January 1972

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Abstract
Gives examples of several types of heroism: the survival-hero, whose heroism is a reaction to a hostile environment; the destiny-hero, who has been chosen to fulfill a task beyond his normal capabilities; the honor-hero, motivated by a desire for reputation and fame; and the ethic-hero, whose self-respect demands he act when circumstances arise that require it. Describes the moral framework of Middle-earth as one that constantly presents opportunities for heroic action, which in turn influences and supports later heroic actions through providing examples to emulate, clues to effective action, or heirloom objects that assist later heroes. In this framework, all heroic actions against evil are valuable and have consequences.

Keywords
Hero, Theories of; Heroism in J.R.R. Tolkien

This article is available in Mythcon Proceedings: https://dc.swosu.edu/mythpro/vol1/iss3/4
Most previous studies of the heroic in Lord of the Rings have focused on Frodo the "true Hero." However, although Frodo's quest was one of the most important acts of the Third Age of Middle-earth, this approach is too superficial to be able to explore in any detail the nature of heroism in Middle-earth. The Lord of the Rings contains written excerpts of the story of "The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King" (as written by the Little People), being a sequel to the stories of Frodo in the Shire, supplemented by the accounts of their friends and the learning of the Wise. Together with extracts from "The History of Middle-earth," written by J.R.R. Tolkien in the Shire, this material is rich in information about the nature of heroism in Middle-earth.

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The HEROIC in MIDDLE-EARTH

by Robert Foster

motivation which we will shortly see is of great importance in Middle-earth from other motivations.

Since almost every situation in Middle-earth is heroic, these terms become less appropriate in describing the heroes of Middle-earth than in other historical or fictional contexts. For example, Frodo's heroism was not due merely to the size of his creation, but because he was chosen by some outside (usually higher) force to perform a task.

However, in the context of Middle-earth, there is at least as much heroism in any part of Middle-earth as there is in the most intense traditional epic earth as there is in the most intense traditional epic.
wrought causality or continuity that explains and complements the transformations of the world. Tolkien's concept of the heroic universe is thus one in which thinking beings are given the opportunity to use the ultimate powers that are available to them. But Tolkien's conception of the heroic universe is also a real struggle for survival against evil, and where every person's effort affects the overall situation. This is by no means a unique conception, and aspects of it have been discussed in earlier works. But Tolkien's great accomplishment lies in having clearly perceived this ideal and then devising a self-contained world in which both the depth of individual heroism and the breadth of collective heroism are maximally expressed while lessening each other; indeed, he manages to make them complement and amplify each other, as they should.

There is nowhere in LOTR the artificiality and isolation of the world of life, particularly of the adventures in Chretien's Erec, for example the wasteful Joy of the Court, or motivate the customs of Arthur's court; there is nowhere the specific demands of the heroes which interfere with the completion of heroic interactions in the Iliad; there is nowhere the avoidance of heroic action to be found, for example, at the court of Broth-

All of this is on what can be called the historical level, i.e., from the viewpoint of the chronicles of Middle-earth, and as such gives an accurate idea of Tolkien's conception of the nature of a heroic cosmos. There are three further conceptions which should be examined. The first is that of moral causality, which is rather obvious if one postulates a heroic world; the difference between Tolkien's heroic society and the artificial society of the medieval court is that in Middle-earth, war is an end in itself, and the meaning of the guards on their borders. However, Tolkien realizes that this is what right is for the Hobbits, and so protect the Shire from the terrors of the rise of Sauron. While the Hobbits grow so powerful that they almost forget the meaning of the guards on their borders. However, Gandalf realizes that the Hobbits have a great strength resulting from their simplicity and lack of ambition (like The Virtinian) or are told by a narrator who assumes himself, his audience and the protagonist to be part of societies similar to us in their attempts to comprehend the ideals and morality involved. This assumption is given a negative proof by Don Quixote, which would not be funny were it not for the fact that Quixote is confusing the purpose of his adventure. There is an obvious difficulty here, since none of us can be expected to understand Middle-earth before reading LOTR. Tolkien, working in a tradition which had become long with the problem for ages to solve the problem very skillfully by presenting the story from the point of view of Hobbits, who are akin to us in their relative ignorance of the heroic and of history. This, of course, means that the history has to wait until the Appendices, but Tolkien is such a good writer (and scholar) that enough hints and heroic motifs are placed in the narrative deixis to make us aware of the smoothness or credibility of the text, to make us aware of these different levels of Middle-earth, and as such gives an accurate idea of the heroic world this is enough. The Hobbits are perhaps the best example of this type of heroism. Small and naturally peaceful, they want nothing more of the world than the opportunity to earn six meals a day for themselves and their families, and to be left untroubled by the outside world. The Rangers have realized that this is what right is for the Hobbits, and so protect the Shire from the terrors of the rise of Sauron. While the Hobbits grow so powerful that they almost forget the meaning of the guards on their borders. However, Gandalf realizes that the Hobbits have a great strength resulting from their simplicity and lack of ambition, and he finally decides that he will need such strength to defeat Sauron. The fact that Bilbo comes to possess the Ring by accident may indicate that the Valar felt this way also. In any case, Gandalf
chooses the two most abnormal (i.e., most interested in outside matters). Bilbo always repays his trust, the former keeping the Ring for sixty years without falling under its spell and the latter using its Hobbitish stubbornness and purity to overcome all. But Bilbo also completes a Quest whose physical and mental horrors would have destroyed anyone of a greater prowess and pride. Frodo is a true hero, because, as a result of the teaching of Bilbo, he becomes the Ring-bearer, and at the end of it, he gains insight into the nature of his actions. Bilbo is less of a hero because, although he performs great deeds, he does so irregularly and during the course of an adventure without direct historical consequence (from his viewpoint), and thus is more of an adventurer than a hero. Although Bilbo is a true hero and exemplifies the two directions that this enhanced heroism takes, Gandalf supports them, saying, "It is true that if these hobbits understood the danger, they would not dare to go. But they would still wish to go, or wish that they were up to it, and so I think, Elrond, that in this matter it would be well to trust rather to their friendship than to great wisdom." (I 356) Merry and Pippin go around and around again, waiting for something to do, when they suddenly begin to act with amazing courage, their love and loyalty overcoming their immensity in the world. Although the Elves' example of this double nature, for, inspired by his great love for Frodo, he performs deeds as great as those of any warrior, but every time he has a chance to catch his breath he begins to voice his desire to be back in his beloved Shire. Sam is in many ways a survival hero, but his Hobbit virtues, especially his love for Frodo, have caused him to develop a wider and deeper notion of his life. However, it has to be admitted, although he never glories in the Quest, and probably doesn't really understand it, he accepts that it must be accomplished.

Men are more straightforward in their approach to heroic activity. Although some of them are cowardly or run-of-the-mill, others, especially the descendants of the Edain, are noble and heroic, delighting in feats of arms but warring only when necessary. The Rohirrim exemplify this simple heroism best, and although they can be misled by their emotions (especially pride and fear), their character is a clear example of that. Their favorite beliefs, is that a man who does not lie cannot be tricked by a liar. The most interesting Men, however, are the descendants of the Edain, who have been greatly enhanced by the long years of combat with the Eldar in Numenor and by a small number of intermarriages with the Elves, until they became the noblest, most skillful, most discriminating of Men. Boromir and Faramir, the sons of the Steward of Gondor at the time of the War of the Ring, exemplify the two directions that this enhanced virtue can take. Boromir, the elder, is the greatest captain Gondor has seen in many generations, a proud, magnificent man mighty in arms, a great leader filled with scorn and loathing for Sarou and his works, the kind of prince movie aday says "strides across across the top of history." The other side of him is his loyalty to his brother in glory and his father's affection; he is smaller and gentler, and, although he is an excellent soldier of strong will and is much loved by his men, he cares more for lore and music than battle, and fights only because Gondor is threatened. Yet in the end, Faramir is greater than his brother, for the latter becomes jealous of his fame and also falls under the spell of the Ring in his pride. Faramir, however, refuses the temptation of the Ring, at least in part because he had indirectly sworn not to covet it, and during the War of the Ring, Aragorn, being the direct descendant of his men and comforter of the despairing: discerning Aragorn's worth, he welcomes him with no thought for his own insulation, but completely, wholeheartedly without thought for his own personal response to the challenge of his heroic world; he becomes the greatest hero of the Third Age because the times and his lineage allow and require it, because the Ring, as it is, is not foolish, but because it is the only way he can win Arwen.

The Dwarves are not heroic. Although they can be faithful and generous, their traditions and habits drive them to an everlasting commitment of honor and pride. However, the Dwarves are unheroic not so much because of this as because they are somehow not part of the whole world of Middle-earth: the Dwarves are a race apart. (III 512)

Last come the Elves, who are different from Men in that they are gentler, wisest, more interested in beauty, the spirit of nature and the universe, and do not die until they are proud of their open-ended existence. If you are going to live for seven or eight thousand years, a life devoted to prowess, or even to government will soon become boring; only the life-style of the Elves, who are in the service of the eternal forces of nature can be satisfying. Thus the Elves love trees, the Sun and Moon, water and, above all, the unchanging stars. They fight like Men, but they do not take great joy in feats of arms. The Elvish psyche is thus not heroic, although Elvish songs celebrate the deeds of heroes. Elves often act heroically, but it is not the Edain and their descendants as admirable because of their unseljalish and steadfast defense of the good.

This leads to the conclusion that perhaps Middle-earth is not a heroic cosmos in the sense that I have been using the term up to this point. However, it is certain that there is an important heroic factor integral to Middle-earth, although perhaps less important to Men. That it must be combined with the gentler Elvish virtues to achieve lasting success is shown by Beren and Luthien, Earendil, the seduction of the Elven-smiths and their enslavement of the Nazgul, Aragorn and Arwen, Faramir and Boromir and the Dunedain in general. This makes sense, for mortals to be remembered and honored must prove their worth, while immortals need not depend upon a handful of exploits for their fame. And, in the final struggle in the Third Age, both the Mannish and the Elvish ways needed to be combined with the non-heroic, practical kvetching courage of the Hobbits. This suggests that Tolkien's conception of the true hero (as opposed to the mere doer of deeds) is that of a "heroic" nature (such as that of the great Edain, Dunedain and Rohirrim, and also such as that of Aragorn, who is this as because they are not a part of the whole world of Middle-earth: the Dwarves are a race apart. (III 512)

The Hobbits, however, serve to embody the universal warning that a hero of any type must never forget to guard against pride and its many temptations.

1. This paper is a greatly revised version of one written for a course in the Heroic Narrative given at Columbia University, where I was Medal holder in 1967. It was intended to Preface Robert Hanning and the other members of the class for their part in our discussions of the various types of heroes and heroism. All page references are to the Ballantine LotR.

2. By this I mean that the society is not based on present or past society, but is either an imaginative construct or is carefully based on a very detached idealization of the heroic societies of the past. Middle-earth is an example of the latter, while E. R. Eddison's Zimiamvia, where Venus creates worlds and adventures for the delight of her hero (who is herself) is an example of the former.
3. I am here using "religion" in the sense in which the word is used in the 礢is postulates of human institutions or superior beings on an entire culture; although this statement is therefore almost a tautology, it has value when compared with the religious philosophy of the Iliad. The Iliad has no absolute morality, and its religion is mere favor-seeking; the gods are petty and egocentric.

4. Religion is an important factor in The Virginian, but the only religion that Wyoming takes seriously is an institution which offers moral interpretations in an advisory capacity; the ultimate decision rests with the individual. Wyoming is almost completely Middle-Ohio, but there is there an element of moral causality which is absent in Wyoming, and a closer interaction between the supernatural and the natural.

5. The literary parallels that come to mind are the sensuously corrupt and decadent southern realms in To the City.

6. In one of the few explicit metaphysical statements in LOTR, Aragorn says, "Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man's part to discern them." (II 40)

7. The similarities between Morgoth's fall and Feanor's rebellion and the downfall of Satan and original sin are inescapable.

8. As Sam points out, "Beren ... was in a worse place and a blacker danger than ours ... Why, to think of it, we're in the same tale still." (II 408)

9. Sauron is without question more powerful, even without the Ring, than the Free Peoples at the time of the War, and thus the aid given by the Valar is necessary, to make the War meaningful as a struggle of good against evil and as a heroic exercise. The aid given by the Valar is indirect and, more important, inherent to the patterns of Middle-earth, and so does not in any way lessen the Free Peoples' heroism in the mind of the reader. Era is only mentioned twice in passing in LOTR, and these references, like the history of the Wizards (who, although Valar, fit into Middle-earth patterns), are confined to the Appendices. Thus, the narrative of LOTR contains no explicit statements of divine intervention, except to me that it helps the structure of the cosmos, even without consciously knowing what they are. 10. Except in the Shire, where the decision to be unheroic was intentional and carried out completely; there was no pride in military prowess in the Shire, or of almost any kind of prowess except perhaps eating.

TRANSCENDING THE IMAGES (continued from P.5)

That's the issue. We have our modern explanations for everything and we idolize them as the truth. But they are only images. I think Lewis is a very avant-garde, forward looking thinker. He has gone beyond the idolizing of the image of modern times, but yet does not advocate a return to the Medieval model. He is saying that we should see the image but let it remain transparent. See beyond the image to the truth that it implies. To see in this way, and to accurately explain it in this way, is a very human, and human, language.

I would hope that we in the Society could be aware of the models and how they work, both our own Modern and the Medieval models, and that we might have an open-mindedness and a tolerance. It is interesting that Lewis is talking about how the spirit of the age, the intellectual life of a culture, influences the scientific discoveries that the culture produces to bolster its world view. I think we are seeing a change in the idolized truths of the 20th Century. Our culture is radically different, in many ways, from what it was 10 years ago. We are seeing the changes become more stabilized and institutionalized and given the blessings of the Establishment. It seems that we are seeing a great undercurrent of change in philosophy, religion, psychology, etc., and in the way we understand how things are; in fact a new cultural model. I hope that the Mythopoeic Society can participate in this. Although we are far too small to influence our culture directly, we can, by being open to the images directly and transcending them at the same time, get away from the narrow-mindedness of thought in our culture. That is my hope.

FOOTNOTES:
1) The Theology of Romantic Love: a study in the writings of Charles Williams by Mary McDermott Shideler

2) Psychological Reflections by C. G. Jung

3) Two Essays on Analytical Psychology by C. G. Jung

4) The Iliad has no absolute morality, and its religion is merely favor-seeking; the gods are petty and egocentric.

5) Shire, where the decision to be unheroic is intentional and carried out completely; there was no pride in military prowess in the Shire, or of almost any kind of prowess except perhaps eating.

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