



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 30
Number 1

Article 9

10-15-2011

The Lord of the Rings' Interlace: The Adaptation to Film

Emily E. Auger
Independent Scholar

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Auger, Emily E. (2011) "*The Lord of the Rings'* Interlace: The Adaptation to Film," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 30: No. 1, Article 9. Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol30/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSUTM

Online Summer Seminar 2023

August 5-6, 2023: Fantasy Goes to Hell: Depictions of Hell in Modern Fantasy Texts

<https://mythsoc.org/oms/oms-2023.htm>



The Lord of the Rings' Interlace: The Adaptation to Film

Abstract

An investigation of how Tolkien's interlacing narrative technique is translated in the recent film trilogy, and in particular, Jackson's method of interlacing Isildur's story, Gollum's torture in Mordor, and Elrond's expanded council with foreshadowings and re-echoings of dialogue and visual cues.

Additional Keywords

Interlace structure; The Lord of the Rings (film trilogy). Dir. Peter Jackson—Narrative structure; Tolkien, J.R.R. The Lord of the Rings—Narrative structure



THE LORD OF THE RINGS' INTERLACE: THE ADAPTATION TO FILM

EMILY E. AUGER

J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S *The Lord of the Rings* was rewritten as a film script by Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh, and Philippa Boyens and the film itself released in three parts that more or less coincide with the volume divisions of the original text: *The Fellowship of the Ring* ([FR] 2001), *The Two Towers* ([TT] 2002), and *The Return of the King* ([RK] 2003).¹ In the film, as in the text, interlace is used to amplify and expand upon the central "matter" of the narrative in a manner that dramatizes its status as myth.² This paper identifies the specifically filmic variations of Tolkien's interlace involving cross-cutting apparent in the extended DVD editions of the trilogy: the appendix is a list of the occasions of interlace and the paper itself is a discussion of how the interlace technique is applied in the development of particular aspects of the lives of Isildur, Gollum, and Elrond in the film relative to the text.

All of the three types of narrative interlace found in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* [*LotR*, to distinguish it from the movies] also characterize Alan Lee's illustrations for that text (Auger 2008). These types include structural interlace, which involves achronological order, such that events are placed out of natural time so as to enhance and draw out associations—similarities and dissimilarities—between characters, events, and themes; stylistic interlace, which refers to the repetition or restatement of a particular theme or other element as a way of both emphasizing it and exploring its potential implications;³ and pictorial interlace, which refers to the manner in which the movements of characters and the obstacles and furtherances they encounter are imbricated with

¹ The literature related to *The Lord of the Rings* and Peter Jackson's films is too vast for citation here. Readers may turn to the essays in *Tolkien on Film: Essays on Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings*, edited by Janet Brennan Croft, and *From Hobbits to Hollywood: Essays on Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings*, edited by Ernest Mathijs and Murray Pomerance, for some of the more recent papers on the films.

² See Vinaver (76-77) for this definition of interlace. T.A. Shippey devotes several pages to interlace, with special attention to Tolkien's use of proverbs in "The Road to Middle-Earth" chapter titled "Interlacements and the Ring." While this approach is of scholarly interest to the subject of interlace in general, it is not further developed here.

³ See Leyerle for these definitions, particularly pages 4 and 10-11.

the environment itself such that all are “apprehended like an image” (Fein 232), or as if the environment itself were a projection of the inner state and will of the characters (Burlin). In both Tolkien’s text and Lee’s illustrations, structural interlace is frequently apparent in the moments dedicated to story, dream, and fortune-telling because they intertwine past, present, and probable future events; stylistic interlace appears in the frequent restating of such themes as love and loyalty, and kingship and stewardship; and pictorial interlace appears so continuously that the physical aspects of the environment appear as a direct manifestation of the motivations and will of the various characters with regard to the quest.

These different types of interlace are also recreated in the film, though it does not incorporate all of Tolkien’s characters and events, and cross-cutting generally serves to further the effects of continuity editing expected by today’s film audiences. The interlace that is most unique to the film, best described as a kind of structural interlace, is the re-presentation of certain motifs and lines of dialogue with variations, often by cross-cutting, in a manner that serves to enlarge on the matter. Sometimes these follow Tolkien, some adapt the text, and some add to it. As the appendix to this paper demonstrates, the principal method of interlace unique to the film involves visual re-presentations of particular events, often with voice-overs from individuals who are disassociated in time and/or space from the accompanying images. Here, just a few of these film treatments are elaborated with reference to the text, notably those applied in the development of the story of Isildur, Gollum’s torture, and Elrond’s “council,” not only the council at which the fellowship is established, but the expanded “council” highlighted in the film which also involves Elrond’s private communications with Gandalf, Aragorn, Arwen, and Galadriel.

The Fellowship of the Ring

The Fellowship of the Ring text begins with a prologue about the life and interests of hobbits. The film opens with a different prologue in which Galadriel’s voice-overs and related visuals present an abbreviated version of the long history of the Ring, including its forging, Isildur’s taking of it from Sauron, and its passage to Gollum and then Bilbo. The inscription is not read aloud, but it is seen twice: on Sauron’s finger just after it is made and then in the battle in which Isildur uses his father’s broken blade to slice off Sauron’s finger. It falls to the ground, and the inscription continues to glow even as Isildur picks it up and holds it in his hand. The film then turns to material included in Tolkien’s original text prologue about the life and interests of hobbits, presenting it as if it were the first chapter of the book Bilbo is trying to write. After this, the *Fellowship* film follows the sequential order of events in the text fairly closely, allowing for edits, character confluences and expansions, dialogue adaptations and reassignments,

alterations in tone, and visual explorations of the sets appropriate to the new medium. Much of the structural interlace is of a light-handed familiar kind that hardly warrants the label; and it tends to be “true” to the book, if not always taken exactly from it, as in Bilbo’s story-telling of his adventures in *The Hobbit*, references to Bilbo’s adoption of Frodo, and the obvious familiarity of the hobbit children with Gandalf’s fireworks. All of the principal props that serve as motifs for the larger history of the Ring are introduced in this first film, including the Ring itself, the Eye, and the *palantír*; and such secondary props as Bilbo’s sword Sting and his mithril armor. Some, such as Arwen’s jewel and the sword that was used to defeat Sauron in the past, variously called Narsil, the Sword of Elendil, and, when it is reforged, Andúril, are more extensively altered in the film in a manner contributing to the interlace effects.

In the book, it is many years after Bilbo’s party before Gandalf returns to explain to Frodo what he has learned of the Ring. When the inscription is revealed in the fire, he recites it:

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
(*LotR* I.2.50)

Frodo is appalled by what he is told and responds accordingly:

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo.
“So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” (I.2.51)

In his account of his research on the Ring, Gandalf also makes a short reference to the fact that Aragorn brought Gollum to him and of the possibility that he was tortured: “when we pressed him he whined and cringed, and rubbed his long hands, licking his fingers as if they pained him, as if he remembered some old torture” (I.2.58). Gandalf then leaves Frodo, without saying where he is going but promising to return for Frodo’s birthday (I.3.67). Frodo makes involved plans for his departure, including the sale of Bag End. When Gandalf fails to show up on the designated day, he follows through on these plans, and, disturbed by his encounters with and accounts of strange men on horseback, heads off with Sam, Merry, and Pippin to Bree, where he meets Strider/Aragorn and gets a belated message from Gandalf. Gandalf’s activities during this period are revealed in later chapters.

In the film, Gandalf’s departure from Bilbo’s birthday party and return with information about the Ring seem to take place in relatively quick succession, and allusions to Gollum’s torture are more explicit. After Gandalf’s

departure, the film cuts very briefly to a night scene at Sauron's stronghold, screams are heard ("Shire! Baggins!"), and some riders on black horses exit the gates (FR scene 8). Then the camera finds Gandalf going to study various manuscripts, including Isildur's own account of the Ring. Viewers hear Gandalf's voice reading aloud as they witness Isildur's claiming of the Ring from Sauron's severed finger: the inscription is seen again as he does so. By Isildur's own account the fates of the Ring and his own lineage are now bound together. The scene ends as the camera goes to a hobbit disturbed by one of the riders looking for the Shire. The next scene begins back in the Shire where some hobbits, including Frodo and Sam, are enjoying themselves at the Green Dragon pub (FR scene 9). In scene 10, Gandalf returns to Frodo, tests the ring by tossing it into the fire and, after the revealed inscription proves the ring is the Ring, he explains what he has learned from his studies; but, as in the prologue, no exact reference is made to the precise moment of Isildur's failure to destroy it when he had the chance. It is after the inscription has been made visible that, as in the book, Gandalf recites it. It is not seen again until the Ring is about to sink into the lava at Mount Doom (RK scene 70). As Gandalf says that he looked for Gollum but the enemy found him first, the camera returns to Sauron's stronghold. This time viewers understand better what is happening, as they now see the actual torture of Gollum: Gollum's long-fingered hands grasp upwards as he attempts to escape his restraints and the words of his screams can be made out even more plainly: "Shire!" "Baggins!" Likewise, the connection between the riders and the subsequent encounter of one of them with a lone hobbit is now clear, if it was not so before. Thus, whereas in the text, the torture of Gollum is merely alluded to at this point in the narrative, in the film it is already a moment for repetition and enlargement—for interlace—such that viewers, perhaps more readily than readers, may feel the pity for the creature that caused Bilbo to leave him alive in the encounter that transferred the Ring from Gollum to him so many years before.

The film then returns to the exchange between Frodo and Gandalf that ends with the decision that Frodo and Sam must take the Ring to Bree where Gandalf promises to meet up with them again after he has consulted with Saruman, a point he does not share with his accomplice(s) in the book at this time. The synchronicity of events is asserted by cross-cutting through the next few scenes as the camera takes us to Gandalf's incarceration by Saruman, thus making an earlier parallel to the incarceration of Gollum than appears in the text. Then the camera follows Sam and Frodo's meeting with Merry and Pippin in the corn field, an effective alteration of the manner in which the four hobbits come to travel together in the book. The meeting of the hobbits with Strider at the Prancing Pony, the group's departure for Rivendell, and the wounding of Frodo by the leader of the dark riders, are all likewise made chronologically

synchronous with Saruman's felling of trees to fuel the birth of his great army. Of these events, only the presentation of Gandalf's incarceration and the wounding of Frodo are developed in the film as cross-cut interlace.

The Council of Elrond (*LotR* II.2) in Rivendell is an opportunity for interlace taken up in both text and film, but it is handled differently in each. In the text, this Council is the occasion for lengthy histories and explanations of how the current state of affairs came to be prior to the establishment of the fellowship. Gandalf repeats the Ring's inscription in the language of Mordor and then in plain speech. He also reports that Gollum "went to Mordor, and there all that he knew was forced from him." Aragorn adds "He had suffered much. There is no doubt that he was tormented, and the fear of Sauron lies black on his heart." At this point, Gollum is supposed to be in the keeping of the Elves of Mirkwood, but Legolas informs the Council that he has escaped (II.2.254-55). The particular interlace that establishes Gollum's torture, more or less completed in the film by the sound of Gollum's screams from Mordor and the sight of his fingers clawing the air in a futile effort to escape, is thus completed later in the text narrative at Elrond's Council without the specific visual and auditory details that are presented in the film.

In the text, the Council is also the occasion of Elrond's description of the role of Isildur in taking the Ring from Sauron and elaboration on the fact that Isildur, after taking the Ring, failed to destroy it in the fires of Mount Doom. As he says, "Isildur took it, as should not have been. It should have been cast then into Orodruin's fire nigh at hand where it was made. But few marked what Isildur did" (II.2.243). The broken Sword itself, the Sword of Elendil, is then reforged (II.3.276-77).

In the film, the official Council (FR scene 27) is preceded by several events not detailed in the book. It is in a private conversation with Gandalf (FR scene 24) that Elrond expands the prologue account of Isildur, with accompanying flashback visuals, to include the exact moment of Isildur's failure to destroy the Ring at Mount Doom—only Elrond witnessed this failure. Then (FR scene 25), the camera finds Aragorn reading near the altar where Isildur's still broken blade rests. Boromir, whom we later learn was sent by his father, the steward of Gondor, to retrieve the Ring and bring it to him (TT scene 41), enters and admires a painting on a nearby wall showing the confrontation between Sauron and Isildur. Boromir then picks up the blade itself, cuts his finger on it, and lets it fall to the ground. After he departs, Aragorn puts it back where it belongs. Arwen enters and, after they relocate to a bridge (FR scene 26), gives Aragorn her jewel and repeats her choice of a mortal life with him. After the council (FR scene 27), Elrond finds Aragorn at his mother's tomb and speaks to him about the possibility of reforging the Sword, reminding him that only he, Aragorn, can wield it (FR scene 28). The Sword itself is not remade until much

later in *The Return of the King* (RK scene 10). In the film, the Sword, initially the means of Isildur's defeat of Sauron, and Arwen's jewel both become props marking the later interlace of an expanded treatment of Elrond's "council."

The film version of the official Council is more focused than is the text account on sanctioning the decision Elrond made 3,000 years before that the Ring must be taken to Mount Doom and destroyed. Frodo's crucial decision to volunteer for the job Isildur failed to complete is linked with a view of the Council participants angrily arguing reflected on the Ring's surface: no such reflection is described in the book. The inscription is not made visible at this point, but, as in the text, Gandalf speaks in the language of Mordor. What he says is unclear, unless you happen to speak that language—perhaps he is reciting the inscription, perhaps he is saying something else—it is only clear that his speech stops Boromir from actually touching the Ring. Although the film version seems to be much simpler, as in the text, the Council still serves as a kind of design "knot" where various narrative strands come together and then move on in new combinations. More noteworthy in the film, however, is the manner in which the interlace develops in the expanded treatment of Elrond's "council" such that it includes Elrond's meetings with Gandalf before it and Aragorn after it, and, as we shall see, with Galadriel and Arwen.

The Fellowship sets out from Rivendell and, as in the text, the filmic Fellowship of nine companions attempts to proceed through the Pass of Caradhras and then make the ill-fated trek through Moria. As in the text, these are moments of pictorial interlace, such that the mountain itself seems to come alive to prevent the group from passing that way. During a pause inside Moria, made while Gandalf tries to figure out which way to go (FR scene 34), Frodo sees Gollum for the first time and goes to tell Gandalf. Frodo expresses his regret that he ever came into possession of the Ring and Gandalf tells him that everyone who sees times such as these feels that way, but that he only has to decide what to do with the time he has been given. The lines Gandalf speaks are very similar to those spoken in the book (and not repeated there) during the conversation that takes place before Frodo even leaves the Shire. This is the point in the film at which Frodo learns that Gollum's name was once Sméagol and of Bilbo's feeling of pity for him. In the film, after Gandalf's apparent death in his confrontation with the Balrog and the later breaking of the Fellowship, Frodo recalls his own words and both Gandalf's face and his reply as he prepares to finish the quest alone (FR scene 46). This, like the repetitions and expansions of the account of Isildur and of Gollum's torture, is an instance of interlace that serves to enlarge the "matter"; in this case by enhancing the role of Gandalf's advice and adding depth and sense to Frodo's choice as well as, by association, the audience's feeling of pity, perhaps for Gollum, and certainly for Frodo.

In the film, the group's encounter with Galadriel—after the death of Gandalf the Grey—serves a similar purpose to that in the text, even though the role of the mirror may seem reduced in the film by the fact that only Frodo, rather than both Frodo and Sam, looks into it (FR, II, vii, 380-84). What Frodo glimpses is also more fragmentary and brief than the text description, but in both versions it strengthens his motivation to accomplish the quest. In the film, the scene ultimately focuses on the way the Ring draws the attention of the Eye. More important, however, to the differences between text and film is the initial meeting of the group with Celeborn and Galadriel. In the book, these intensely telepathic moments are given a brief treatment:

[...] she held them with her eyes, and in silence looked searchingly at each of them in turn. None save Legolas and Aragorn could long endure her glance. Sam quickly blushed and hung his head.

At length Lady Galadriel released them from her eyes, and she smiled.
(II.7.357)

What actually transpires in these moments becomes more apparent in subsequent paragraphs as the hobbits and Boromir each express their sense of what she was doing. Boromir specifically notes "Maybe it was only a test, and she thought to read our thoughts for her own good purpose" (II.7.358). Indeed, the gifts she provides the members of the fellowship at their departure are all exactly what each needs for their part in the coming challenges: food, cloaks, rope, and a magical light.

In the film, the initial meeting with Galadriel (FR scene 38) is far more dramatic, with intense looks and overlaps and incongruities between spoken words and telepathic ones, not to mention the unusual light reflections in Galadriel's eyes. That this is indeed Galadriel's best opportunity for gathering information telepathically and by her gift of foresight is, as in the book, subsequently made apparent as the usefulness of each of her gifts is revealed. In addition, and essential to the expansion of Elrond's council in the film, it is when Galadriel learns much that later causes her, in the film's most effective and crucial moment of interlace, to counsel Elrond in his final decision about the involvement of the Elves in the coming battle (TT scene 38).

The *Fellowship* film concludes with events from the end of Tolkien's Book Two, including the further breaking of the Fellowship such that Frodo and Sam go on alone; and the beginning of Book Three, including Boromir's death, the abduction of Merry and Pippin, and the decision of Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli to look for them.

The Two Towers and The Return of the King

Both the second and third films revise the order and content of Tolkien's book more than does the first, with a continued tendency to assert, where appropriate, the simultaneity or near simultaneity of events as they happen to the members of the now broken Fellowship and their enemies. Frodo and Sam acquire Gollum as a guide and advance toward Mordor through the Marshes, reach the Black Gate, are then re-routed by Gollum such that they meet up with Faramir and his men, and then proceed to what Gollum hopes will be their deaths in the cave that readers know is occupied by the monstrous spider Shelob. Merry and Pippin, mistaken at the end of *The Fellowship* for Frodo and Sam and taken captive by Saruman's forces, escape into Fangorn Forest where they meet Treebeard. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli search for Merry and Pippin and in the process meet up with the loyal, but banished, Éomer who informs them that Rohan's King Théoden is under a spell. They also renew acquaintance with the resurrected Gandalf. All four go to meet Théoden, whom Gandalf frees from the influence of the spell. Théoden then dismisses the manipulative Wormtongue. Wormtongue immediately goes off to report to and advise Saruman; thus, by Wormtongue's description of the ring Aragorn wears, Saruman learns there is a claimant to the throne of Gondor, and also that Théoden will likely, as he indeed does, take his people to the presumed safety of Helm's Deep. This passing of information also becomes part of an interlace about the attack on Théoden's people and on the sanctuary itself (TT scenes 27, 34, 36, 51).

More significantly, the second and third films further expand the roles of the female characters of Arwen and Galadriel well beyond what appears in the original text. In the *Two Towers*, flashbacks reveal that Elrond's "council" prior to the fellowship's departure from Rivendell included, not only his talk with Gandalf, but his successful counseling of Aragorn to leave Arwen so that she, in turn, will leave with her people and thus not suffer the fate of mortality and the doom he believes is about to befall Middle-earth (TT scene 33). Viewers learn of Elrond's interference in the relationship as Aragorn's thoughts drift, first as he rests with his pipe and again as he walks with the others towards Helm's Deep. As he smokes, he recalls Arwen's encouragement to recognize the path that is before him and then, as he walks, he recalls Elrond's demands that he let Arwen go so that she might live on with those of her kind, rather than die as a mortal. He then answers Éowyn's question about the jewel about his neck by saying that the woman who gave it to him is leaving to be with her people and that he will never see her again. Thus he has emotionally relinquished Arwen at the moment he is about to face a large scale battle. In a prelude to that battle, the people of Rohan are attacked as Théoden leads them to Helm's Deep, as per Wormtongue's advice to Saruman, and Aragorn is apparently killed, leaving

Arwen's jewel behind in an Orc's fist for Legolas to recover (and later return to him).

The effects of Elrond's counsel to Aragorn are set up for reversal in scenes 37, 38, and 39. Here, at the approximate midpoint of the entire trilogy and in the most intense application of interlace throughout, the questions that have arisen are articulated and reversals take place that lead first to the deepening hopelessness of the quest, but then, as events further unfold, to its success. In some respects, it seems that time is halted for these three scenes so that the preternatural influence of the Elves can have its effect. First, the love between Aragorn and Arwen is reaffirmed as the comatose Aragorn is blessed by the failing Arwen in a kind of dream (TT scene 37) such that Brego, a horse he previously had released (TT scene 24), comes to carry him to Helm's Deep; en route he gathers information about the army on its way to attack that stronghold. As after their last actual meeting, however, this reaffirmation of his bond with Arwen is followed by Elrond's counseling, this time of Arwen (TT scene 38): he persuades her that her relationship with the mortal Aragorn is hopeless by presenting her with a long, dark vision of the lonely and impossible future she will have if she stays with him—a vision that is fully realized visually in the film and punctuated by Elrond's eloquent voice-overs. Since her father has the gift of foresight, Arwen cannot help but listen to his counsel and agrees to do as he asks.

In scene 39, however, the "council" of Elrond is again expanded, as it is not in the text, as Galadriel, who was absent from the official Council, speaks to Elrond telepathically and with great intensity about what is unfolding, ending with the question: "The time of the elves is over. Do we leave Middle-earth to its fate, do we let them stand alone?" The answer, in scene 48, is clearly no, and the Elves provide the means by which Helm's Deep stands against Saruman's army until Gandalf's arrival with Éomer and reinforcements. Furthermore, after the battle for Helm's Deep has been won, when the departing Arwen has her own vision of her as yet unborn son and realizes Elrond lied to her, she reaffirms her earlier choice of a mortal life by returning to Rivendell to await her fate (RK scene 9). Elrond then has little choice but to do still more to improve the outcome for the world he was earlier fully prepared to forsake. At Arwen's request, he has the Sword remade, an event presented in the film as having the mythic dimensions appropriate to it with a smithy hammering the glowing metal back to its original form at night (RK scene 10). Disguised, Elrond takes it to the camp where Théoden is gathering an army for the defense of Minas Tirith. Aragorn, who is resting in a tent at that camp, wakes suddenly from a dream of Arwen and a repetition of her earlier words "I choose a mortal life" as her jewel falls and bursts into light (RK scene 30): this latter image becomes an associative point for a later part of the interlace when Aragorn uses the *palantír* to challenge Sauron so that he will not notice as Frodo and Sam approach the end of the quest (RK scene

60). Just as he awakens from this pre-battle dream, Aragorn is called to Théoden's tent to meet the unexpected visitor: Elrond reveals himself by pulling back his hood and dramatically presents the Sword to Aragorn. He advises Aragorn to use it to summon the ghostly Oath Breakers to turn the tide in the defense of Minas Tirith.

Thus, scene 38 of *The Two Towers* film, the moment when Elrond seems to win the battle to keep his daughter with him with a lie, or at least an incomplete truth, is followed immediately by Galadriel's communication and what turns out to be a commitment first to reaffirm the alliance between Elves and Men in the Battle for Helm's Deep and then to ensure the success of the battle for Minas Tirith and the return of the hereditary King to his throne. These events are crucial to the final destruction of the Ring, though that is accomplished, in the end, accidentally at the hands of Gollum when Frodo himself, like Isildur, turns away from the final goal.

Scene 40 of *The Two Towers* returns to the world of men and more, as Sam might say, "natural" forms of interlace, developing such parallels as those between Théoden and Denethor, Boromir and Faramir, Faramir and Aragorn, Merry and Pippin, and Frodo and Gollum, and Gollum and Sam, in the interests of developing the "matter" of kingship, stewardship, loyalty, and so forth. After scene 39 of the *Two Towers*, numerous instances of interlace set up previously or at that moment are completed, notably Arwen's vision and decision to disobey her father's counsel (RK scene 9), the destruction of Arwen's jewel (RK scenes 30, 60), Gollum as a murderer (IT scene 29; RK scenes 1, 32), and the Witch-king (RK scene 14; RK scene 45); but none are introduced. One possible and noteworthy exception is Pippin's vision through the *palantír* of the White Tree (RK scene 8), which he then sees (scene 11). The White Tree, however, has already been well established as a motif prior to this moment in that it appears on the banner and uniforms of Gondor. It is also in *The Return of the King* that the reforged Sword contributes to Aragorn's efforts to help Frodo accomplish his task, particularly when he uses it to summon the Oath Breakers, those whom Isildur cursed to live forever as ghosts for failing to honor their allegiance to him (RK scenes 30, 33). These subsequent events are narrated without introducing new interlaces, because the action is turning more emphatically to the events of a present in which what had been forgotten and lost has been remembered and reclaimed. Events in different locations are cross-cut together to complete the interlace designs already established, to enhance the simultaneous occurrence of events, and to move the action more directly forward to its conclusion.

Interlace is one of the most important techniques Tolkien used to mythologize his narrative and amplify significant events. In the film, interlace by cross-cutting is the principal technique whereby important events from the distant past are lent mythological dimensions in the present, as for example in

the treatment of the Ring and the Sword. It is also the principal technique whereby events in the lives of the main characters that will further that mythology are amplified, as, for example, the fate of Isildur after he destroys Sauron with his father's broken Sword, but then fails to destroy the Ring; the fate of Gollum who is literally forged by the Ring's effects and by Sauron himself into the instrument of the Ring's destruction; and, of course, Elrond in relation to his "council." Almost all that follows the last "council" of Elrond, in which Elrond, in effect, is finally counseled himself by Galadriel, turns ultimately toward the successful outcome of the quest. Elrond, in response to Galadriel's question "Do we leave Middle-earth to its fate, do we let them stand alone?" renews his former commitment to see the Ring destroyed. As before, he cannot personally throw the Ring into the fire, but his will to see that done, having survived for 3,000 years, is finally satisfied.

APPENDIX

This appendix is based on the extended *Lord of the Rings* DVDs, not the film scripts. It identifies each point in these DVDs at which cross-cutting between locations and/or across time, often with voice-overs that are disassociated in some way from the images shown, creates interlace. In some instances, it is the voice-over that provides a repetition, rather than the specific visual images.

Note: Scenes that set up or follow from and are thus part of such key moments of interlace, but which do not actually include this cross-cutting feature, are marked in italics.

The Fellowship of the Ring

- Scene 1 Prologue: Galadriel's voice-over provides a broad account of the making and history of the Ring and reveals the inscription (FR 10; RK 70), but does not include the details of Isildur's failure to destroy it (FR 8, 10, 24, 25; and RK 10), its original forging (RK 10); or anything about Gollum. (On the torture of Gollum, see FR 8, 10; as well as TT 3) (On Gollum as murderer, see TT 29; and RK 1, 6). The inscription glows on the Ring shown on Sauron's index finger soon after it is made and again as he goes into battle. The inscription still glows after the finger with the Ring is severed by Isildur using his father's broken Sword and as Isildur holds it in his hand.
- Scene 8 Gandalf leaves after Bilbo's party, telling Frodo to keep the Ring secret and safe. There is a brief cut to Sauron's stronghold and the

sound of screams (“Shire! Baggins!”), followed by Black Riders charging out of the gates. The film then follows Gandalf to a library where he finds and reads from Isildur’s own account of the Ring. The inscription is seen again in the visuals that show Isildur’s experiences (see FR 1, 10; and TT 3). The scene ends with another shot of a Black Rider in search of the Ring.

- Scene 10 Gandalf returns to Bag End to test the Ring: the inscription is revealed and Gandalf recites it. Gandalf also tells Frodo some of what he has learned in the library, particularly that Sauron survived and wants his Ring back (see also FR 1, 8, 24, 25; and RK 10). As he adds that he looked for Gollum but the enemy found him first, the camera turns to Sauron’s stronghold, as in FR scene 8, with added shots of the torture and again the screams, which are more audible now, of “Shire!” “Baggins!” Again the Black Riders are shown charging forward in their search of the Ring (see FR 8; and TT 3). The scene ends with Frodo and Sam on their way to the Prancing Pony where Gandalf plans to meet them after consulting the head of his order (Saruman).
- Scene 12 *Saruman shows Gandalf the palantír he has been using. Gandalf quickly covers it and in doing so, briefly touches it and realizes that it is a conduit to the Eye. Gandalf is then attacked by Saruman.* (See FR 22)
- Scene 19 *Frodo is stabbed by the Witch-king.* (See RK 14)
- Scene 22 When Frodo wakes up in Rivendell, he asks Gandalf why he did not meet them as planned. Gandalf says only that he was delayed; but the visuals cut to his incarceration, following the events seen in FR scene 12, on the top of Isengard by Saruman, and his escape with the help of a moth and an eagle.
- Scene 24 In a private conversation with Gandalf, Elrond expands the Prologue account and that in scenes 8 and 10 about the Ring, with accompanying flashback visuals, to include Isildur’s failure to destroy it. Elrond was the only one to actually witness this failure. (See also FR 25, 28; and RK 10)
- Scene 25 *Aragorn reads near the altar where Isildur’s broken blade rests. Boromir enters, admires a painting on a nearby wall showing the confrontation between Sauron and Isildur, cuts his finger on the blade, and lets it fall to*

- the ground. After he departs, Aragorn puts the blade back where it belongs. (See FR 1, 10, 24, 28; TT 39; and RK 10)*
- Scene 26 *Arwen enters the memorial room and she and Aragorn speak of the past. The setting changes to a bridge, where the pair embrace and continue their conversation. Arwen gives Aragorn her jewel. (See TT 33; RK 9, 30, 60)*
- Scene 27 *The Council of Elrond (Denethor, the Steward of Gondor, has sent his son Boromir to this council with orders to retrieve the Ring for Gondor, as is shown much later in scene 41 of the Two Towers.)*
- Scene 28 *Elrond finds Aragorn at the tomb of his mother and speaks to him about the possibility of reforging the broken Sword. Aragorn does not want the power the Sword would bring to him. The next scene (29) begins with Bilbo giving the sword Sting to Frodo, who accepts it gratefully.*
- Scene 32 *Saruman, who knows that the Fellowship is now heading through Moria, anticipates their failure due to the presence of the Balrog. The Balrog is first seen as an illustration in a book Saruman consults. (See FR 36; TT 1, 15)*
- Scene 34 *Inside Moria, Frodo sees Gollum for the first time. He and Gandalf have a conversation in which Gollum is identified as Sméagol, Bilbo's pity for the creature recalled, and Gandalf advises Frodo that despite his feeling of regret, all he can do is make up his mind about what to do with the time he has been given. (See FR 46)*
- Scene 36 *Gandalf's battle with the Balrog. (See FR 32; TT 1, 15)*
- Scene 38 *The surviving eight meet Galadriel. Although this meeting is strongly inflected with telepathic communication through voice-overs and dramatic camera work, it is not marked by visual cross-cutting beyond the immediate setting. It is, however, a moment at which Galadriel gathers a great deal of information about the members of the fellowship and its chances of success. (See FR 39, 41, and especially TT 39)*
- Scene 39 *Frodo looks into Galadriel's mirror and sees the disaster awaiting the Shire if he fails to destroy the Ring, as does Galadriel. This event is part of Galadriel's information gathering and contributes to her subsequent communications to Elrond. After Frodo sees what will happen to the Shire, she says "This task was appointed to you*

and if you do not find a way, no one will." (See FR 38, 41; TT 39; and, for a repetition of Galadriel's words to Frodo, RK 38)

- Scene 41 The companions take their leave of the Elves. The giving of gifts is carried out in memory flashbacks as the eight depart in the boats the Elves provide. This moment is one outcome of Galadriel's information gathering in FR scenes 38 and 39 and also interlaces with the subsequent uses that are made of the gifts, although in those scenes there are no visual flashback references to the gift giving moment itself. (See, for example, TT 2 for Sam's use of the rope Galadriel gives him and RK 38 for Sam's use of the light she gives to him)
- Scene 44-45 *Boromir is badly wounded defending Merry and Pippin from Saruman's troops and he dies.* (See RK 11)
- Scene 46 Frodo pauses before getting into the boat to cross the river and proceed to Mordor alone. He holds the Ring in his hand and recalls Gandalf's face and his advice (see FR 34). *Aragorn sees to it that Boromir is given a boat burial* (see TT 40 for Faramir's dream of this burial).

The Two Towers

- Scene 1 Prologue: Gandalf's battle with the Balrog is re-presented such that viewers are given more information about the battle after it disappeared from sight in scene 36 of *The Fellowship of the Ring* (see FR 32, 36; and TT 15). The camera then cuts to Frodo waking, such that the preceding sequence seems to have been his dream.
- Scene 2 *Sam and Frodo make good use of the rope Galadriel gave them.* (See FR 41)
- Scene 3 *Frodo orders Gollum to lead them to the Black Gate as Gollum recalls to himself what lies beyond those gates: since viewers already know he was tortured there, they may identify with his fear and reluctance even though there is no actual cross-cutting to the scenes of his experiences in Mordor or visualizations of the events from his point of view.* (See FR 10)
- Scene 10 *Merry and Pippin escape from the Orcs and Uruk-hai into Fangorn Forest.* (See TT 10, 15)

- Scene 12 Aragorn spots Merry and Pippin's trail, and, as he accurately reconstructs what happened, the camera cross-cuts to the two hobbits' earlier escape into Fangorn Forest. (See TT 10, 15)
- Scene 15 Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli, having picked up Merry and Pippin's trail (see TT 10 and 12), follow them into the forest where they meet the resurrected Gandalf. Gandalf explains what happened to him after they last parted: the accompanying visuals elaborate on what was initially presented of his battle with the Balrog (FR 32, 36) and what appears in the prologue of *The Two Towers*.
- Scene 23 *Gandalf, having released Théoden from Saruman's control, takes his leave of Edoras riding on Shadowfax. He tells Aragorn to look for him in the east on the morning of the fifth day.* (See TT 58)
- Scene 24 *Brego, the horse that was formerly ridden by the now deceased son of Théoden, is so nervous as to be deemed useless. Aragorn has him set free.* (See TT 37)
- Scene 25 *Wormtongue advises Saruman about the peculiar ring with a double serpent motif worn by the Ranger (Aragorn) who is aiding Gandalf and who also prevented Théoden from killing him rather than merely expelling him. Saruman, who finds the ring Wormtongue describes in a book, realizes that Gandalf believes he has brought the heir to the throne of Gondor into the battle.*
- Scene 27 Wormtongue continues to advise Saruman, now suggesting that Théoden will take his people to Helm's Deep as the camera cuts to those making that very journey. Saruman orders an attack on the travelers. (See TT 34, 36, 51)
- Scene 29 *Gollum calls Sméagol a murderer.* (See FR 1; and RK 1, 6)
- Scene 33 Aragorn first sits smoking, listening to Arwen's words of love in his memory, and then the scene shifts to what he describes as a dream, but which is also a memory, of an exchange with Arwen that took place at Rivendell. He is wearing the jewel she gave to him earlier in the film and Arwen tells him he must go with Frodo (FR 26). Then the scene shifts to Aragorn as he walks along on the road to Helm's Deep and his thoughts, with accompanying visual images, cut to Elrond's demands that he leave Arwen so that she can live on

- with her own people. Aragorn tries to return Arwen's jewel to her but she tells him to keep it. (See TT 38; and RK 9, 30, 60)
- Scene 34 *The party en route to Helm's Deep is attacked (See TT 27, 36, 51) and Aragorn is dragged over a cliff. His companions are almost certain that he is dead. Legolas finds Arwen's jewel in the hands of an Orc. (TT 37, 43)*
- Scene 36 Wormtongue explains the weakness of Helm's Deep to Saruman; the accompanying visuals show the grated waterway that runs under the walls of the sanctuary. Saruman shows Wormtongue the explosives and army with which he will breach the walls of Helm's Deep. (See TT 27, 34, 51)
- Scene 37 In a cross-cut scene between a reclining Arwen and a comatose Aragorn, Brego, the horse he previously had set free, comes to Aragorn and carries him to Helm's Deep. (See TT 24, 33, 34)
- Scene 38 Elrond presents Arwen with a very clear sense of her lonely future if she stays in the world of men. Visualizations of this future are accompanied by Elrond's persuasive words. Arwen agrees to migrate with the other Elves. (For related events, see FR 27; TT 33, 39; and especially RK 9, 10)
- Scene 39 The camera cuts between Galadriel and Elrond and then to visualizations of the situation and future Galadriel sees, including Saruman, the Eye, Gondor, Frodo and Sam with Faramir (TT 40), and the painting of Isildur (FR 25). She also points out that Frodo is realizing that the quest to destroy the Ring will claim his life and that Elrond knew this would be so all along because he foresaw it. She asks him whether the Elves are going to just leave or not. (See TT 48 for Elrond's decision)
- Scene 40 Frodo, Sam, and Gollum are taken temporarily into custody by Faramir. Faramir already knows that his brother Boromir is dead because he found his broken horn six days earlier and he dreamed of the boat that Boromir was laid to rest in. This dream is shown in the film. (See FR 44-45 for the death of Boromir and FR 46 for his boat burial)
- Scene 41 In a visualization of Faramir's memories of his brother, the camera goes from a scene with Faramir, Frodo, and Sam to an earlier time

in which Boromir is making a celebratory speech about the retaking of Osgiliath. His father, the Steward of Gondor, congratulates Boromir and tells him that Elrond is calling a council. Boromir is directed to go and bring the Ring back to Gondor. (See FR 27)

- Scene 43 *Aragorn arrives at Helm's Deep. Legolas returns Arwen's jewel to him.*
- Scene 48 *The Elves arrive at Helm's Deep.* (See TT 39)
- Scene 51 *Saruman's explosives breach the wall at Helm's Deep.* (See TT 27, 34, 36)
- Scene 58 The Battle for Helm's Deep seems hopeless, in spite of the help from the Elves. Then Aragorn sees the light of dawn shining through a window and recalls Gandalf's words, which are repeated in a voice-over (TT 23), about his arrival on that very morning. And Gandalf does arrive, with Éomer and all of Théoden's loyal soldiers to secure a victory in the battle for Helm's Deep.

The Return of the King

- Scene 1 Prologue: The film opens with the life of Sméagol, elaborating on how the ring was discovered, the murder that made it his, and his subsequent metamorphosis into Gollum. (See FR 1; TT 29; and RK 6)
- Scene 6 In one of Gollum's arguments with Sméagol, there is a visual flashback to the murder he committed so that he could take possession of the Ring. *Gollum also develops the plan to let Shelob kill Frodo and Sam so he can take the Ring again.* (See FR 1; TT 29; and RK 1, 68)
- Scene 8 Pippin takes the *palantír* from Gandalf and in it he sees the dead White Tree of Minas Tirith. There are no interlaced visuals while Pippin actually holds the *palantír*, but when Gandalf asks him what he saw, there is a brief cut to the Tree (see RK 47). Gandalf surmises that Sauron means to attack Minas Tirith. *He advises Aragorn to look for the "black ships" before he departs with Pippin for Minas Tirith on Shadowfax.* (See RK 30, 35)
- Scene 9 As Arwen rides away with her people, she has a vision of her as yet unborn son wearing her jewel (see FR 26; TT 33; and RK 30, 60).

There is a flashback as she recalls her father's face and his words that there is nothing for her in the world of men but death. Realizing that he lied, she immediately reverses her path and returns to Rivendell.

- Scene 10 Mortality begins to take hold of Arwen. As she retrieves the broken Sword from its altar, there is a visual flash to the moment at which it was used to slice off Sauron's finger (see FR 1, 10, 24, 28). She asks her father to have the Sword reforged and Elrond does so. (See RK 10, 29, 30, 35)
- Scene 11 *When Gandalf and Pippin go to Minas Tirith, Pippin sees the Tree that Gandalf already recognized from his description (ch. 8). When they meet Denethor, there is a brief visual cut to the death of Boromir as Pippin explains that he died trying to save their lives and then offers his own service to repay the debt. (See FR 44-45)*
- Scene 14 At Minas Tirith, Gandalf and Pippin discuss the current situation. Gandalf describes the Witch-king, who is briefly visualized arming himself and then as on the day Frodo was stabbed on Weathertop. (FR 19)
- Scene 29 *The army for the defense of Minas Tirith gathers at Dunharrow. The restlessness of the horses is attributed to the proximity of the mountain where the ghosts of the Oath Breakers reside. (See RK 30, 31)*
- Scene 30 A cloaked rider arrives at Dunharrow where the men are gathering for the defense of Minas Tirith. Aragorn dreams of Arwen and then sees the door into the mountain cave of the ghostly Oath Breakers. He hears Arwen say "I choose a mortal life. I wish I could have seen him one last time." Then he sees her jewel drop from its place about his own neck. As it breaks on the floor, it bursts into light. (For the dream fulfilled, see RK 60. For the jewel, see FR 26; TT 33; and RK 9)

Aragorn wakes suddenly and is immediately called to Théoden's tent where he finds Elrond himself is waiting to tell him that Arwen's fate is now tied to that of the Ring (RK 60). Elrond gives him the reforged Sword (RK 10) and suggests he use it to solicit the ghost army of the Oath Breakers to their cause (RK 29, 30); there is a brief flash at this point to an image in Aragorn's mind of the King of this army (RK 35).

Elrond also warns him that ships are coming in from an unexpected direction and will arrive at Minas Tirith soon (RK 8, 35)

- Scene 33 *Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli proceed along the mountain path in search of the Oath Breakers. Legolas tells how these men were cursed for failing to fulfill their pledge. The three come to the very door Aragorn saw in his dream (RK 30). In this instance, there is no cross-cutting between scenes, it is simply the same door that Aragorn saw earlier in his dream.*
- Scene 35 *Aragorn uses the Sword to successfully demand the support of the Oath Breakers. (See RK 10, 29, 30, 33) He leaves the mountain, thinking he has failed, and, seeing the black ships (RK 8, 30) on their way to attack Minas Tirith, he sinks to his knees in despair. At that moment the King of the Oath Breakers appears and promises to bring his army into the fight.*
- Scene 38 *Frodo uses the light given to him by Galadriel in his battle with Shelob (see FR 41). When he makes his initial escape and Gollum, who attacks him again, goes over the cliff, he collapses. He is revived by a vision of Galadriel and the sound of her earlier words to him "[I]f you do not find a way, no one will" (FR 39).*
- Scene 60 *Aragorn distracts Sauron by using Denethor's *palantir* to declare himself; he does this by raising the reforged Sword that was used by Isildur to defeat Sauron before. Sauron responds with an image of Arwen lying near death. Aragorn steps back in surprise because he believed Arwen had already left Middle-earth. He drops the stone and the jewel falls from his neck and breaks into light as in his earlier dream. (For the dream, see RK 30. For the jewel, see FR 26; TT 33; and RK 9, 30)*
- Scene 68 *Gollum attempts to strangle Frodo. (See TT 29; RK 1, 68)*
- Scene 70 *As Gollum sinks into the lava at Mount Doom, the Ring remains for a moment on the surface and the inscription reappears before it vanishes forever. (See FR 1, 10)*

WORKS CITED

- Auger, Emily E. "The Lord of the Rings' Interlace: Tolkien's Narrative and Lee's Illustrations." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 19.1 (2008): 70-93.
- . "The Lord of the Rings' Interlace: From Tolkien to Tarot." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 19.3 (2008): 317-330.
- Burlin, Robert B. "Inner Weather and Interlace: A Note on the Semantic Value of Structure in *Beowulf*." In *Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope*. Eds. Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving Jr. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1974. 81-89.
- Croft, Janet Brennan, ed. *Tolkien on Film: Essays on Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings*. Altadena, CA: Mythopoeic Press, 2004.
- Mathijs, Ernest, and Murray Pomerance, eds. *From Hobbits to Hollywood: Essays on Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings*. New York: Rodopi, 2006.
- Fein, Susanna Freer. "Thomas Malory and the Pictorial Interlace of *La Queste del Saint Graal*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 46.3 (Spring 1977): 215-40.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. 1957. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1971.
- Leyerle, John. "The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 37.1 (October 1967): 1-17.
- The Lord of the Rings*. Dir. Peter Jackson. Special Extended DVD Editions. New Line Home Entertainment. *The Fellowship of the Ring* 2002, *The Two Towers* 2003, and *The Return of the King* 2004.
- Shippey, T.A. *The Road to Middle-Earth*. Boston: Houghton, 1983.
- Thomson, George. "The Lord of the Rings: The Novel as Traditional Romance." *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 8.1 (*The Novel in England and Europe*) (Winter 1967): 43-59.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. Boston: HoughtonMifflin, 2004.
- Vinaver, Eugène. *The Rise of Romance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- West, Richard C. "The Interlace Structure of the Lord of the Rings." In *A Tolkien Compass*. Ed. Jared Lobdell. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1975. 77-94.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

EMILY E. AUGER has graduate degrees in History in Art and English Literature (University of Victoria) and has taught art history in Canadian and American universities for over twenty years. Her monographs include *Tech-Noir Film: A Theory of the Development of Popular Genres* (2011), *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics in and Beyond the Arctic* (2005, 2011), and *Tarot and Other Meditation Decks: History, Theory, Aesthetics* (2004, 2011). She is a contributor to the anthology *King Arthur in Popular Culture* (2002) and has published papers on interlace in Alan Lee's *Lord of the Rings* illustrations, genre and Pre-Raphaelitism in *Lady Audley's Secret*, and other subjects.