he was rewarded with a place grander than he could imagine. In the real world, too, God grants His followers answers better than they could ever imagine, which leads them to feel comfort throughout their lives.

Taking the two Christian beliefs that God will redeem the righteous and answer His followers in times of trouble, Christians find a sense of purpose in their earthly life. Jeff Greenberg and his colleagues, in their book *The Science of Religion, Spirituality, and Existentialism*, expound on the ties between religions and human value in the following: "Religion, and more generally culture, enables humans to function securely in the world despite the knowledge of their perpetual vulnerability and inevitable death by providing them with a sense that they are persons of value in worlds of meaning, and thus potentially eligible for symbolic or literal

immortality" (16). Relating to Sir Gawain and Lucy, both characters pursue the journeys laid out for them, but both experience many obstacles along the way. Without Lucy's trust that Aslan will get them out of the darkness and Sir Gawain's faith in God's ability to provide shelter, both characters would experience a sense of hopelessness and regret about their missions. However, since both characters know God/Aslan has their best interest at heart, they prove Greenberg and his colleagues' claim; Gawain and Lucy see their value and significant roles in their journeys and overall lives. Therefore, the Christian mindset allows for both Lucy and Sir Gawain to see beyond the dangers they face on earth and trust God will deliver them—if not on earth, then in heaven.

The Christian faith enriches the lives of numerous people around the world in the past, present, and future. As Christians believe, in order to form a strong relationship with God in heaven, a foundational relationship over the course of a human's earthly life must grow. Praying and seeking God's assistance in a spectrum of situations will lead to a greater trust and unity between the believer and God. Ultimately, Christians define their faith with two words: prayer and trust. Christians believe in God because seek and receive God's grace on earth through prayer, and will witness His glory one day in Heaven. After all, Jesus did not die on the cross for no reason; He wants to strengthen human connection with Himself and His Father.

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Good and Evil in Fantasy: The Author and the Reader

Armand Liloia

Fantasy, as a genre, is distinct from others. One of the most important features of fantasy is the presence of a created world. This created world can be thought of as a "reality" with its own rules and history. This quality of fantasy makes it distinct from other genres and allows the author to make the world serve their goals. The reality they create can be perfectly suited for them to discuss the themes or ideas that they wish to share. For example, J. R. R Tolkien's (more on ohim later) Middle-earth has its own mythological history, including races, religions, and God-like figures. However, Middle-earth is also famous for being written with explicit Christian principles in mind, with many events within Tolkien's body of work that take place there reflecting Tolkien's separately expressed Christian beliefs. With that example in mind, it's to be said that fantasy worlds are created to express certain ideas and their "rules" reflect that. In these worlds, good and evil, or the author's view of good and evil, are expressed in how they are constructed. By examining how Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Owen Barfield's *Night Operation*, and Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* construct their fictional worlds, we can find their authors' approximate view of good and evil (or perhaps more generally, morality) through analysis of constructed worlds, and predict how readers will react to them.

In Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series, the forces of good and evil are relatively clear cut in their presentation. That is, it is almost as easy to tell who is good or evil by their aesthetic as by their actions. That is not to say that there is no ambiguity in morality of the character in *Lord of the Rings*, but rather that Tolkien's views of good versus evil are very apparent in the narrative. Forces of good are associated with light, life, and growth. The elves, the most fundamentally ancient race and the one most closely related to the "gods" of the setting, most strongly share this association. For example, Tolkien

describes an encounter between Aragorn and Arwen, two unambiguously heroic characters: "Frodo saw that Aragorn stood beside her; his dark cloak was thrown back, and he seemed to be clad in elven-mail, and a star shone on his breast. They spoke together, and then suddenly it seemed to Frodo that Arwen turned toward him, and the light of her eyes fell on him from afar and pierced his heart" (Tolkien 238). Both Aragorn and Arwen possess "light" that Frodo notices and by which he is deeply affected. They are described as shining and radiant, inviting comparisons to Christian associations of angels and heaven. Additionally, so do the heroic Hobbits: their lifestyle is close to nature; unindustrialized; and characterized by relaxation, simplicity, and pleasure. This is shown to be superior to other attitudes of other races: "their elusiveness is due solely to a professional skill that heredity and practice, and a close friendship with the earth, have rendered inimitable by bigger and clumsier races" (Tolkien 1). On the other hand, the forces of evil could also just be called forces of darkness. For one, Sauron is literally a "Dark Lord." Other races associated with evil, such as orcs, evil magical creatures, and Gollum himself, who has been almost totally corrupted by the One Ring, dwell in dark, industrialized environments, such as caves. For example, Frodo's band's initial encounter of Shelob, a massive spider monster, goes like this: "Presently they were under a shadow, and there in the midst of it they saw the opening of the cave …. He did not speak its name: Torech Ungol, Shelob's lair. Out of it came a stench, not the sickly odour of decay in the meads of Morgul, but a foul reek, as if filth unnameable were piled and hoarded in the dark within" (Tolkien 718). Shelob, an evil character, is associated with rot, death, and similar concepts. This is an obvious contrast to the elves and hobbits, who are associated with an abundance of life as opposed to an abundance of death. Tolkien constructs Middle-earth by associating good and evil with life and light and death and darkness respectively.

The effect of this is that what constitutes good and evil, and who represents it, is relatively clear-cut in *Lord of the Rings*. However, it might not be as apparent to every reader as it is to those of us who have been trained to read closely and without the bias of modern times. For example, one criticism of Tolkien's writing is that orcs and other villainous races could be inspired by or associated with racist views on the part of Tolkien. For example, Númenóreans are explicitly dark-haired, and so are the orcs often described. However, Tally explains this: "Regarding the origins of orcs, perhaps it is telling that even Tolkien changed his mind over time, as he seemed uneasy about the ways they fit into the history of Middle-earth … if orcs were merely another race of elves, however, it would be much more difficult for their demonization to be tolerated." Why is this important? This shows that Tolkien's goal in the construction of Middle-earth was to have a specific moral philosophy. Therefore, when elements of it appeared to go against this moral philosophy, it was important for him to change these elements. Tolkien's response shows not only the effort required to do this effectively but the difficulty in future-proofing a fantasy narrative, let alone any narrative. Tolkien writes from a perspective influenced by his time, but he can't control how people in the future will interpret it due to cultural changes. Therefore, it is important for him to preempt these varying interpretations.

Night Operation, by Owen Barfield, can be compared to *Lord of the Rings* in that the world is constructed to reflect the moral messages Barfield wishes to communicate. However, *Night Operation* is different in that it is much more obvious in its construction; in addition, it could be argued to be, in fact, science fiction! Is this a problem? Can we examine science fiction and fantasy through the same process? The line between fantasy and science fiction is, in fact, thin. Science fiction does require that there be an (obviously) scientific basis. However, this needs to be only in presentation; it needs

to have only an aesthetic of science. Science fiction still involves a created, imaginary world—it is just fantasy created for a technologically advanced era. For example, *Star Wars* contains magic, dark overlords and imaginary races, both hallmarks of the fantasy genre. However, it would never be called fantasy, but rather science fiction. Therefore, we can analyze fantasy and science fiction in the same way.

In *Night Operation*, the world is divided into the underground, where people in filth and hedonism hide away from the possibility of chemical attacks, and the abandoned aboveground. Effectively, it is an allegory for Plato's cave. The characters leave their falsely constructed "cave" (in this case, literally the sewers) to go aboveground and see the real world. Where Tolkien associates good and evil with light and darkness, Barfield associates good with space, and evil with a lack of space. Barfield describes their world:

> 'The sewers had been constructed for quite a different purpose than the one they now fulfilled. They had of course been constructed by dwellers above-ground in the past, but not with any thought at all of living in them. They were originally used, not for human beings but for their excreta, which they first concealed and then carried away to be disposed of in various ways.' (8)

Barfield's constructed world is underground and inherently limited. People live in the tight, cramped spaces formerly occupied by literal human waste. This serves as an overt indication that people in this world are, effectively, human waste, and they, too, are concealed, only to have their humanity flushed away in various ways. Also important is when Jon, the principal character, and his friends venture to the above-ground:

> 'Here it is necessary to emphasize that Jon had never before stood in open space. Is that enough to explain what happened next?… something rushed in upon him, across the world from the horizon, and down upon and round him from the sky, striding at him with seven-leagued boots from all directions, from all places except the friendly mouth of the cave he had just left behind him. It was *Fear*.' (Barfield 41)

Due to the world they have lived in, the *real* world is terrifying to Jon and his companions. Their minds have been formed in a society that disavows humanistic values. When they see open space for the first time, and have escaped from their community, they are unable to comprehend its value. This is the evil of their society.

Similarly to Tolkien's works, it is possible to misinterpret *Night Operation* and misread its world. For my own example, I myself was skeptical of the moral arguments Barfield made due to his evil being partly represented by homosexuality and sexuality. However, it must be remembered that Barfield was writing at a specific time and warning against a future where his then-current social movements go too far. Therefore, this is another case in which literary analysis is necessary to understand the original intent, because once again cultural changes have affected the context through which I viewed this story at first. According to Petrosky, "Reality perceptions and fantasies, like other human processes, do not operate in a vacuum. Clearly, bits and snatches of inner experiences (along with other factors) influence our perceptions of external reality and vice versa." My reality, the one I live in in the year 2023, is different from the reality in Barfield's world. I have different concerns and experiences, and I will initially interpret it only through that viewpoint. Just like Jon, I'm also susceptible to looking at the situation only with the lens I've been given.

American Gods by Neil Gaiman is distinct from the preceding books for a few reasons. For one, it does not take place in an imaginary world but rather "our" world, with imaginary elements. Middle-earth and the world of *Night Operation* are separated from us by time, taking place in a mythological past or a hypothetical allegorical future. However, *American Gods* takes place in the modern day. It also differs in that its statements show that the author is more aligned with moral ambiguity than with an obvious portrayal of good and evil.
The setting, which could be called "magical realism," reflects this sense of moral ambiguity. Just as the boundaries between good and evil are smudged, so are the boundaries between the real and the imaginary. In *American Gods*, characters commit what could be seen as negative or immoral acts for neutral or even altruistic reasons. In other cases, they simply have to, and what they need to do to survive is completely outside conventional morality. Unlike in *Lord of the Rings* and *Night Operation*, the "aesthetics" of a character don't imply their ultimate morality. Characters can be "light" or "dark" and still fall on either side of the moral spectrum.

For example, it is established that the main conflict is a war between the old gods (classical mythological characters, like Odin, Horus, and even Jesus Christ) and the new gods (anthropomorphic representations of concepts like technology, media, and automobiles). Worship of the old gods, in the form of traditional religious practices, is replaced by sacrifices to industrial gods in the form of car accidents or random deaths. The main character, Shadow, is a representative of the old gods. Here, he meets the new god of technology:

> 'You tell Wednesday this, man. You tell him he's history. He's forgotten. He's old. And he better accept it. Tell him that we are the future and we don't give a […] about him or anyone like him. His time is over.… Tell him that we have […]ing reprogrammed reality. Tell him that language is a virus and that religion is an operating system and that

> prayers are just so much […]ing spam. Tell him that or I'll […]ing kill you.' (Gaiman 50)

Here, we see the personal conflict between these divine forces. We can see that the god here is putting on a performance. He takes a moral position, but he is trying to convince the main character of that position. His moral viewpoint contrasts with his actual actions.

The effect on the audience of this moral ambiguity is to confuse them and reveal something about themselves. The gods of *American Gods* have been brought there by immigrants; they are suffering from sickness, poverty, and social change. They are in conflict with people who live different lives and want to change the established social order. The experience and world of these characters is intended to represent the American experience. What is the good and evil in America? It doesn't matter; from each character's perspective, they are justified. It is the impact of their actions that establishes their morality. At the end, the overall conflict is revealed to be engineered by Odin as a sacrifice to himself. Shadow, initially aligned with the old gods, stops him and ends the conflict, realizing that the ultimate cost is too much. Therefore, the protagonist becomes moral by discarding the other influences around him and trusting his own judgment

What conclusions can we draw from examining these three works? *Night Operation* and *Lord of the Rings* show that a fantasy world can be clear-cut in its presentation of good and evil. Tolkien and Barfield both create worlds where who is good and who is evil is obvious. On the other hand, Gaiman shows how a constructed world can be morally ambiguous. Whatever the fantasy authors' intent on writing is, they can't always predict how people will interpret their words in the future. Therefore, it is often the case that it has to be re-examined later to find its place in a different cultural context.

Ultimately, however, the most important conclusion is that all three of these works show an increasing level of complexity in the presentation of good and evil in fantasy over time. *Lord of the Rings*, fittingly as the work that established so many omnipresent fantasy tropes, has the least complicated (which is by no means necessarily negative) representation of good and evil. What represents which and who is on which side is pretty obvious. *Night Operation* is more complicated, as it is not immediately clear to the characters what is good and what is evil. Therefore, it is more challenging for the readers, as well. As Tolkien looks to the past for inspiration in the form of ancient languages and concepts, Barfield imagines a future where today's concepts are taken to a perhaps logical end.

Finally, *American Gods* takes place in the modern day. There is little separation between the "real" and the "fake," and situations are morally ambiguous. This is the most complex, as it deals with, on some level, the presence of "myth-making" in our everyday lives. All three of these books use fantasy as an allegory for certain things, including good and evil. These are specific to the time in which they are written. In the future, the fantasy genre will only continue to evolve and respond to changes in our society. Fantasy, like mythology, is intended to help us interpret our history and the times in which we live. How will fantasy respond to our time? This can only be left to the future to show us.

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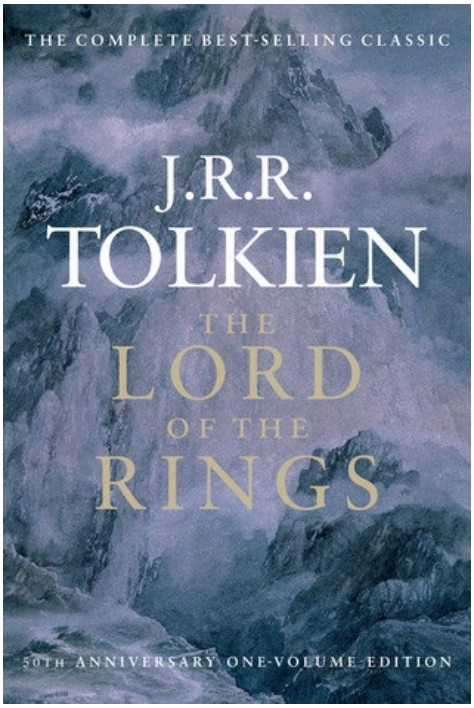

The Love of God in This World and the Next

Diana Gad

The simple truth and gracious wisdom of religion is unmatched by anything else. Faith is a powerful belief that can show in the largest acts of miracles and moving mountains, as well as in the smallest things, such as a book in someone's hand. The fantastical works of *The Magician's Nephew* by C. S. Lewis and *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien offer religious insight into not just new and faraway worlds, but this one as well. Tolkien and Lewis detail a holistic view of death. Tolkien investigates how one should die with faith; Lewis supplements this with how to react to another's death with faith. In this way, the two authors complement each other in providing both sides of the experience. The works of *A Grief Observed* and *The Problem of Pain*, both by Lewis, and *"The Sweet and the Bitter": Death and Dying in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* by Amy Amendt-Raduege also examine the phenomenon of death.
Tolkien's Catholic faith influences his depiction of death in *The Lord of the Rings* in his creation of a "good death" that includes repentance, reconciliation, and faith. Lewis's Christian faith influences how he writes Digory's experience regarding his mother's potential death, particularly in his relationship with Aslan.

In *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory is written very similarly to Lewis, as the way Digory responds to his mother's death takes major influence from Lewis's childhood. Digory finds that the possible death of his mother is absolutely crushing to him. He is "a boy who was so miserable that he didn't care who knew he had been crying" (Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* 4). These emotions were experienced by not only Lewis, but also his sons, when Lewis's wife died. Lewis describes, "there appears ... the most fatal of all non-conductors, embarrassment ... I felt just the same after my own mother's

death when my father mentioned her" (*A Grief Observed* 11). The embarrassment that Lewis felt, and that his sons felt, when their mothers died is also seen in Digory's reaction when he struggles to tell Polly about his mother's illness. Lewis continues on to describe how "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear" (*A Grief Observed* 1); Digory feels terrified about his mother's death. Digory is constantly afraid of his mother dying, with a storm cloud practically hanging over him constantly in response to her illness. When Digory finds that he can possibly save his mother with the fruit from Narnia, his entire motivation and focus shifts to saving her. When Digory expresses "And then-Mother well again" (Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* 93), the sudden hope that clenches Digory's heart can practically be felt. Digory takes it upon himself to get fruit from the land of Narnia, though he is confronted with the issue of how to do so. He understands that this is his one chance and, again, feels the weight of his entire world on his shoulders.

When Digory returns to Narnia, he cannot get the fruit because he now must deal with his sins of bringing the White Witch into Narnia and the introduction of Aslan; the introduction of Aslan is significant, as he is the prominent God-like figure in the book. The interaction of Digory and Aslan is emblematic of the relationship between God and his creatures (Lewis himself uses the term "creature" to describe humans in relation to God in *The Problem of Pain*). The interactions of Aslan and Digory interactions are important to showing how Lewis's religious background influences his writing. Through Aslan and Digory, Lewis teaches the audience how to deal with the death of a loved one, experiencing the solace of faith in God.

Instead of simply giving Digory the fruit he desires for his mother, Aslan gives him a quest to go and get fruit for Aslan, himself; Digory desires for Aslan to simply give him the apple, but Aslan plans to test Digory's faith. Though it may

seem cruel that Digory is tested in his time of need, Lewis argues that this is, in fact, the true nature of God. Lewis claims "We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in heaven—a senile benevolence who, as they say, 'liked to see young people enjoying themselves'" (*The Problem of Pain* 40). By testing Digory, Aslan acts instead as the "Father in Heaven." Lewis goes on to declare "You asked for a loving God: you have one" (*The Problem of Pain* 46), and that true love is not passive tenderness but an active pursuit between God and his creature.

Digory is then tempted multiple times to change the trip to get the fruit for Aslan into the trip to get the fruit for his mother. The White Witch tempts him to make this change, also tempting Digory to lose his faith in Aslan. But Digory overcomes and realizes, as Lewis describes, "If you're approaching Him not as the goal but as a road, not as the end but as the means, you're not really approaching Him at all" (*A Grief Observed* 54). Digory understands that to use Aslan as a way to get the fruit for his mother would be a grave mistake and would find both his "heart's desire and … despair" (Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* 171). After Digory's return and the completion of Aslan's command, then, and only then, is Digory permitted to take a fruit for his mother. In awe, once he takes the fruit, in what is the most poignant moment of the book, Digory asks "'Please,' he said, 'may we go home now?' He had forgotten to say 'Thank you,' but he meant it, and Aslan understood'" (Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* 191–92). Lewis gives the reader a depiction of faith at its finest, a wordless love between God and his creature. The reciprocal love between God and his creature is powerfully seen in Digory and Aslan as a result of Digory's mother's possible death. Humans "were made not primarily that we may love God (though we were made for that too) but that God may love us, that we may become objects in which the Divine love may rest 'well pleased'" (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 48). Once Digory turns to God at the prospect of his mother's death, his faith is

strengthened, and he is able to brave the storms of his mother's possible death. For this, he is rewarded with the love of God and the saving of his mother. Lewis advocates for the turning of one to God when someone they love dies. Solace is found in God; turn to Him and worship God, and you'll find your loved one in this life, as well as in the afterlife.

Tolkien investigates "the art of death" through the contrast of the death of Boromir and the death of Denethor. The elements of the good death of Boromir include "steadfastness, faithfulness, self-control, and sacrifice" (Amendt-Raduege 14) that are "owed to the new religion: Christianity" (Amendt-Raduege 15). Directly prior to his death, Boromir succumbs to the temptation of the Ring and sins in his assault against Frodo. Boromir is tempted by evil and is in a trance-like state influenced by the Ring. Almost instantly, when Boromir is himself again, he recognizes his sin and "suddenly he wept. He rose and passed his hand over his eyes, dashing away his tears. 'What have I said?' he cried. 'What have I done? Frodo, Frodo!... A madness took me, but it has passed. Come back?' (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* 390). Boromir's recognition of his sin is also apparent in how he acts after, as he "sat down aloof, with his eyes on the ground He put his head in his hands, and sat as if bowed with grief" (395). Aragorn then orders Boromir "'Go after those two young hobbits, and guard them at the least, even if you cannot find Frodo'" (395), giving him the opportunity to reconcile his sins; Boromir accepts and follows Aragorn's order. In this way, Aragorn becomes the "religious attendant" (Amendt-Raduege 29) in Boromir's death. Boromir has admitted and repented for his sin and then reconciled by doing his best to protect Merry and Pippin. At the brink of Boromir's last moments of life, he says "'I am sorry. I have paid'" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers* 404). Here, Tolkien places pillars of the Catholic faith: confession, reconciliation, and acceptance. As Boromir performs all three, Tolkien allows him to have a peaceful death. Boromir is honored by Aragorn, Legolas, and

Gimli, who "knelt for a while, bent with weeping, still clasping Boromir's hand … [and] stood a moment with heads bowed in grief" (404). They then "'tend the fallen'" so that "'No evil creature dishonours his bones'" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers* 405) and sing him a song in mourning, honoring him even in death. Amendt-Raduege claims that Tolkien "uses Boromir's death to demonstrate that even the most flawed among us can die with courage and dignity, if they repent of their actions and partake of the grace and forgiveness that has always awaited them" (22).

Tolkien does not stop discussing Boromir at the time of his death but continues on about his afterlife and remembrance. Boromir's body then floats down the river, practically spelling out to the reader that he is in a good afterlife, as rivers are heavenly imagery and are polar opposites to the fires of Hell. Though Boromir sinned, he has repented, reconciled, and accepted his death and the future of Middle-earth, thereby accepting the power and grace of God. He is remembered kindly by the members of the Fellowship and his family. Even Frodo says he "'would grieve indeed'" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers* 649) at the news of Boromir's death. Faramir's sighting of his brother is one of the most touching scenes, where he sees Boromir and feels sorrow for his brother's death but also acceptance because of how at peace Boromir himself looks. The "departure of Boromir" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers* 403) is the ending of his life in this world and the beginning of his life in the next world—not an ultimate end, but only a physical one—as he continues to live in the hearts and minds of the other characters and in the afterlife.

Tolkien does not simply leave his vision of death at Boromir's passing but contrasts it with the "necessary corollary to the good" (Amendt-Raduege 32) of Denethor's death. Denethor's manner of death is drastically different from Boromir's.
Denethor plans to kill himself which "especially when it is motivated by the conviction that death will come anyway, is the ultimate failure of faith" (Amendt-Raduege 35). Denethor

has allowed the power of Sauron to overcome him, almost as if Denethor gives in to Satan himself, sinning against God.
Denethor realizes that his actions are sinful because he proclaims that "'We will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed hither from the West'" (Tolkien, *The Return of the King* 807). There are no accidents with the philologist Tolkien, and so when he calls Denethor a heathen, the meaning is easily understood. Denethor has sinned, and has recognized that he has sinned, but in the wrong way. While Boromir feels remorse, Denethor does not and even plans to also involve Faramir in his sin. When Gandalf, who like Aragorn, acts as the "religious attendant" (Amendt-Raduege 29) in death, gives Denethor the opportunity to repent, Denethor not only rejects it, but also disrespects Gandalf, calling him "'Grey fool'" (Tolkien, *The Return of the King* 835). In his final moments, Denethor displays his despair at the state of Gondor and his pride at his controlling death. Amendt-Raduege describes this as "ofermod, a troublesome word that Tolkien famously translated as 'overmastering pride'" (33). He calls Gandalf ignorant and insults him vehemently, then claims that if he cannot have what he wants, he will instead have "naught: neither life diminished, nor love halved, nor honour abated" (Tolkien, *The Return of the King* 836) and proceeds to burn himself alive.

Compared to Boromir's death, Denethor's is practically the opposite. Denethor does recognize the action of his sin but not the evil of it; he does not repent, reconcile, or accept the will of God. The humility and hope that permeate Boromir's death are substituted by pride and despair in Denethor's death. The repercussions are seen in Denethor's afterlife.
While, of course, the true fate of Denethor's soul is unknown, Tolkien's imagery regarding Denethor's remembrance speaks volumes. While Boromir's body is treated with love and honor and he is remembered with songs and the love of the Fellowship and his brother, Denethor does not receive the same remembrance. His son "Faramir never mentions his father again" (Amendt-Raduege 39), and Denethor is never

referred to again in the series. Denethor is also continually associated with fire imagery. When he picks up the palantír "it seemed to those that looked on that the globe began to glow with an inner flame, so that the lean face of the Lord was lit as with a red fire," and all those who looked into the palantír after his death "saw only two aged hands withering in flame" (836), virtually spelling out his eternal damnation.

Tolkien and Lewis were men with deep faith and belief in God. Tolkien shows it's never easy to die, but all people must do it. How it is done matters. Lewis also teaches that all must die, and some must go on in this world while others go on into the next. Both authors champion the belief that there is nothing permanent in this world, but there is more than this world. The authors continually engage readers of all ages in the timeless question of death. Digory, Boromir, and Denethor all ask *ubi sunt*: where are those who were before us? And how shall we go when we follow? Tolkien and Lewis both find that the remembrance of God and the acceptance of what is good is what is needed to have a good death but also to brave the storms that someone else's death brings. The war between good and evil happens not in this world but in the end world as well, for the end world is eternal, just as is the battle of good and evil. And only with God, the eucatastrophe of death is complete: this world may end, and yet, the next will begin.

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Afterlife: Life and Death in Narnia and Arda

Hannah Gray

The question of what happens after death is one that has captivated the human imagination since the beginning of time. From the earliest of mankind there have been different theories, beliefs, and ideas about the human soul and if life after death is possible. Some have thought that it is a continuation of life; others a paradise where all the troubles of the earth are meaningless; and still more that life is a never-ending cycle, and that a soul is merely reborn to begin living again. It is impossible to say what, if any, kind of existence there is after death, but that has not stopped people from asking this question and even inventing new answers. Both C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien were devout Christians and believed in the existence of places such as heaven and hell where the souls of humans go after their physical bodies have died. This belief is apparent throughout their writings where they attempt to answer this question. Through the lens of fantasy, Lewis and Tolkien each create worlds with their own versions of an afterlife following the Judeo-Christian model. Each of their respective writings contains the idea of an immortal soul that continues on after a mortal body has died and finds a paradise waiting for it as an afterlife. Both authors focus as well on the judgement and ultimate healing of the soul from sins and the chance to live again spiritually and be reborn physically. In their books *The Last Battle* and *The Silmarillion* the worlds of Narnia and Arda place great importance on the spirit of a living being and the question of what comes after death.

The afterlife of the world of Narnia could be viewed in two different ways. The Pevensie siblings' return to England could be viewed as its own sort of afterlife, as they were fundamentally changed by their experiences and lives in Narnia, thus being reborn as new versions of themselves. In

the more literal sense, there is the existence of "Aslan's Country": a divine, legendary land that is both part of Narnia and not. Existing in the sky beyond the atmosphere to the farthest east of the Great Eastern Ocean, it rings around the world, as well as above the living stars in the sky and possibly beneath its bottom. Similar to the Heaven of the Bible,
Aslan's Country exists as a sort of parallel realm where everything operates according to Aslan's will. It is described as "a great chain of mountains which ringed round the whole world" without snow or ice on the peaks and growing progressively taller (Lewis 208). The sky is clear blue, the grass is lush and green, and there are colorful birds and beautiful trees everywhere. It is as if a blind person is seeing light after a lifetime of darkness, or Dorothy the colorful world of Oz after monochrome Kansas. Just as Narnia would have appeared as a paradise to the Pevensie children compared to London, Aslan's country is an Eden by even greater measure: "'This is still Narnia, and more real and more beautiful than the Narnia down below, just as it is more real and beautiful than the Narnia outside the stable door'" (Lewis 207). By going up and further into the great mountain chain, it is discovered that there are entrances to Aslan's Country from all worlds, including England. Just as the Bible offers the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, as the characters transition from Narnia to Aslan's Country, they experience a more profound and everlasting reality beyond the temporal world. In this place the believers and the righteous "live" together in eternal peace and prosperity, without evils such as illness, death, or sin to taint it.

In the world of Arda, the afterlife of its inhabitants is generally determined by species. Elves, men, dwarves, and hobbits all pass into a place called the Halls of Mandos, or the Halls of Awaiting, where they wait and are sorted into a permanent afterlife. This is roughly analogous to the halls of the gods in Norse mythology, where souls resided for a time before passing on to a further location. The souls of the children of Iluvatar—God—i.e., elves and men, are summoned to the Halls after death by the power of Namo, the Vala. In his

capacity as the "keeper of the Houses of the Dead, and the summoner of the spirits of the slain" he watches over souls until it is their time to pass on (Tolkien 28). When Iluvatar created his children he declared that the elves, immortal and lovers and creators of beauty, "shall have the greater bliss in this world" and he "willed that the hearts of Men should seek beyond the world and find no rest therein" but also that they would not be bound to fate like everyone else and that everything they attempted would be so as they mastered the world (Tolkien 41). This is similar to God giving Adam stewardship of creation and free will. However, the elves represent the state of man in Eden who had not fallen, being immortal creatures of great wisdom and beauty in close communion with nature. Accordingly, men only stay in the Halls for a brief time, as their fate leads them out of Arda and Ea—the universe—entirely, whereas elves are tied to the world of Arda until its end. After a brief respite in the Halls, the immortal elves are re-embodied and return from the Halls to their kin in Aman. Aman is the "Blessed Realm," a continent west of Middle-earth across the ocean. Within Aman is Valinor, the home of the Valar, and Eldamar, the kingdom of the elves of there. The name of the continent itself means "good," denoting its state as being free from evil and the home of the Valar. Unlike the lands of Middle-earth, the continent was never influenced by Melkor—the Lucifer figure of Arda's mythology—and thus remains as pure and uncorrupted as it was upon creation. Aman functions like a sort of Eden, untouched by corruption and many of its inhabitants exiled until they repent.

Heaven is often imagined as a place of negation; without a body there is no need to eat, so there is no food, and there is no need to sleep, so there is no rest period. If there is only eternal bliss, then there is no need for any other emotion. Rather than describe Heaven as a purely spiritual place, Lewis uses vivid landscape imagery to represent Heaven as a semi-incarnate realm. After the final destruction of Narnia

and the final judgement of its inhabitants, those who chose to believe in Aslan follow him west to a new land "further up and further in" to his country (Lewis 189). Soon the characters are invited inside a walled garden and notice that they can see Narnia over the garden wall. Only, it is not Narnia as they knew it. Everything is described as looking more vivid, more real. With this, Lewis evokes the feeling of looking at a beautiful landscape and that Heaven, as a physical place, "will be like the experience of living in the landscape" where everything inspires a feeling of wonder without being lost (Ordway 17). The infinity of Heaven is displayed in two main ways: Aslan's Country is literally open-ended with no physical boundaries, and it inspires happiness without end. The journeying aspect of heading further and further into Aslan's Country shows the characters' joy in both the place where they are currently and the appeal of whatever is next. Lewis uses the metaphor of a story to explain this feeling: there is enjoyment in the current scene as well as the draw to find out what happens next (Ordway 22). By saying that the story will continue with descriptions too wonderful to write, he implies that there will be infinitely more to read ahead. This desire for more evokes a longing in the reader to follow the characters in their stories. As the characters themselves draw ever closer to the presence of God, so, too, do the readers of the story follow them further up and further into Heaven.

Death and immortality are two central themes to the world of Arda, but just as much attention is paid to its afterlife. For all it is a religiously Catholic work, there are just as many pagan influences in the structures and dwellings of the afterlife; it is not merely a replication of the Heaven-Hell-Purgatory dynamic. The Halls of Mandos bear certain resemblance to those of the Norse gods, and similarly the "tradition of extending memory and fame after death" was utilized by men, that they might gain their own sort of immortality (Nelson 202). The druidical afterlife was a place of light and beauty where the deceased lived again in happiness, much like the re-embodied did in Aman. The void in Tolkien's mythology is

the nothingness outside of Arda and is mentioned only at the beginning of creation as a place of punishment for evildoers, as it is "a terrible and hopeless pit with endless emptiness and nothingness" because that is what evil fears (Nelson 207). This pit is similar to that of Tartarus from Greek mythology, an abyss in the deepest and darkest part of the underworld, where the enemies of the gods are sent in punishment. Alongside differing death realms, there is a clear distinction between false immortality and that of the elves. The immortality of the elves is conditional in two manners. First, while they may not age to infirmity nor sicken and die, they can be mortally wounded as they are not invulnerable. The other manner in which they might die is to give up their immortality and live out a mortal life. However, once they do so they may never go to the Undying Lands, as nothing mortal may remain there. Originally death was intended by Iluvatar to be a gift to men after a long life, but it was corrupted by Melkor into something to be feared. The rings of power may extend a mortal life beyond its intended length, but they corrupt as they do so, making the chance of reaching the afterlife an impossibility, as evildoers will be totally destroyed with their power and forever condemned to the everlasting darkness of the void because of their actions. In the end, it is their deeds in life that determine not only how they die, but what comes after that as well.

For all that the question of the afterlife is one that is truly impossible to answer, people have never stopped trying. What happens after death is as unknowable as what happens before something is born, and it ties into the questions of consciousness and the soul. There are thousands of different theories and interpretations of the afterlife, but none is so widespread as that of the Judeo-Christian idea of Heaven. People want to believe that if they do good deeds, that if they live a good and just life, they will be rewarded with an afterlife that makes up for the toils and sufferings of the mortal coil. In the fictional world of Narnia and Arda, the afterlife is, for the most part, exactly what the authors hope for themselves: a place of peace and comfort without worry.

The Halls of Mandos, Aman, and the void evoke the structure of Purgatory, Heaven, and Hell, but the absence of the souls of humans makes them unique to Tolkien's imagination. In the end, even he could not envision what happens after death and left the spirits of men to simply go beyond the bounds of the universe. Where they end up after is left just as unknown as any average person's own fate. Aslan's Country as imagined by Lewis ends just as vaguely as Tolkien's concept of the afterlife. He did not write if there was an end to going further up and in, or if there is anything else there. The implications of each author's interpretations of a fictional afterlife are purposely left unspecified. The Halls of Mandos grow with each passing age as people die; elves are re-embodied in Aman to live again in untroubled paradise; and the fates of Men are in the hands of Iluvatar. Aslan's Country is a true land without end that inspires endless delight in all who enter it, unspoiled by despair or stagnation. Perhaps whatever comes after death is like both or neither of these places. Whatever one's interpretation of the question, all people do is hope for the best: that they will experience something greater than what they have already.

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"The Dominion of Men": A Study of Masculinity in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*

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J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are both male-dominated novels centered on adventure, war, and the dangers of power. Despite these seemingly traditional masculine themes, the men in these tales are not fully representative of the classic heroic male. Not bound by conventional beliefs of masculinity and femininity, Tolkien, perhaps unintentionally, emphasizes the importance of upholding values of males and females. The male characters in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* embody characteristics that are not typically ascribed to them, championing both male and female traits that can be seen in their personalities as well as in their relationships with each other.

Aspects of masculinity are represented in the different races of Middle-earth, so "race thus becomes a way of inscribing gender" (Miller 136). Each race is described in various ways as shown in *The Hobbit*, where Tolkien showcases the lifestyle and personality differences between the dwarves and the elves. These two races provide alternative views of the dominating form of masculinity that is upheld by the race of men. When Thorin and his company arrive at Rivendell, the narrator highlights that "dwarves don't get on well with them. Even decent enough dwarves … think them foolish … or get annoyed with them. For some elves tease them and laugh at them" (Tolkien 49). The enmity between dwarves and elves is only exacerbated by their extreme differences in character, as Tolkien's dwarves "represent a sort of student form of the normative masculinity of Men; their psychology and values may be compared roughly to those of adolescent males" (Miller 141). The characteristics of dwarves are more similar to and representative of those of men, since they uphold typical masculine and earthly qualities, such as stubbornness and physical strength.

Contrastingly, Tolkien's elves showcase "a version of masculinity that rejects the worldly values of political power and historical progress in favor of the aesthetic and transcendent" (Miller 140). While elves are still considered to be fierce warriors, the elves that Bilbo encounters in *The Hobbit*, save for those in Mirkwood, are depicted as light-hearted, joyful, and ethereal. Their otherworldly aura makes them appear more feminine than masculine, since they often laugh, sing, and dance, and they are fiercely in tune with their own emotions and with nature. This lack of domination over nature by the elves is another value that subverts traditional masculine characteristics, as they have learned to coexist with the natural world, while dwarves and men have used it for their survival and profit. Though the seriousness of the elves changes as the story moves from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*, they still maintain most of their defining traits, successfully displaying both feminine and masculine qualities. Tolkien manages to showcase varying characteristics of manliness through the races of Middle-earth, yet none of these characters remains stagnant in their personality. Consequently, masculinity in *The Lord of the Rings* can be "perceived as dynamic and changeable" (Ruiz 26). The male characters are not restricted to one trait or convention of virility, but rather they change over time and can exhibit qualities ascribed to both males and females.

Nevertheless, different levels of masculinity are found within the same race, as well. In the race of men, there are groups that vary in what features of masculinity they represent. The men of Rohan are considered "a reconstruction ... of the literary Anglo-Saxon world ... a society that therefore inherits the epic heroic code" (Ruiz 26). Éomer, a prominent soldier of Rohan, embodies the epic qualities of warriors as he rides fearlessly into battle ready to sacrifice himself for king and country. Although Éomer champions hypermasculine traits, he is not a one-dimensional character, as a gentler and more compassionate side of him is apparent in his interactions with his sister, Éowyn. In the extended edition of *The Return of the*

King after the Battle of Pelennor Fields, Éomer is shown running "*towards ÉOWYN'S body and picks her up and cradles her in his arm…. cradling ÉOWYN and a tear starts to his eye*" (Boyens, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*). Karl Urban, the actor portraying Éomer, successfully depicts Tolkien's intentions as he sheds the roles of heir to the throne of Rohan and warrior and morphs into Éowyn's older brother, trading vengeance and power for grief and longing. Éomer represents traditional masculinity, but Tolkien does not portray these dominant traits in a negative way. Instead, he pairs them with more delicate qualities to depict Éomer as a dynamic and complicated character.

The hypermasculine traits of the Rohirrim are deeply contrasted to those of the men of Gondor. These men are just as strong, as the ruling class stems from "the line of Numenorean kings that ruled in Gondor…. as there was no claimant of pure blood to the crown, the era of the stewards started" (Ruiz 28). While the men of Rohan fought for the freedom of their country, Denethor, the current steward of Gondor, embodies a colder and more negative perception of masculinity and doubts "all others who resisted Sauron, unless they served himself alone" (Tolkien 1031).
Over time, Denethor becomes a "representative of masculinity that is constructed on the exertion of power over everyone else through oppression and domination" (Ruiz 28). This obsession with power is translated in his treatment of his two sons, as Boromir, who reflects typical heroic qualities, is favored over Faramir, who champions gentler traits and is wrongfully perceived as physically weak. Through corruption, exacerbated by the manipulation of Sauron and the growing paranoia that he would lose his place with the return of the King, Denethor lusts for power and control over others. By creating differences within people of the same race, Tolkien provides more depth to his characters, bringing geographical and cultural influences into their personas. Moreover, he successfully portrays positive and negative features of masculinity and how they are embodied in diverging ways.

Tolkien's experience in World War I had greatly influenced his works, especially evident since *The Lord of the Rings* is largely a war story. While participating in war is typical of men in Nordic and Scandinavian tales, both of which also inspired Tolkien, the men in his tales do so only out of necessity; furthermore, most of them do not take deep pleasure in their actions. Tolkien's own perception of war is conveyed through Aragorn's and Faramir's characters.
Despite being leader of the race of men, Aragorn does not relish warfare; rather, he champions kindness, understanding, and pity. In the film adaptation of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Peter Jackson contrasts Aragorn's battle with Lurtz, the Uruk-hai that killed Boromir, with Aragorn shedding tears for his fallen comrade. The incredibly violent scene, rife with bloodshed and limbs being cut off, is juxtaposed with Aragorn sharing Boromir's last moments with him, putting him at rest as he "*bends and kisses BOROMIR'S forehead*" (Boyens, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*). By depicting such male tenderness in the midst of violence, Jackson successfully translates Tolkien's multifaceted view of masculinity as being simultaneously valiant and affectionate, rather than these two features being mutually exclusive.

Later in the story, as the last alliance of men in Gondor march to the Black Gates, Aragorn "looked at them, and there was pity in his eyes rather than wrath; for these were young men from Rohan, from Westfold far away, or husbandmen from Lossarnach, and to them Mordor had been from childhood a name of evil ... a legend that no part in their simple life" (Tolkien 868). Aragorn acknowledges that these young soldiers do not fully understand the evil they are fighting, yet they are willing to risk their lives to defend their country. Furthermore, Aragorn does not look down on other men who are not as strong or brave as him; instead, he attempts to recognize and encourage them. By making Aragorn conscious of the feelings of other men, Tolkien not only makes him an understanding and compassionate King but also reflects the idea that war should not be celebrated or

enjoyed, an unorthodox concept in a story centered on warfare.

As one of the most compassionate and understanding of all the major male characters, Faramir represents more modern and nontraditional attributes of masculinity. Even though he is Captain of Gondor and an efficient warrior, Faramir is molded by Tolkien to depict a soldier representative of his time in World War I. Contrary to the typical notion of male heroism in the midst of war, "soldiers from World War I were not interested in dreams of glory and honor … they were concerned with mere survival" (Carter 91). Faramir emulates this notion of fighting for survival rather than for sheer enjoyment and personal glory. When discussing the future of Minas Tirith and Gondor, Faramir states, "War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend" (Tolkien 656). He is reluctant to fully immerse himself in warfare; however, Tolkien emphasizes that reluctance does not equate to cowardice.

Faramir's battle intelligence is showcased in *The Two Towers* as he and his group of rangers ambush Sauron's followers, revealing his role as a "conscientious leader…. [who] sacrificed the idea of glorious face-to-fact combat in favor of a weapon system that would be less desirable in the eyes of men such as Boromir, but also much more efficient" (Carter 93). Even though they are brothers, Boromir and Faramir differ in their masculinity, as Boromir "'is closer to a warrior found in an Old English text ... based on ... military prowess and physical strength,'" while Faramir "'is similar to an Arthurian character, more interested in learning'" (Ruiz 31). This difference in character is what makes Denethor look down on his younger son, and despite Faramir's best efforts, he is viewed as weak since he possesses a different kind of strength that others around him may not understand. Contrary to the

classical heroic figures in traditional lore and even in *The Lord of the Rings* itself, Faramir represents a new male warrior, as his "humility and wisdom…. is evident in men ... who went into service with caution and awareness, not selfish dreams of decorations and promotion" (Carter 101). Overall, Faramir champions humility and wisdom, two unlikely yet essential qualities of a high-ranking warrior, and showcases a new model of heroic male characters.

Another important component of Tolkien's view of masculinity is friendship, specifically that of Frodo and Sam. The relationship between these two is rooted in trust and mutual love for each other that only strengthens as they continue their journey. Tolkien credits the war as helping him characterize Sam, stating that "'My 'Sam Gamgee' is indeed a reflexion of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war and recognized as so far superior to myself'" (Croft 6). Sam represents the qualities of an English soldier that Tolkien admired, as he is loyal, steadfast, and humble. Despite all these qualities, it is Sam's deep love for Frodo that makes his relationship with Frodo complex. The bond between Frodo and Sam is "marked by gestures of physical tenderness and protectiveness, the 'tactile tenderness'..... characteristic of World War I male intimacy" (Smol 963). Throughout their entire journey, Frodo and Sam instinctively hold each other, providing mutual comfort and reassurance in the face of insurmountable evil. For example, as they climb Mount Doom, Frodo struggles with the temptation to put on the ring, so Sam takes "his master's hands and laid them together, palm to palm, and kissed them; and then he held them gently between his own" (Tolkien 921). This comforting scene of masculine intimacy, not typically depicted between two male friends, highlights the "extreme circumstances in which war has placed the two friends that such physical intimacy develops" (Smol 967). Tolkien's experiences in World War I inspired several of the components of Frodo and Sam's deep friendship, and although the two hobbits do not directly

engage in large, sweeping battles, the events they endure push them to rely on each other more than ever before.

Even after the ring is destroyed, the relationship between the two hobbits surpasses that of any other characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the film version of *The Return of the King*, Frodo awakes in Minas Tirith and gradually greets members of the Fellowship, until "FRODO'S eyes fall upon a FIGURE standing apart from the others…… it is SAM…. CLOSE ON: FRODO'S and SAM'S eyes meet" (Boyens, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*). When Sam comes into view, there is a moment between him and Frodo, a silent acknowledgment, a mutual understanding, and perhaps a deep sadness in knowing that their journey, the quest that kept them bound to each other, has ended. Frodo and Sam's relationship confirms the idea that "Tolkien seems to be thus in favor … of a type of masculinity that is rather based on simplicity, loyalty, friendship and mercy; it is based on life rather than death, peace rather than war" (Ruiz 36).

In both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's unconventional representation of masculinity and male relationships challenges conventional perceptions and understandings of the two concepts. The male characters in these stories value fellowship and are confident in their own masculinity as they laugh, weep, and sing together. Furthermore, by depicting men in a different light, Tolkien enables others to view themselves and their relationships and actions in a new way. Overall, by not prescribing one gender to a single temperament, Tolkien breaks the mold of gender stereotypes and presents fresh, innovative male characters that successfully balance components of masculinity and femininity.

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Anglo-Saxon and Christian Themes of Bravery in *Beowulf* and Their Applications in *The Hobbit*

Shilpitha Kadiyala

Beowulf is an Old English poem that details the courage and bravery of its namesake, the warrior, Beowulf. *Beowulf* is a story describing an almost Herculean warrior as he takes on life-endangering missions to better the lives of those that are suffering. The tale follows his journey as he defeats monsters and dragons, using both bodily prowess and spiritual fortitude. Correspondingly, *The Hobbit*, a fantasy novel written by J. R. R. Tolkien, follows the journey of an unlikely hero, Bilbo. This story is about a hobbit, a member of an adventure-averse race, as he begins a journey alongside dwarves under the guidance of a wizard to gain some treasure from a dragon known as Smaug. Though Bilbo is reluctant, he exemplifies bravery through facing disturbing creatures and extending mercy even though it is the most difficult choice to make. The literary works *Beowulf* and *The Hobbit* examine bravery through the Anglo-Saxon and the Christian lenses by placing an emphasis on personal courage and moral responsibility, respectively.

Beowulf, written by an anonymous poet, exemplifies the values of Anglo-Saxon bravery. The protagonist, Beowulf, faces several fights throughout his journey, beginning with his confrontation with the monster Grendel. Grendel's depravity is a central theme of this part of the poem as he is "greedy and grim" (*Beowulf* 11, 120). Grendel terrorizes Hrothgar's kingdom to the point where the Great Hall sits empty, as everyone is filled with fear. The only one that hears this kingdom's plight and comes to aid them is Beowulf. As he picks up arms against this monster, Beowulf is full of confidence as a battle-tested warrior. This fight introduces the Anglo-Saxon value of physical strength, as Beowulf realizes that weapons are useless against this monster and decides to

fight him in hand-to-hand combat. Beowulf is unconcerned about his own life as he fights Grendel with virtually no way to protect himself. This instance exemplifies Anglo-Saxon bravery as he fights with "unflinching courage in the face of death" (Vasiliu 2019).

Beowulf does not dare to cower in the face of a monstrous entity, as keeping his word to Hrothgar and his people is more important to him than if he lives or dies. This response is an exceedingly clear display of Beowulf's physical prowess and warrior skills that mold him into the definition of an Anglo-Saxon hero. While Beowulf's fight with Grendel is a formidable one, one can say that his fight with Grendel's mother is even more so. Grendel's mother, moved by maternal rage that is eerily human, moves to take her revenge on her son's killer, Beowulf. Beowulf journeys to the bottom of the lake in which Grendel's mother resides to rid the kingdom of its plague once and for all. As Beowulf prepares for his battle, he displays extraordinary courage, but he also displays his desire for glory. This is seen when Beowulf is speaking to Hrothgar and says, "For every one of us living in this world means waiting for our end. Let whoever can win glory before death" (*Beowulf* 97, 1386–1388). As Hrothgar laments his dead friend and counselor, Beowulf's method of consoling him is to remind him that it is important to be renowned if possible before one dies. In this instance, Beowulf, once again, demonstrates his lack of fear of death. He is prepared to die to keep his word as he promised Hrothgar to return peace to his people. Alongside his display of bravery is Beowulf's desire for glory. Glory is an extremely potent aspect of Anglo-Saxon culture, as it is important that one does something worthy of being remembered even after they die. Although Beowulf feels a sense of responsibility toward the people of Hrothgar's kingdom, his desire to fight on Hrothgar's behalf also comes from the fact that Grendel and his mother are worthy adversaries. They are monsters that have terrorized legions of people, and Beowulf is the warrior that has inspired

legions of people. His fight with these monsters serves to greatly increase his glory as "the more ferocious and unrelenting his opponents are the more audacious and glorious the hero's exploits" (Vasiliu 2019). This sentiment is proven accurate, as Beowulf's courage and bravery are remembered from this point forward and eventually lead to him becoming King of the Geats. Henceforth, Beowulf is known for his bravery and his physical abilities in fighting such great monsters. Although his reputation as an exceptional warrior is cemented prior to his fight with Grendel, it is now exaggerated in renown, leading to the Geats placing great trust in him as a leader even if he is not the one that is meant to inherit that position.

Although Beowulf represents a quintessential Anglo-Saxon hero in the initial stages of the poem, there are instances in the latter parts of the poem where this protagonist demonstrates the Christian vision of bravery as he displays humility and sacrifice. After Beowulf defeats Grendel and his mother, he returns home as a brave hero, the likes of which have never been seen before. Through a series of events, Beowulf becomes the King of the Geats and rules peacefully for 50 years. This peace does not last forever, as a dragon guarding a hoard of wealth begins to destroy his kingdom. When Beowulf hears the magnitude of destruction caused by this dragon, he displays an extraordinary moment of humility. He wonders if he has angered God in some way to bring suffering on his people. This idea brings Beowulf much turmoil as the narrator says, "it threw the hero into deep anguish and darkened his mood: the wise man thought he must have thwarted ancient ordinance of the eternal Lord, broken his commandment" (*Beowulf* 159, 2327–2331). By examining his own actions to determine if he has done something wrong in the eyes of God, Beowulf is humbling himself in front of something or someone higher than himself. This response is a sharp contrast from Beowulf's attitude when he resolves to fight Grendel and his mother, as he is determined to fight them, but never considers failure, or the role of God in the suffering inflicted on Hrothgar's people.

This moment of humility is even more surprising when one considers that Beowulf's reputation is now cemented as "a man whose greatness has been ever before our eyes and who has twice overcome nearly invincible foes" (Reynolds 1978). At this moment in the poem, Beowulf's bravery and ability are unquestioned. The only one who doubts his ability to protect his people is Beowulf himself. Whether it is due to him gaining wisdom as he ages or him remembering Hrothgar's words about pride, Beowulf is now able to recognize that there is a power higher than him. He understands that no matter how great of a warrior and king he is, some things can be determined only by the almighty God. This display of humility is a great demonstration of Christian bravery, as it can be extremely difficult to acknowledge that he cannot control everything. As a king, he has authority over all of his people, but this instance of humbleness shows that even he answers to someone. In giving up this semblance of complete authority, Beowulf exudes bravery. Another instance where Beowulf represents Christian bravery is when he is willing to sacrifice his life for his people and does it for no personal glory. After Beowulf laments over the destruction caused by the dragon, he resolves to go to combat no matter what the consequences. Though fighting is his choice, the danger of the situation makes Beowulf realize that "after many trials, he was destined to face the end of his days in this mortal world; as was the dragon, for all his long leasehold on the treasure" (*Beowulf* 159, 2341–2344). For the first time in the tale, Beowulf seems resigned to the fact that this will be the final battle of his life. Regardless of this realization, Beowulf readies himself for battle, as giving up his life is a sacrifice he feels he must make. Beowulf's courage is commendable because he "never wavers as he vows that now, as king, he will fight for his people just as he had fought for his Lord" (Reynolds 1978). This sacrifice is an example of Christian bravery, as he is willing to give up the most precious thing any man has—life. He wants to do this in the interest of the common good. He knows that his sacrifice will free his people from the tyranny of the dragon, and that is

more important to him than living on. True to his word, Beowulf defeats the dragon, though he is mortally wounded and abandoned by many of his comrades. The poem ends as it began: with a funeral.

Although *Beowulf* explores many Christian themes, it seems to be a tale that is told primarily through a pagan point of view. Throughout the tale, Beowulf displays his inclination to play the role of the quintessential Anglo-Saxon hero. He focuses on glory and treasure as the motives in fighting the monster. Even though Beowulf's attitudes shift toward a more Christian perspective later in his life, he still holds on to his pagan ideals as he ensures that his people receive the treasure from the dragon in his last moments. *The Hobbit*, on the other hand, follows *Beowulf* closely in structure and theme but differs in the fact that it seems to be written from a heavily Christian perspective. Bilbo displays these Christian ideals in demonstrating extraordinary mercy and humility in times of turmoil; however, he also displays some Anglo-Saxon ideals through the transformation of courage he experiences on his adventure. The stories are similar in that each includes a hero that must live up to high expectations, histories interwoven with these expectations, monsters that seem to increase in their ability to terrify, and a dragon (Christensen 1989). When examining *Beowulf*, an Old English poem, it is extremely illuminating to view it in comparison to *The Hobbit*, a fantasy inspired by the Old English tale.

When one thinks of *The Hobbit*, the Christian ideals that are present throughout may be the ones that come readily to mind; however, it is important to discuss the Anglo-Saxon ideals present in the work of literature to understand how it was inspired by *Beowulf*. The story begins with Bilbo, a hobbit (a race of people known for living quiet lives). Bilbo is approached by a wizard named Gandalf to aid 13 dwarves on their quest to steal some gold from a dragon named Smaug. While Bilbo is very reluctant at first, as he continues the journey, he steps into his role as a leader. The Anglo-Saxon

version of bravery seems present within Bilbo as he grows more confident throughout his adventure. This idea is seen when Bilbo faces various monsters, including trolls, spiders, and other creatures. A moment that represents Bilbo's courage being brought to the forefront is when Bilbo uses an elven sword and kills a giant spider to free his captured friends. Following this instance, Bilbo, referring to his sword, says, "I will give you a name … and I shall call you Sting" (Tolkien 156). This moment is significant as Bilbo steps into his role as a leader and embraces it. The narrator describes Bilbo as feeling "changed" after this moment, as he does something purely brave without hesitation for the first time in the story (Tolkien 156). This occurrence also represents a moment of Anglo-Saxon bravery as it emphasizes the physical ability of Bilbo in killing a giant spider. He displays markedly improved skills as he performs the action of stabbing his foe. He can put aside his fears for the sake of his friends. This response is the same kind of bravery that Beowulf demonstrates in his battle with Grendel as "even in the face of seeming doom, courage shines through" (Schmoll 2020). It is an act of physical bravery that finally puts Bilbo in the role of a hero. To fight against what seem like impossible odds is a quintessential example of pagan bravery. It is unflinching courage in a situation that does not provide much hope for such a feeling.

While the Anglo-Saxon ideals present in *The Hobbit* may be hard to come by, the same cannot be said for examples of Christian bravery. One way that Bilbo demonstrates such bravery is when it comes to his encounter with Gollum. After Bilbo becomes separated from the rest of the party, he finds a ring and keeps it without giving it much thought. After this occurrence, he stumbles upon Gollum's cave in the Misty Mountains, and the two engage in a game of riddles where Bilbo proves to be Gollum's equal. Gollum plans to defeat Bilbo by using his ring (the ring found by Bilbo) as it has the power to turn him invisible, but he cannot find it. Gollum suspects that Bilbo has the ring and confronts him. Bilbo slips on the ring and becomes invisible. Bilbo's instance of bravery

through mercy occurs as he contemplates killing Gollum. He soon concludes that he cannot kill Gollum. This is because it was "not a fair fight. He was invisible now. Gollum had no sword.… And he was miserable, alone, lost. A sudden understanding, a pity with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart" (Tolkien 87). This event is an instance of extraordinary sympathy and mercy on Bilbo's part. This action also takes an incredible amount of courage as Gollum, at this point, is a monstrous creature that preys on goblins. To let him go is to condemn himself to having an enemy for the rest of his life, yet Bilbo makes this bold choice. This creature is a formidable foe by any measure, and he is one that does not care for anything but himself. Gollum reveres only one thing, and that it is the ring. He has no redeeming qualities to lead to the "awakening of the feelings of pity and mercy" from Bilbo (Nelson 2002). Another way that Bilbo demonstrates Christian bravery is through his humility and self-sacrifice. This occurs when a war between the party and the elves seems to be impending, and Bilbo does something at his own expense. Bilbo steals Thorin's Arkenstone, a symbol of his fallen house and stolen title. This response creates what seems to be an insurmountable rift between the two companions but also holds off the war and saves countless lives. Thorin is quite angry at first, but he recognizes Bilbo's noble actions as he says, "There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. --Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure" (Tolkien 290). Thorin recognizes the fact that Bilbo is willing to sacrifice their friendship and face any punishment Thorin may impose upon him if it means preventing bloodshed. This is an exceptionally brave act, as Thorin could have chosen to never forgive Bilbo and to punish him. Moreover, the other dwarves could have turned on Bilbo for betrayal, leaving him in an especially precarious situation. Despite the possible consequences, Bilbo goes ahead with his plan, as he knows that saving lives is much more important than whatever may happen to him. This is also an instance of humility, as Bilbo recognizes that some things are bigger than he is. Bilbo "offers the Arkenstone in a way that sees beyond himself" (Polk 2018). This is an opportunity for him to be

selfish and go with the status quo of the party, but he decides against it because he knows that personal comfort means little in the face of potential suffering for many others. He considers himself to be small in the grand view of the world.

Beowulf is an Old English poem that details the journey of warrior Beowulf in his fight against monsters and a dragon. In the beginning of the tale, Beowulf seems to be an Anglo-Saxon hero, as the primary focus is on his physical strength; however, there is a shift in tone as Beowulf grows older and he comes to consider the role of God in his life and understands the position of sacrifice. *The Hobbit* is a novel that can draw many parallels with *Beowulf* in the structure of the plot. It is a story that centers on a hobbit named Bilbo Baggins and the adventure he goes on in search of gold. *The Hobbit*, contrastingly to *Beowulf*, focuses on the Christian themes of mercy and humility. Throughout the journey, however, Bilbo grows in pagan courage to rescue his friends. Both stories are tales of bravery, courage, and transformation. The instances that occur in these tales change the protagonists in marked ways. They grow and learn from those around them, no matter where their bravery stems from.

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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
pray for us!