6-15-1987

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Peter J. Schakel

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Abstract
Although both Orwell and Lewis warned against the evils of totalitarianism in their novels, they did it from different theological and political perspectives. Both mythopoeic works recognize the danger in attempts to destroy myth.

Additional Keywords
Lewis, C.S. That Hideous Strength; Myth in C.S. Lewis; Myth in George Orwell; Orwell, George—As mythopoeic author; Orwell, George. Animal Farm; Orwell, George. 1984
That "Hideous Strength" in Lewis and Orwell
A Comparison and Contrast
Peter J. Schakel

On the face of it, C.S. Lewis and George Orwell seem totally dissimilar men. The one is a political conservative, the other a socialist and revolutionary (for, though Orwell was and is admired by conservative anti-communist Malcolm Muggeridge, one must remember that he advocated Democratic Socialism throughout his life); the other a Christian rationalist, and traditional British decency, humane and ecclesiastical hierarchies. He was opposed to the Church and religion. He was egalitarian in social outlook, forward-looking, progressive, although he wanted that progress to be based on values retained from the past. He valued imagination in others, but tended himself to emphasize practical, down-to-earth qualities more highly than imaginative ones.

Such common and contrasting elements form the background for similarities and differences between Lewis' That Hideous Strength and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. The two books were published at about the same time, 1945 and 1948 respectively, in response to the same perceived danger of totalitarianism - the Nazism of the past and the Stalinism of the present. Both authors depict the dehumanization and despoliation of life which would occur under such a regime, as a means of warning readers against the threat such organizations pose; but the characteristics each focuses on reveal significant differences in their outlooks. And though neither considers himself an "outsider" in part because of his Irish background, in part because he was not considered a threat to the state - or even human, are observed by two-way telescreens; posters everywhere proclaim BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU. Winston is employed in the Ministry of Truth, re writing old newspaper stories to conform with current official Party versions of what occurred. Newspeak (a contracted language which makes it impossible for its users to express, or even conceive of, unorthodox opinions or ideas) and Doublethink (the ability to accept an idea and its opposite simultaneously) prevent readers from noticing the changes. But Winston never learned Doublethink.

That "Hideous Strength" in Lewis and Orwell seems more desirous of moving backward to the best of the past than of moving forward to an uncertain future. He valued imagination in others, and showed a keen, though limited, imagination himself. Orwell on the other hand, identified with the working class and the poor. He himself was near the poverty-level much of his life, a socialist and revolutionary, rejecting the church and religion. He was egalitarian in social outlook, forward-looking, progressive, although he wanted that progress to be based on values retained from the past. He valued imagination in others, but tended himself to emphasize practical, down-to-earth qualities more highly than imaginative ones.

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The Party does not control him mentally: he can still raise questions and think critically and commit such Thought-crimes as "Down With Big Brother." The story follows Winston as he begins a love affair with Julia, a co-worker in his building, and as he attempts to find and join a subversive organization. It turns out, however, that the Thought Police have long had Winston and Julia under surveillance as possible rebels. They are arrested, taken to the Ministry of Love, tortured, brainwashed, and broken. The story ends with Winston realizing that now "he loves Big Brother."

Central to the story is the theme of dehumanization. Orwell's original choice of a title for the book was "The Last Man in Europe." Winston was
apparently the last man in Oceania who had not been
brainwashed by the Party’s propaganda and who had
escaped the effects of Thought-control; thus he was
the last person in Europe to retain the qualities of
the free use of intellect and moral choice, qualities
that for Orwell and Lewis alike give a person or
her humanity. “If you are a man, Winston,” says
O’Brien, his torturer, “you are the last man. Your
kind is extinct.” [4] According to the Party, the
masses, the manual laborers and the lower classes (the
Proletariat, or “Proles”), are considered sub-human.
The proles are not human beings,” Syme tells Winston
early on; and later O’Brien says, “They are helpless,
like the animals” (1984, pp. 47, 222). Animal imagery,
in fact, is used throughout the book for those outside
the Inner Party as well as for the Proles, which
reinforces the dehumanization theme. Homo sapiens
continue to exist, but as animals, totally trained and
regulated and controlled, not as human beings. The
central purpose of Orwell’s story is to warn that such
elimination of human beings is inevitable, ultimate,
and most devastating result of a totalitarian
government.

That it is inevitable is asserted and clarified by
Lewis as well as Orwell. Lewis, in The Abolition of
Man, warns that some men have got to take charge
of the rest — including unselfishness and a desire to
serve others — as their guides and norms, the only
persons who would be willing to rule would be those
who take pleasure in having power over others. In That
Hideous Strength having power over others is the
inducement for joining the totalitarian group: “Man
has got to take charge of Man. That means, remember,
that some men have got to take charge of the rest —
which is another reason for cashing in on it as soon
as one can. You and I want to be the people who do the
taking charge, not the ones who are taken charge of.”
(THS, p. 42) To take charge of Man is to treat human
beings as things, as objects over which man seeks
control. So it is in Oceania too, where the incentive
is simply and wholly the possession of power. O’Brien
tells Winston, “The Party seeks power entirely for its
own sake. We are not interested in the good of others;
we are interested solely in power.” (1984, p. 217)

Nineteen Eighty-Four does not explain how those
who possess power, those in the Inner Party, came
to possess it. That process is portrayed, however, in
Orwell’s earlier book, Animal Farm. It depicts
allegorically the revolution of the exploited working
class (the proletariat) against the monied, managerial
class — and clearly Orwell is sympathetic with that
revolution. The uprising of the animals against
Farmer Jones and their establishment of a socialistic
economy based on equality, of status, work,
and rewards, is the sort of peaceful but decisive
revolution of the laboring classes Orwell hoped would
occur in England during or immediately after World War
II. But the theme of Animal Farm as a whole is not
revolution, but the revolution betrayed. The latter
half of the book shows how the pigs gradually assert
priority over the other animals (“All animals are
equal, but some animals are more equal than others”
[5]), form an Inner Party which seizes power, and
impose repressive restraints and controls over the
other animals. At the end of the book, the pigs move
into the farmhouse and become indistinguishable from
Farmer Jones — as the policies of the Communist
party in the Soviet Union became barely distinguishable
from those of the Czar, against whose tyranny the people
revoluted in 1917. But Animal Farm and Nineteen
Eighty-Four are satires, warnings against the likely
culmination of tendencies Orwell saw in his society in
the 1930s and ’40s, not a realistic prediction of what
would occur. Orwell himself summed up his message
well: “Something like Nineteen Eighty-Four could
happen.... Don’t let it happen. It depends on you.”

That Hideous Strength which Lewis called “A
Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups,” describes the
expansion and growing threat posed by, and ultimately
the defeat of, a totalitarian plot in contemporary
England. The plot is quite simple. One half traces
the involvement of a young don of Bracton College, Mark
Studdock, in the N.I.C.E. (the National Institute for
Coordinated Experiments), a socio-political organiza-
tion whose aim is to gain total, absolute power over
the political and social structures of England and
thus over the lives of individuals. Mark participates
in the Institute’s moves to seize control of the city
of Edgestow, first by dominating it economically, then
by subverting its administrative structures, then by
turning it into police state. This is the initial step
in their scheme to control all England, and later to
link up with similar totalitarian groups around the
world. The other half of the plot focuses on Mark’s
wife Jane, who aligns herself with an organization
opposed to the N.I.C.E.. This group, living in the
Manor at St. Anne’s, has gathered around Elwin Ransom,
whose adventures on Mars (in Out of the Silent Planet)
and especially on Venus (in Perelandra) have rendered
him superhuman, a type of Christ. Jane comes
personally to accept the religious-humanistic values
the St. Anne's group embodies and her clairvoyant
powers are a crucial factor in its destruction of the
N.I.C.E..

In That Hideous Strength as in Nineteen
Eighty-Four the dehumanizing effect of a totalitarian
government is stressed. The social planners, police,
and bureaucrats of the N.I.C.E. deprives humans of
their freedom and dignity as fully as do the Pigs
and the Party in Orwell’s works. Dehumanization in the
N.I.C.E. occurs chiefly in two ways. First, in their
determination to gain complete conquest of nature,
the N.I.C.E. comes to treat human beings as only another
part of a machine, a proper subject for experimentation.
Thus, in the headquarters at Belbury, convicted
criminals (like Mrs. Maggs' husband) are caged up
alongside the menagerie of animals collected for
vivisection. They are dehumanized, second, by the very
allegiance which makes them members — or inner
members, at least, of the organization. Mark learns
that, if he is to become a member of the inner circle
of the N.I.C.E., he must destroy all moral sensitivity
—he must contract to a physical-cerebral shell like
Whiter, or become a hard, cold logical machine like
Frost, devoid of human responses. He learns the
N.I.C.E.'s ideal is a decapitated Head, kept
functioning by a machine which circulates juices and
oxygen through it. That he is able to resist the
pressure to follow Frost and Whiter is the first step
in moral growth and maturing for him.

But dehumanization is not the fundamental theme
for Lewis, as it is for Orwell. At an even deeper
level, Lewis' book depicts the struggle of Good vs.
Evil. The N.I.C.E. is not just a totalitarian organiza-
tion, but a diabolical one: its ultimate leaders are
not humans like Wither and Frost, or even the bodiless
Head being kept alive by Filostrato's machines, but
the bent Eldils of earth, fallen angels, demons,
emissaries of the devil. They are the Hideous Strength
which lies behind the N.I.C.E. and which are being
opposed by the Christ-figure Ransom and his followers.
Ultimately, thus, Lewis' book becomes a modern
novelist's equivalent to a medieval morality play, with its warnings about the social and personal effects of evil. It is in that light that the end of the book must be viewed. As the N.I.C.E.'s power expands and intensifies, the Oyarsas (guardian angels, spiritual powers) of the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter descend on earth, join with Merlin, the magician, and other members of the N.I.C.E. to reawaken them after sleeping fifteen centuries, and quickly, easily destroy the N.I.C.E., though the Hideous Strength which lies behind it is only set back, not defeated. It is an unabashedly deus ex machina ending — the gods literally do come down — which fits nicely the overall theme of the morality story: Evil ultimately cannot stand up to the Good and will be utterly defeated in the end. And the book is a call to readers to align themselves with the Good — to accept the objective values of traditional morality (what Lewis in The Abolition of Man called the Tao), as Mark Studdock does by choosing the side of the sweet and straight, the "Normal," when Frost attempts to make him embrace the sour and the crooked, and as Jane does in her slow movement toward conversion to Christianity. Only by acceptance and reliance on the Good, on the values of the Tao, Lewis affirms, is there hope for resistance to the growing threat of totalitarian rule with its inevitable elimination of human freedom and dignity.

Nowhere in That Hideous Strength does Lewis specify how the N.I.C.E. came into being. One can infer that a small group of men desirous of power over others discovered the existence and strength of the Oyarsas, or fallen eldils. To use that knowledge, these men took advantage of the contemporary esteem for specialists, especially scientists, and created the N.I.C.E. as a front to mask their real methods and objectives. The publicized purpose of the N.I.C.E. is to get "science applied to social problems and backed by the whole force of the state" (p. 38); the public is led to believe that the N.I.C.E. will solve "the unemployment problem, the cancer problem, the housing problem, the problems of currency, or war, of education" and provide "a brighter, cleaner and fuller life for our children" (p. 133). In fact its aim is to "cente the union by the whole force of the state" (p. 38); the public is led to believe that the N.I.C.E. will solve "the unemployment problem, the cancer problem, the housing problem, the problems of currency, or war, of education" and provide "a brighter, cleaner and fuller life for our children" (p. 133). In fact its aim is to "cente the union by the whole force of the state" (p. 38); the public is led to believe that the N.I.C.E. will solve "the unemployment problem, the cancer problem, the housing problem, the problems of currency, or war, of education" and provide "a brighter, cleaner and fuller life for our children" (p. 133). In fact its aim is to control and direct the lives of the populace, beginning with such measures as sterilization of the unfit, the regulation of backward races, selective breeding, and "real education" — the type which "makes the patient what it wants infalibly" (p. 42; emphasis added). All of this reflects Lewis' "dread [of] specialists in power and suspicion of social scientists — his fear, in general, about the treatment of non-scientific subjects through quasi-scientific methods, particularly as the objectives of a popularized science, or "scientism," are united with the structures and strengths of government. [7]

But it also, unintentionally perhaps, reflects Lewis political outlook, which contrasts sharply and interestingly with Orwell's. Orwell identifies with and clearly sympathizes with the proletariat, the working classes who end up exploited before the revolution (in Britain of the 1930s and '40s) and after (in Oceania of the 1980s). Lewis, on the other hand, gives little attention in his works to the laboring classes. They do not appear as characters in his stories (except perhaps for Frank, the cabby, in The Magician's Nephew, who hardly is typical), and he does not refer to them in his essays. The glimpses we have of the proletariat show them as employed, hard-working, humble, solidly patriotic types who know when they are well off, are content with their lot in life, and would become involved with, or receptive to, radical social change only if they were manipulated from above. No need for major social change is evident in Lewis' writings, though he lived through the same decades as Orwell and could have seen, perhaps should have seen, evidence of the same sorts of problems. One finds in Lewis' reference to the huge gap that then existed between the extremely rich and the very poor, or to the repressiveness of the fairly rigid class system, or to the cruelties of unemployment, inadequate wages, and poverty. Little of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Wigan Pier is evident, it appears, from the sheltered recesses of Oxford. Religiously and economically Lewis had sympathy for the down-and-outs and desired an improved lot for them. But not politically — an important part of the Old Western myth he clung to endorse hierarchy and resisted change, unless it involved a return to the even more patriarchal society of the past. That Hideous Strength is a deeply political book because it is fundamentally an anti-revolutionary book (that may account in part for Lewis' popularity among conservative Christians in America today). As That Hideous Strength sets things forth, social "revolution" would come completely from the top down and it is undercut by being identified with wild fanatics like Straik. Thus it is interesting to hear Orwell claim for Lewis' religious writings, not just his stories, a reactionary political effect if not intent: Lewis' "chummy little wireless talks," Orwell wrote, "are not really so unpolitical as they are meant to look. Indeed they are an outflanking movement in the big counterattack against the Left which Lord Elton, A. P. Herbert, G. M. Young, Alfred Noyes and various others have been conducting for two years past." (Essays, III, 265) Lewis' interests lay chiefly in the moral-spiritual struggle of the upper-middle class to which he, and his characters, and probably his readers, belong, not in the fight for political-economic justice and freedom for the lower classes which was Orwell's constant concern.

Of elements which link Orwell and Lewis, that of greatest interest at this conference is myth. Nineteen Eighty-Four is at one level, in some respects its deepest level, a story about an effort to eliminate myth. A crucial purpose for the introduction of Newspeak is to eliminate connotations, or, as Syme the philologist, calls it, vagueness and useless shades of meanings. "The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought[] in the end we shall make thought-crime literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it" (p. 46). The imaginative aspect of existing authors will be expunged: "By 2050 — earlier, probably — the whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron — they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be" (p. 47). They must be reversed, for each embodies the highest reaches of imaginative expression, and the imaginative epitomizes freedom, the ability of the mind to range widely, to explore possibilities and impossibilities, to give a new structure to life. All this is anaethema to a totalitarian regime.

Poetry no longer exists — only the verse manufactured or reshaped by the Party. Poetry gives a sense of order to things, and the Party reserves all ordering of life to itself. There is no more story. There is still fiction — Julia works in the Fiction Department in the Ministry of Truth, helping produce novels, not by imagination, but by novel-writing machines. The novels, presumably, are like the machine-produced pornography: "Ghastly rubbish.... They only have six plots, but they swap
them around a bit." (p. 109). Image, metaphor, symbol become unthinkible, in the literal sense that one cannot think them: the new language makes it impossible. So too it is impossible to have or experience, myth. Myths are narratives whose use of language and structure enable them to embody universal human truths and to convey these truths directly to the imagination. Everything in Party-think makes myth impossible. Narrative sequence no longer exists: things do not have beginnings and endings and coherence, and thus meaning; they simply happen randomly and are recorded, unless and until the Party decides that they did not happen, apparently, just as randomly. Language and scene no one can embody universal truth: language is either wholly and simply concrete and literal, involving concrete objects or physical actions, or abstract terminology used to convey Party ideology, which is the only truth in existence. And imagination withers like an unused limb until soon, even if it could encounter myth, it would be incapable of recognizing or responding to it. Perhaps this is the ultimate form the abolition of man can take: that not human beings are enslaved physically, but that their freedom to imagine — to dream, to aspire, to experience truth and beauty — is removed.

The intriguing thing is that, in communicating this danger to myth, Orwell creates what may be the most powerful of twentieth-century myths. Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four exhibit the characteristics of myth Lewis set forth in An Experiment in Criticism; the former almost perfectly, the latter in a somewhat flawed fashion. Both are narratives whose shape or course of action rather than particular telling or style, imprint upon the imagination a powerful human or divine truth. [A] A myth, Lewis says, is capable of summary, and even in summary form, conveys its power and vitality. That is true for both Orwell stories: they have come to emblazon a whole complex of contemporary reality even for people who have never read them. They have vividly etched upon the imaginations of the western world truths about moral-political-human attitudes and relationships more powerfully, it seems, than the works of any other twentieth-century writer, because only Orwell was able to turn those ideas and concerns into myth. Lewis recognized and appreciated the absolute perfection of Animal Farm as myth: "There is not a sentence that does not contribute to the whole. The myth says all the author wants it to say and (equally important) it doesn't say anything else." (Literature, p. 104) But he apparently failed to recognize the mythical power of Nineteen Eighty-Four. In discussing it, Lewis dwelt on its formal imperfections — its wordiness, its extraneous elements, its unappealing characterization; he could not understand why it was better removed. But ironically enough, he failed to notice that it, like That Hideous Strength, is a "Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups," a fantasy which would have appeal and effect despite weaknesses in its telling.

In contrast to the story in Nineteen Eighty-Four, the effort to destroy myth That Hideous Strength as a story is an effort to reestablish a myth. Lewis too recognizes the danger implicit in the destruction of myth. In The Abolition of Man he protests against the methods of education which cultivate the intellect but stultify the imagination, as the faculty both for generating and appreciating myth. "The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.... By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes." (p. 24) He demonstrates the results of such education in Cosser, the utterly mechanized sociologist, and in Mark, whose education "had been neither scientific nor classical — merely 'Modern.'" The severities both of abstraction and of high human tradition had passed him by" and who would have been exactly like Cosser were it not for the influence of his wife Jane. (This, pp. 84-87 and 185)

Lewis' answer to this and to the treat of the Hiduous Strength generally, is to return to the "Old Western" mythology, the belief (common to western culture until the nineteenth century) in an orderly universe, human reason, and objective value. [9] He had spelled out this alternative to modern ideas and values throughout the Ransom trilogy, beginning with Out of the Silent Planet, where Ransom learned about the existence, and immanence, and the influence of spiritual beings, learned to call the universe "the heavens" (full of life and light, the womb of the worlds) rather than "space" (dark, empty, barren), and learned the importance of hierarchies, trust, and order. Out of the Silent Planet prepared him for a journey to Perelandra, where he helped the Green Lady hold onto the "Old Western" life in its pure form, by resisting the temptation to disobey Maladil and accept the ways of the twentieth-century world. All this comes to bear on the final book of the trilogy, where the importance of the "Old Western" mythology is brought out through contrast, as attention focuses on a group of men and women totally devoid of and opposed to the good and decent ideas and values embodied in the "Old Western" myth. The conflict between good and evil, "Old Western" and modern, traditional and "progressive" reaches its climax in the scenes where Frost attempts to bring Mark into the Inner Circle of the N.I.C.E.. In the "Objective Room," Frost exposes Mark to disproportion, ugliness, and abnormality in an effort to destroy the innate tendency to prefer proportion, beauty, and the "Normal," for such "Normal" responses, to Lewis, are basic to one's humanity. In Mark's case the effort is unsuccessful — he is attracted by and drawn to Order and Goodness and Truth and thus preserves his humanity, and is on his way toward the salvation of his soul.

It is intriguing, in the case of That Hideous Strength, that the story in which Lewis shows the need for myth does not achieve the qualities of myth itself. The story lacks the simple, satisfying shape of myth: it is complicated, difficult to hold in mind or summarize, and overly long — Lewis himself prepared a shortened version for Avon books in 1946. It does not appeal primarily to the imagination, and lacks powerful images that remain planted in the memory. It conveys a theme of lasting human signification, but does so through perhaps overly long telling rather than showing characteristics of myth at its best. Marjorie Nicolson wrote, concerning Out of the Silent Planet, that "Mr. Lewis has created myth itself, myth woven of desires and aspirations deep-seated in some, at least, of the human race.... As I journeyed with him into worlds at once familiar and strange, I experienced, as did Ransom, a sensation not of following an adventure but of enacting a myth." [10] That Hideous Strength demonstrates the dangers faced by human civilization if such experiences are lost. But ironically enough, That Hideous Strength, unlike Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, does not itself enact a myth and has not become a vital part of twentieth-century mythology, perhaps because what
Ms. Nicolson says of Perelandra is also true of it, that "the Christian apologist has temporarily eclipsed the poet and the artist." (Ibid., p. 251n)

The similarities and differences between Lewis and Orwell as persons, between the responses to totalitarianism, and between their uses and attitudes toward myth come to focus, finally, on the degree of optimism each projects. Orwell, in Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four seems to offer little hope. The last man in Europe succumbs; at the end of the book Winston Smith is a pathetic figure -- an alcoholic, broken in body, mind, and spirit. With that the Party's victory seems complete; no one can or will escape the tyranny. Yet Orwell himself was not without hope. The book is warning, not prediction. He apparently had faith that the solid, old English traits he discussed in The Lion and the Unicorn [11] would see his country through this threat, if only it were on guard against the danger. That hideous Strength, on the contrary, has a fairy-tale ending: the Good overcomes the Evil and all is well. But the victory is too easy to be convincing and satisfying realistically. If an organization like the N.I.C.E actually began to gain a foothold, one wants to protest, clairvoyant dreams and Arthurian figures are not going to come along and sweep it away. Lewis is less optimistic when he treats the same topics in an essay entitled "Is Progress Possible?" It concludes by asking whether we can discover any way of submitting to the world-wide paternalism of a technocracy [which seems best able to handle the desperate problems the world faces] without losing all personal privacy and independence. (God in the Dock, p. 316) He supplies no answer to the question. The most that can be said, perhaps, is that the hope for both lies in myth: so long as the kind of myth Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four are can be created and circulated, and so long as respect for, and even minimal adherence to, the Old Western myth remains, we can have confidence that the danger represented by totalitarianism will be held at bay.

NOTES
[11] The Lion and the Unicorn (1941) is reprinted in The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, II, 56-109. The opening section, "England Your England," is available in The Orwell Reader (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956) and George Orwell, A Collection of Essays (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954) and thus is comparatively well known; the latter two sections, "Shopkeepers at War" and "The English Revolution," important to a full understanding of Orwell's thought, have unfortunately been neglected.

Rites of Passage in The Hobbit, continued from page 8 heart, firm of purpose and will, and who has a real quarrel with the dragon, is able to defeat it.

The Hobbit, then, is a book for children, which amongst many things of wonder and horror, takes them through the maturation process with the hero, and shows them what they must face and how they must face it to win through to full maturation and realize their true potential. The Hobbit is also a book for adults. It is a mythic novel, which traces the path of the hero from his calling, through his initiation into psychic/spiritual maturity and wholeness, to his return from his experiences with his shadow at the roots of his being, and his defeat of the darkness and evil both within and without. Because of his development and maturation, Bilbo goes on to save his friends from death, imprisonment and their own evil, as a true hero should. The ring becomes an externalization of the internal sources of power (confidence, courage, pity and compassion), tapped and discovered through Bilbo's experiences under the mountains and in Mirkwood. But unlike many of the heroes of old, Bilbo is easy for the reader to identify with because of his simple humanity. He shows us our own potential for such realization and wholeness within ourselves. It is a great mythopoeic story, drawing out our hidden fears and showing us a way into ourselves that, for many, is obscured. But perhaps the greatest "message" of this story is hope. The hope that we can find ourselves and that in finding that wholeness, we can help create a better world, a world in which we may all learn to value "food and cheer and song above [all forms of] hoarded gold."
