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## Nazis in the Shire: Tolkien and Satire

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## Online Winter Seminar



### Online Winter Seminar

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### Abstract

The comedy of manners satire that appears in the early pages and conclusion of *The Hobbit* gives way to a more serious satire in the penultimate chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*. "The Scouring of the Shire" is not allegorical, but Tolkien's remarks on "applicability" facilitate critical analysis of the chapter's satire. Well-known features of Nazism appear in the occupation of the Shire by "Ruffians," men who tyrannize with egregious regimentation, enforce ever-expanding rules, and who regard the hobbits as belonging to an inferior race. The use of collaborators, threats, torture and killing of dissenters, and internment that recalls Nazi concentration camps—all done on a reduced scale—sustain an applicability to places occupied by Nazi Germany. The chapter ends not only with victory over and expulsion of the Nazi-like occupiers, but with a Shire restoration that evokes the norms on which the satire is grounded.

### Additional Keywords

Satire in *The Lord of the Rings*; Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. "The Scouring of the Shire"; Nazism; World War II



## NAZIS IN THE SHIRE: TOLKIEN AND SATIRE

JEROME DONNELLY

"[T]here is satire, sustained or intermittent in undoubted fairy-stories, and satire may often have been intended in traditional tales where we do not now perceive it." (Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories" 115)

### A SATIRIC INCLINATION IN A DARKENING WORLD

TOLKIEN'S FICTION IS SELDOM SEEN AS HAVING A COMIC, let alone a satiric side, even though his first book about hobbits contains a number of scattered satiric moments and indeed begins with considerable comedy and satire, from the wizard's appearance on Bilbo Baggins's doorstep, the dwarves' teasing songs at Bag End, to the hobbit's fright at the dwarves' account of the coming of the dragon. The milieu in the opening chapter of *The Hobbit* evokes an Edwardian-like summer, when life seemed almost to stand still in an orderly ritual of comfortable, if somewhat stuffy, propriety. This is the world in which Bilbo Baggins seems fully immersed, until Gandalf disturbs it with a wand-scratched graffiti on the hobbit's beautiful green door at Bag End, Underhill. A pleasant, slow world, it can also be self-centered, bourgeois, and rather pointless; Tolkien makes gentle fun of this Edwardian character, as he subtly satirizes it, using the hobbit as a participant in its self-satisfied complacency. His subsequent remark that *The Hobbit* "and its sequel are not about 'types' or the cure of bourgeois smugness" does not preclude the presence of satire as an ingredient of the fantasy (*Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* [Letters] 365). Indeed, his comment acknowledges the presence of "bourgeois smugness" to be made fun of—an object of satire that is "intermittent," to use Tolkien's word (from my epigraph), if not at the center of the narrative. No satire is directed at Bilbo's bachelorhood *per se*. Like Kenneth Grahame's Mr. Toad in *The Wind in the Willows* (one of the works that inspired Tolkien), the unemployed but comfortable Bilbo lives a lifestyle of "inherited private wealth as a quite extensive class in Edwardian England still did" (Boyle, *Who Are We Now?* 38). It is rather Bilbo's self-satisfied and somewhat stuffy sense of propriety which Gandalf and the dwarves poke fun at.

Satire in *The Hobbit* extends beyond that playful opening look at the stuffiness or smugness that threatens to freeze Bilbo's soul into a deadening provincialism, and appears in his other comedy of manners contexts as well: for example, Tolkien exposes crude vulgarity in the gastronomic arguments of Burt,

Tom, and Bill, the Cockney-accented trolls, and he ironically mocks the selfish market-place commercialism of the Mayor of Laketown (“Commercialism is a swine at heart,” as Tolkien remarked elsewhere [*Letters* 55]. Tolkien, of course, does not use “swine” in the Nazi manner; he refers, not to any person or people, but to an abstraction). Comedy of manners reappears in the final chapter of *The Hobbit*, where Bilbo returns to the Shire in an episode that parodies the return of Odysseus, who finds his home invaded by would-be usurpers of his wife and property. Tolkien make his version of the hobbit’s return satiric: in place of confronting occupying suitors in Ithaca, Bilbo Baggins is confronted by greedy relatives, the Sackville-Baggins, rummaging his belongings and making off with what they can carry. This comedy depends on the applicability of an Edwardian world outside the text. A more historic applicability enables satire in Tolkien’s subsequent fiction; Edwardian comedy-of-manners fun was not to appear in Tolkien’s subsequent hobbit books.

World War II marked the interim years between *The Hobbit* and the completion of *The Lord of the Rings* and is perhaps reflected in the number of battles included in the later work. It may also have influenced the penultimate chapter’s account of what I will argue consists of an anti-Nazi satire, dramatized in the occupation of the Shire. In May 1940, after the British troops fled Dunkirk in the wake of a German advance and a rapid conquest of much of Western Europe, a Nazi invasion and occupation of England was widely anticipated. Newspaper articles fed an anxiety of expectation; “British Waiting for Expected German Invasion,” a UPI wire service release on 4 August 1940, typifying (and perhaps fueling) the widespread unease. Tolkien’s contemporaries, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, for example, were “continually anxious,” in their conviction that Nazis would invade and occupy England. In anticipation of a Nazi invasion, they prepared by fitting out their Sussex garage as a place to commit suicide by asphyxiation (Snaith 131). Other English writers imagined a Nazi occupation in fiction. A literary sub-genre of an imagined Nazi takeover featured prominently in novels and film both before and during World War II; at least a half-dozen novels positing a Nazi occupation appeared in England during the Hitler years, and still others continued to appear after the war had ended. Perhaps best known was *If Hitler Comes: A Cautionary Tale*, by Douglas Brown and Christopher Serpell, published in 1940. Tolkien could hardly have been unaware of the existence such novels, though not necessarily influenced by any of them or by the film with a similar subject, *Went the Day Well?* (1942). Many features of Nazi oppression had appeared in the British media and appear in these novels.<sup>1</sup> In *If Hitler Comes*, for example, Nazis are able gradually to

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<sup>1</sup> The film, *Went the Day Well?*, based (very loosely) on Graham Greene’s short story, “The Lieutenant Died Last,” depicts the response to a Nazi takeover of an English village.

suppress freedom—to infiltrate the London police, to use collaborators, and send the country toward barbarism.<sup>2</sup> *If Hitler Comes* depicts how so few are needed to maintain control:

It does not take many secret police to hold down England. One in every factory, helped by a few spies; one in every group of villages; one for every block of streets. Each is protected by an invisible human screen—by the score or so of men, women, and children who would pay with their lives were any desperate attempt to be made on his. Each group knows how to corrupt still further the frightened little group he dominates. Each serves at once his own greedy ends and his Führer's. (Brown and Serpell, 108-109)<sup>3</sup>

These were the familiar tactics used by the Nazis in occupied Europe.

These same features—and others—appear in “The Scouring of the Shire,” the penultimate chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*. The hobbits’ home, the Shire, succumbs to an occupation under very similar conditions, if on a much-reduced scale (and, as if to make the morality of the satire more challenging, the Nazi-like occupants of the Shire are *men*, rather than characters of fantasy). Just as in *Went the Day Well?* where occupiers of an English village use threats of terrorism and a collaborator, the men occupying the Shire use terrorism and local hobbit-collaborators to stifle any indigenous opposition. Such similarities do not imply that Tolkien was influenced by the novel or the film but show that they are based on a common concern and a British perception of the Nazis. What those novels and the film accomplish in modes of realism, Tolkien dramatizes in fantasy. Tolkien’s observation that satire “may often have been intended in traditional tales where we do not now perceive it,” applies to his own masterwork. An applicability that evokes the practices of the recently defeated Nazis infuses the Scouring chapter with satire.

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Another wartime film, *The Silent Village* (1943), depicts a brief Nazi takeover of a Welsh village. Katharine Burdekin’s 1937 novel, *Swastika Night* (published under the pseudonym Murray Constantine), was the first fictional representation of a Nazi occupation of England. Nick Milne examines “revisionist escapism,” a fictive alternative history that emerged following World War I. See “The Door We Never Opened: British Alternative History Writing in the Aftermath of World War I,” in *Baptism of Fire: The Birth of Modern British Fantastic in World War I*.

<sup>2</sup> For more on these novels, see Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *The World Hitler Never Made: Alternate History and the Memory of Nazism*, 35-40, and Andrew Roberts, “Herr Ribbentrop Requests,” 16.

<sup>3</sup> See also John C. Tibbetts, “It (Might Have) Happened Here: How Nazi Germany Won the War,” 153-66.

As in *The Hobbit*, the Shire setting also bookends the narrative in *The Lord of the Rings*. Absent, though, in the latter is the cheerful tone in the earlier work's subtitle: *There and Back Again*. In contrast to the wealth of comedy and satire in Bilbo's first encounter with Gandalf and the dwarves in the "unexpected party" in the opening chapter of *The Hobbit* and in his return to the Shire following his adventures, comic moments in the later work's "long-expected" birthday party are scarce, and Frodo's return to the Shire is anything but comic. The great difference between return and recovery in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is that the earlier work treats as comic satire Bilbo's difficulty in reclaiming his property from the grasping Sackville-Bagginses, whereas Frodo and his companions face an intrusion of the enemies conquered elsewhere now occupying their home. The difference in what greets these returning hobbits is macrocosmic by comparison; this return is on a scale that resonates beyond Bilbo's household to the larger world of the Shire itself and the intrusion of malign forces from the vast outside.

Besides the lingering shadow of the war just ended, the near absence of playfulness in *The Lord of the Rings* stems from Tolkien's second thoughts about the comedy he had included in the earlier book—the comic bits that were closest in tone to Grahame's treatment of Mr. Toad. Tolkien retrospectively decided that certain of the comic features in *The Hobbit* had been "a mistake," specifically the "umbrellas" and "silly names" and perhaps more generally the Edwardian comedic satire, as suggested in his regret as to instances of the book's "modernities" (*Letters* 196). *The Lord of the Rings* follows that revised thinking; the comedy largely disappears, though not all the satire, and it is perhaps helpful to recall Tolkien's insistence that satire can be included in fantasy and fairy-tale ("On Fairy-stories" 114.) In the later work, the intervention of a war and the destruction of the Ring bring a shift from the light comedy-of-manners satire in *The Hobbit* to the grim satire of a dystopian moment when the Shire is occupied by forces of darkness, similar to England's only recently defeated enemy that not many years before had seemed poised to overwhelm the country. I maintain that as well as a satire on industrialism—its inappropriate technology and its consequent environmental damage—"The Scouring of the Shire" includes a satiric attack on the Nazis. A critical reading of the scouring episode in conjunction with the Second World War, Tolkien's comments on Hitler, and his views on satire yields added meaning and importance to this late chapter. Before elucidating the anti-Nazi satire, some contextual background is in order.

#### **TOLKIEN'S PROXIMITY TO WORLD WAR II**

The episode contained in Scouring chapter has made hardly a wave in the multitudinous seas of Tolkien criticism, despite its importance. (As if to cap the

dearth of criticism, the Scouring episode was not included in the film version shown in theaters.) Yet, the events of this chapter are important to the larger narrative for several reasons, not the least of which is the meting out of justice and revenge in Saruman's abasement and killing. His death also marks the final working out of Tolkien's recurring theme of the self-destructiveness of evil. Moreover, Frodo's encounter with an occupied Shire serves as much more than an anti-climax. The chapter is essential to understanding the contrast between what the Shire has suffered and the restoration of the Shire's traditional order that follows the Scouring.<sup>4</sup>

A different sort of critical absence—until recent years—is the comparatively minimal consideration of World War II compared to the interest in World War I in Tolkien studies.<sup>5</sup> The extensive biographical and critical attention is understandable, since Tolkien served in the army in the First World War. Yet, he was also close to the Second World War. Tolkien worked on *The Lord of the Rings* off and on from 1936 to 1949, mostly, that is, during years when Hitler and the Nazis were in power. As Tolkien says in the Foreword to the second edition (1966), "as the years go by it seems now often forgotten that to be caught in youth by 1914 was no less hideous an experience than to be involved in 1939 and the following years" (xxiv). Even though Tolkien was

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<sup>4</sup>Limited discussion of the Scouring episode can be found in Philip W. Helms, "The Gentle Scouring of the Shire: Civilian-Based Defense among the Hobbits." A chapter promisingly entitled, "The Scouring of the Shire," in Jonathan Witt and Jay W. Richards, *The Hobbit Party*, 124-145, contains no discussion of the episode. Nor is there any discussion of this episode or its importance in Donovan, *Approaches to Teaching Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings."* *The Tolkien Encyclopedia* contains a "Shire" entry (Stanton), though no reference to the scouring of it except very briefly in some other entries. In contrast, David M. Waito makes the Scouring episode central to the work in "The Shire Quest: the 'Scouring of the Shire' as the Narrative and Thematic Focus of *The Lord of the Rings*." Waito applies a superhero adaptation of Joseph Campbell's mythic approach and Plato's depiction of the ideal state in *The Republic* to Tolkien's Shire. The argument is unconvincing, ultimately because Waito omits the fact that Plato's *Republic* idealizes a closed society, which is antithetical to Tolkien's Shire. The Republic's enlightened despotism lacks the values of joy, merriment, and romance so important to Tolkien's Shire. Waito's study does not touch on World War II or satire in the Scouring episode.

<sup>5</sup>For Tolkien and World War I, see esp. John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle Earth* and his extensive bibliography. See also Barton Friedman, "Tolkien and David Jones: The Great War and the War of the Ring." In "The Complexity of Tolkien's Attitude toward the Second World War," Franco Manni and Simone Bonechi discuss both world wars and even attempt to locate parallels between specific World War II battles and battles in *The Lord of the Rings*. For the most comprehensive account of Tolkien and war, see Janet Brennan Croft, *War and the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*, which includes a judicious discussion of both World Wars, as well as relevant biographical information concerning Tolkien and war.

directly involved in World War I, he was close to World War II in more than one way. The Second World War played an immediate part in his life as resident of Oxford, where he served as an air raid warden and developed a syllabus for naval cadets whom he also taught. Additionally, two of his sons served in the British military. The Blitz brought the war home; fire caused by a bombing destroyed the warehouse containing the first edition of *The Hobbit*. On another occasion, Tolkien could see from his study a distant glow from the bombing of Coventry. In addition to experiencing the war brought home, Tolkien's own professional interests gave him a special concern and contempt for Hitler and Nazism. Writing to his son, Michael, at the British military academy Sandhurst, Tolkien recalls, "I have spent most of my life [...] studying Germanic matters [...] when Hitler was, I suppose, dabbling in paint." He adds, "I suppose I know better than most what is the truth about this 'Nordic' nonsense." Tolkien's own scholarship and his understanding of that cultural past contrast with Hitler's Nordic caricature and rouses him to exclaim, "I have in this War a burning private grudge [...] against that ruddy little ignoramus Adolf Hitler" (*Letters* 55). No matter how much he despised Stalin, he expresses for the Soviet dictator nothing like this deeply felt, almost palpable loathing for Hitler and Nazism's "'Nordic' nonsense." Tolkien, then, along with the rest of England paid considerable attention to Hitler and the Nazis, whose depredations in Germany and countries they occupied "were widely reported in the foreign press" (Evans 15). Moreover, during the same post-war years of 1945-49, when Tolkien was working on *The Lord of the Rings*, the highly-publicized Nuremberg Trials were revealing even more details than had been previously known about the evils of the Nazis.

#### APPLICABILITY AND SATIRE

Whatever occasional critical musing there might be about the possibility of Saruman as a figure from the Second World War, the attention given to the influence of World War I on Tolkien's work has diverted critical attention from the Second World War and thus the possibility of a Nazi satire in *The Lord of the Rings*. One near exception is Robert Plank, who argued in a brief and somewhat impressionistic essay published in 1975 that Tolkien had used the Scouring chapter to depict the Shire subjected to "a political and economic revolution" that paints "a portrait of fascism" (Plank 109-10). After that tantalizing start, Plank's argument deteriorates. The "similarities" he posits between Mussolini and Saruman lack any allusive signal: each, he says, had a career marked by being a "turncoat" and each "comes to a miserable end" (112). The likenesses are so remote and the circumstances so dissimilar as to be totally unconvincing (e.g. Saruman is stabbed by a vengeful aide, while Mussolini was summarily executed by partisans and mutilated by a mob). Plank also overlooks the

possibility of satire's presence in the Scouring episode and thus perhaps not surprisingly finds the entire chapter disappointing, "almost impossible to read [...] with enjoyment and understanding, either alone or with the rest of the trilogy [sic]" (108).

Decades later, Tom Shippey, the doyen of Tolkien critics, remains one of the few critics to comment on "The Scouring of the Shire," and in particular to invoke Tolkien's notion of "applicability" in the chapter. In the Foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien distinguishes between allegory and applicability. He dismisses the presence of any allegory and says that instead, "I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers" (Foreword.xxiv).<sup>6</sup> Shippey takes up Tolkien's term: "one might wonder again about the 'applicability' of 'the Scouring of the Shire'" (*J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* 166). Cautioned by Tolkien's insistence that *The Lord of the Rings* "has no contemporary political reference whatsoever" (164), he nonetheless finds "applicability"—that "hints of correspondence between our history and the history of Middle-earth are in fact fairly frequent" (164). He cites as examples of "our history" echoes of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's delusional assurance to the British in 1938 of "Peace in our time" and of another form of delusion in the Maginot Line's supposedly protective capacity against invasion from Germany (165-66), and even a reference applicable to Nazism (169). These references are, of course, applications to WWII. Less convincingly, to me at least, Shippey also argues that the condition of the Shire faced by the returning hobbits is an instance of applicability in that it recalls the socialist government of post-World War II England where "perfectly satisfactory old houses" were replaced with "damp, ugly, badly-built, standardized ones" (168). This application, however, does not take into consideration that, unlike post-war England, the lamentable housing in the Shire was imposed, not according to the wishes of its own government as in post-war England, but by an occupying enemy. Moreover, Tolkien makes the shoddy housing only a lesser consequence of an occupation that has brought on imprisonment, pollution, torture, and murder, all of which are much more crucial matters than inferior housing and in context far different from Britain's post-war Socialist government. (As Shippey himself points out, "Tolkien said flatly that the chapter did not reflect 'the situation in England at the time [i.e. post-WW II late 1940s] when I was finishing my tale'" [166]). There is less emphasis on construction and much more on destruction of houses (e.g. "missing" or "burned down" [*The Lord of the Rings (LotR)* VI.8.1004]; "they burn houses and build no more" [1013]) and on devastation ("hack, burn, and ruin;

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<sup>6</sup> On Tolkien's dislike of allegory, see Hammond and Scull, *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion*, lxxvi-lxxvii and Tom Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, 161 ff.

and now it's come to killing" [1013]). The Shire seems even poised for a genocidal extirpation of the hobbits by making the Shire uninhabitable: "If they want to make the Shire into a desert, they're going the right way about it," as one hobbit observes (1013).

Tolkien's disavowal of a "political" or any other connection between the scouring in the Shire and England's government does not rule out a satire on the Nazis. Shippey's examples of applicability in citing Tolkien's indirect criticism of the shoddy housing and Chamberlain's "capitulating to Hitler" (*Century* 165) tacitly acknowledge the presence of satire based on an applicability to contemporary history—here, the implicit criticism of the evil effects of a corrupt ideology instanced in the world beyond the text. Satire points outside the text—its object; here, application provides it. These Shire conditions are more comparable to World War II and Nazi occupations than to England's post-war government, which in addition was an elected one, and not a foreign occupation.

In an important subsequent discussion, Shippey makes a convincing argument that places Tolkien in a cluster of British post-World War II writers who share a particular theme. Landmarks by Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, William Golding, T.H. White, and George Orwell all "have as their major theme the nature of evil," a theme "forced upon them by their life experience," and are "all effectively or as regards their major impact post-World War II by publication date" ("Tolkien as a Post-War Writer" 85). For these writers, the war necessitated an approach commensurate with its horrors. Shippey observes that "all five authors turned to fantasy, or fable, or science fiction [...] because they felt that the theme of human evil was not one which could be rendered adequately or confronted directly" by "realistic fiction alone" (86). Besides the features Shippey finds in these works, I would add that satire is also present. Three of those landmarks—Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949); Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954); Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* (1945)—are essentially satires. *The Once and Future King* uses satire only sporadically (as in the jousting scenes), and satire is also present Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

The fact that satire is not writ large in *The Lord of the Rings* is understandable; making satire obtrusive would have made it a distraction (and perhaps invited allegorical readings). Similarly, the Catholic Christian subtext that critics have discerned in *The Lord of the Rings* would also have been a distraction had they been more pronounced.<sup>7</sup> Historically, the presence of satire

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<sup>7</sup> On the Catholic presence in the text, see e.g., Nicholas Boyle, *Sacred and Secular Scriptures*, 253-60; Paul E. Kerry, ed., *The Ring and the Cross: Christianity and The Lord of the Rings*; Carolyn Scott, "Beyond Hope He Saved US: Trinitarian Analogies in *The Lord of the Rings*"; Paul Kerry and Sandra Miese, eds., *Light Beyond All Shadow: Religious Experience in Tolkien's Work*; Thomas Smith, "Tolkien's Catholic Imagination: Meditation and Tradition," 73-100.

in other works—even classics—has sometimes been so unobtrusive that it goes almost unnoticed, as has been the case at least as far back as the satire of his own realm’s cultural shortcomings satirized in Tacitus’ *Germania*, or the existence of satire in modern works such as *The Wizard of Oz*. Both the object and even the existence of satire in literature can be problematic. *Gulliver’s Travels* has always been recognized as a satire, but critics have repeatedly debated the satiric object of Book Four and whether the Houyhnhnms represent an ideal or are included in what is being satirized. Tolkien, whose references to satire in his discussion of “fairy stories” (one of which appears as my epigraph) imply that he had given much thought to the matter and was aware that satire has been and can be easily overlooked. This seems to be the case with the Scouring episode.

### SATIRE IN THE SHIRE

Satire in the “The Scouring of the Shire” appears consistently, if subtly, throughout much of the chapter. Insofar as “the hobbits are just rustic English people” (“BBC Interview”), and “‘The Shire’ is based on rural England,” as Tolkien avers (*Letters* 250), satire on Nazism in *The Lord of the Rings* is also related to a more obvious environmental satire: a blight resulting from industrial pollution by the Nazi-like occupation of a bucolic land, most dramatically in the form of Lotho’s new mill (which I discuss below). Satire on the combined excesses of industrialism and Nazism complement and enhance one another, as becomes clear in what Frodo and his companions are told by hobbit friends on their return to the Shire.<sup>8</sup> Farmer Cotton recounts the events by which Lotho (“Pimple”), secretly acting as Saruman’s agent, ushered in a new order and an industrial scale vastly out of proportion to the bucolic Shire. First, Will Whitfoot, the mayor had been displaced, then imprisoned. Next, “there wasn’t no more mayor, and Pimple called himself Chief Shirriff, or just Chief, and did as he liked” (VI.8.1012). Lotho’s self-promotion aside, the actual “Chief” has controlled the occupied land from outside: “We’ve never seen him, but [...] he’s the real Chief now, I guess” (1013). Lotho has acted as a version of the Quisling leaders that the Nazis installed—a stand-in for the real “Chief,” Sharkey (Saruman), who is as yet unknown in the Shire. If the satire on industrialism is more obvious, it is nonetheless subtle and blends with the Nazi satire that entails an occupation like one that had only recently threatened England.

The Nazi-like occupiers of the Shire show no concern for its environment, and their abuse of it satirically portends a dystopian future in place of its nearly idyllic past. As so often followed Nazis’ takeovers on the Continent, the occupation of the Shire has met with little resistance. Men sent

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<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of environmental issues in Tolkien’s work, see Dickerson and Evans, and for remarks on the Shire, see esp. 208 ff.

from abroad—"ruffians"—and hobbit collaborators have cowed most of the Shire folk into passive compliance. The mood quickly changes with the appearance of Frodo and his friends, who prepare for a scouring by determining from fellow-hobbits the strength and extent of the occupiers. The enemy will not quit the Shire peacefully, and force will be required, although Frodo will not himself engage in it. The full measure of his trauma only becomes evident now, with his personal rejection of violence. His non-violent role marks a complete change from the one originally designed for him in this encounter. Tolkien's revisions show special attention to this episode and extensive alterations to it. In Tolkien's early draft of this chapter, Frodo acts as a more traditional heroic warrior and kills two of the ruffians. While the published version alters Frodo's role in this episode, it maintains the consistency of his character as it has developed over the course of his suffering. And, although he personally kills no one in the skirmish with the ruffians, he is neither a pacifist nor a coward. He is no less an active hero, as he leads the Shire hobbits to confront and fight the Nazi-like "ruffians"—men, rather than creatures of fantasy.

While Tolkien remarks in the Foreword that the wars in *The Lord of the Rings* do not refer to "the real war" (i.e. World War II) or to "the [postwar] situation in England" (Foreword.xxiv), neither stipulation precludes a satire on the conditions prevalent in the fallen Shire, where Nazi-like brute power has taken over and men from abroad now lord it over the resident hobbits. The notorious Nazi practice of reprisals and collective punishment threatened and meted out in territories they occupied is echoed in the Shire ("Put those lights out! Get indoors and stay there! Or we'll take fifty of you to the Lockholes" [VI.8.1010]). Their language, with an emphasis on words such as "squad" and "marched" (1010), gives the ruffians the crypto-military cast of Hitler's Gestapo or SS. However tentative, "hints and correspondences" (to use Shippey's words) evoke the presence of Nazism as the object of a satiric attack.

The Nazis' view of themselves a "Master Race" and others as inferior beings is clearly echoed in the "ruffians," who conceive of themselves as superior. Reviling the hobbits as "little fools" (VI.8.1004) is the equivalent the Nazis contempt for "*Untermenschen*," or "sub-human." The designation of the occupying men as "ruffians" recalls the Nazi thugs who roamed German streets with weapons similar to the "whips, knives, and clubs" (1009) now wielded by the ruffians in the Shire. Their abusive language of the Nazis toward Jews as vermin is echoed in the ruffians' sneering reference to hobbits as "rat-folk" (1005). An earlier draft of the chapter is even more emphatic in calling Farmer Cotton, "you old rat" (*Sauron Defeated* 96) and again alluding to Nazi language and mentality by calling the hobbits "Shire-rats" and "swine" (90-91). Tolkien's modulated revision is more consistent with the subtlety of the satire while sustaining its applicability. Even the possibility that a corrupted, broken

community will lead to an eventual genocidal extirpation of the hobbits from the Shire is adumbrated in the account of Farmer Cotton (who himself remains unaware of such a likelihood): “All the ruffians do is what he [Sharkey] says; and what he says is mostly: hack, burn, and ruin; and now it’s come to killing. [...] They cut down trees and let ‘em lie, they burn houses and build no more” (VI.8.1013). After making his appearance in the Shire, Saruman hints that he had planned a Final Solution in revenge for the hobbits having taken up with his rival, Gandalf, when he muses, “‘Well,’ thought I, ‘if they’re such fools, I will get ahead of them and teach them a lesson. One ill turn deserves another.’ It would have been a sharper lesson, if only you had given me a little more time and more Men” (1018). In the same way, Hitler’s genocidal intentions had failed. Saruman’s transvaluation of values (“One ill turn deserves another”) echoes the spirit of a Nietzsche-admiring Hitler.

How has all this come about? Like Germany’s Nazis, who were merciless in plundering booty from conquered territory, the ruffians had thrust their way into the Shire and systematically began looting it: “Men, ruffians mostly, came with great waggons, some to carry off the goods” (VI.8.1012). “It all began with Pimple, as we call him,” Farmer Cotton explains: “last year he began sending away loads of stuff, not only leaf. Things began to get short” (1012). Another hobbit explains, “We grows a lot of food, but we don’t rightly know what becomes of it” (999).

As they survey the Shire, the returning hobbits witness the devastation inflicted on their land. The transformation, with the disappearance of houses and inns and their replacement with “sheds,” “guard houses,” and “prisons” (288), suggests the appearance of a concentration camp.

Bilbo’s now mutilated old homestead, Bag End, offers a microcosm of the new regime’s alterations:

The garden was full of huts and sheds, some so near the old westward windows that they cut off all their light. There were piles of refuse everywhere. The door was scarred; the bell-chain was dangling loose, and the bell would not ring. [...] The place stank and was full of filth and disorder [...]. (VI.8.1017)

Images of a “scarred door” and the “bell that would not ring” mark the sad transformation. They recall how those same two features had set all the hobbits’ adventures in motion so long ago, when Gandalf scratched his mark on Bilbo’s beautiful green door, leading the dwarves to ring the bell and to introduce themselves and adventure to Bilbo Baggins. Now, the door and bell become a synecdoche for hospitality in disarray and a symbol of a social order in remiss. Such implied juxtapositions operate as forceful satire, exposing the wages of Nazism. The degradation of the Shire has resulted directly from the new system

imposed on it, similar to the destructive effects that Nazi Germany had wrought across much of Europe—following what the Nazis heralded as the “New Order” Hitler had called for in occupied countries (and had proclaimed in a widely-publicized speech to the Reichstag: “The year 1941 will be, I am convinced, the historical year of a great European new order” [Lightbody 93]).

The new order of the ruffians has depended on maintaining a constant state of intimidation and fear by adopting Nazi-like regimentation. A strict enforcement of repressive rule is among the first things the returning hobbits discover. When asked to have the gate opened, the response is, “we have orders” (VI.8.998), a remark that evokes the standard line when German Nazis were depicted in popular British and American films (and which Shippey also regards as echoing the Nazis [*Road to Middle-earth* 169]). “Rules” multiply inversely in proportion to freedoms; “everything except Rules got shorter and shorter,” Farmer Cotton explains (VI.8.1012). Signs of a Nazi-like obsession with oppressive dictates have become ubiquitous; when the returning hobbits enter a guard house, they find that “on every wall there was a notice and a list of Rules,” which Pippin immediately tears down (1000), and the hobbits cheerfully set about defying. Convivial gathering places like the inns are “all closed” (1002), and hobbit speech must be carefully guarded for fear of reprisal. When one of the hobbits dares to criticize Lotho, a chorus of fearful hobbits admonishes, “You know talk o’ that sort isn’t allowed. The Chief will hear of it, and we’ll all be in trouble” (1000). Such self-censoring implies that hobbits suspect some of their own hobbit neighbors may be informers.

#### NAZI COLLABORATION IN THE SHIRE

Notoriously, Hitler’s Nazis relied on ordinary citizens to be unofficial spies and to report any breach of conformity with the rules. One of the most memorable examples involved what was subsequently called the White Rose movement in which several Munich students distributing anti-Nazi leaflets in a university building were seen and informed on by a janitor. The ominous remark that “the new ‘Chief’ evidently had means of getting news” (VI.8.1000) implies that the Shire has had its own informers. Any hint of noncompliance by a hobbit is met with imprisonment: “if any of small folk stand up for our rights, they drag him off to the Lockholes” (1002), where they may be tortured (““Often they beat ‘em now”” [1002]) or killed. The term “Lockholes” as a name for a prison for dissidents and the few rebel hobbits (VI.9.1021) recalls the “Drycells” that were a part of Dachau and widely known of in England even before the war, having

been visited by foreign guests of the Nazi government.<sup>9</sup> The emergence of half-starved prisoners—Fredegar, Lobelia—from the Lockholes recalls the liberation of prisoners from Nazi concentration camps (1021).

The “Chief” has co-opted or intimidated reasonably decent folk who naively agreed that a stricter order was necessary. “There’s hundreds of Shiriffs all told, and [the ruffians] want more [...]” Some even “do spy-work for the Chief” (VI.8.1002). Tolkien includes satiric portraits that dramatize how the Nazi presence and its culture-shock have corrupted some of the Shire’s folk. The occupation has its hobbit collaborators—some almost by accident. Collaborating hobbit nobodies could feel that they were somebodies, or, in Frodo’s words, they comprise “a few fools that want to be important, but don’t at all understand what is really going on” (1007). The Nazis of Germany flattered low-level workers they placed in positions that offered a modicum of power and thus secured their cooperation and support. The same thing has taken place in the Shire. The truculent Bill Ferny holds one of those positions, in charge of enforcing a curfew at one of the locked gates installed by the ruffians. He asserts his new-found power in the open-air prison that the Shire has become. His bossiness and trollish crudeness perfectly fit him to the Nazi culture. Other satiric portraits—Robin Smallburrow, Ted Sandyman, and Lotho—are drawn in somewhat more detail.

Robin Smallburrow has become an unwitting tool of this police state; he exemplifies the corruption of the hobbit Shirriffs under the control of the ruffians and like other Shirriffs has become a compliant collaborator. His past familiarity with Frodo makes him conspicuous among the Shirriffs who announce to Frodo’s party that they are under arrest for violating a number of “rules,” including “Gate-breaking” (VI.8.1001). Masking their insecurity, the Shirriffs project themselves as tough and powerful, but their first confrontation with Frodo’s group gives them away. Despite the “staves in their hands and feathers [as badges of office] in their caps,” they look “both important and rather scared” (1001). As his name suggests, Robin Smallburrow exemplifies the ordinary, decent citizen occupying a relatively menial position. Having become a participant in a system of surveillance and informing, Robin is now trapped in the Shire’s new order. “But don’t be hard on me,” he tells Sam, “You know I went for Shirriff seven years ago, before any of this began. [...] But now it’s different.” When Sam tells Robin that he could have quit, if the job had ceased to be “respectable,” Robin tells him, “We’re not allowed to.” The Nazi-like obsession with rules and prohibitions is underscored in Sam’s response: “If I

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Burn provides a useful example of such contemporary awareness, as he recalls in his autobiography, *Turned Towards the Sun* (2003), which includes an eyewitness visit to a Nazi prison in pre-war Germany.

hear *not allowed* much oftener [...] I'm going to get angry" (1002). Robin also echoes the Nazi's restrictions on freedom of movement: "[the Chief] doesn't hold with folk moving about," Robin says, "so if they will or they must, then they has to go to the Shirriff-house and explain their business" (1002). Robin's defensive posture reveals him as weak and helpless in his position of authority, as does the fact that he senses but cannot bring himself to condemn the Nazification of the Shire. Sam Gamgee's responses here and elsewhere articulate the Shire's values. The explicit juxtaposition of his normative views as he chastises the collaborators gives added emphasis to the satire.

Ted Sandyman deludes himself by thinking that he has become powerful in having found security in the Shire's occupation. His tough swagger makes him a somewhat amplified version of Bill Ferny. Ted swears and spits, as he tells Sam, "You can't touch me. I'm a friend o' the Boss's. But he'll touch you all right, if I have any more of your mouth" (VI.8.1017). When Frodo's companions first meet him, they see "a surly hobbit lounging over the low wall of the mill yard [...] grimy-faced," sneering at them—at Sam in particular—and calling out to him, "'Don't 'ee like it, Sam? [...] But you always was soft. [...] What d'you want to come back for? We've work to do in the Shire now'" (1017). Ted sees himself as powerful and Sam as "soft"—an idle dreamer: "I thought you'd gone off in one o' them ships you used to prattle about, sailing, sailing" (1017). The irony in this is that Ted Sandyman is doing the dreaming; his sense of empowerment is delusional. Under the new regime, he is much worse off than before: "he works there," the returning hobbits are told, "cleaning wheels for the Men, where his dad was the Miller and his own master" (1013).<sup>10</sup>

The portrait of Lotho emerges posthumously. The fragmentary account of "Pimple," as Frodo's friends refer to him, illustrates the power of Sharkey to lure and then destroy those willing to be victimized by the spell of language and an appeal to greed. Even more than Robin Smallburrow or Ted Sandyman, whose character failings make them ripe targets for the Nazis, Lotho is the victim of his own selfish vices. As the transformation of the Shire is later explained, Lotho had demolished the old mill, then "brought in a lot o' dirty-looking Men to build a bigger one and fill it full 'o wheels and outlandish contraptions" (VI.8.1013). His grandiose new mill gives the appearance of great industrial momentum, an impression Tolkien creates only to lavish irony on the falseness of this unreal industrial progress. Its brutalizing effects had been seen earlier from afar, when Galadriel had allowed Sam to gaze into the *palantír*. The vision he saw there has come to pass: "the new mill in all its frowning and dirty ugliness" (1016) has scarred the landscape with a grotesque emblem of an

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<sup>10</sup> "Work was central to the Nazi scheme of values" (Burleigh 242). The unemployed could easily be arrested and sent to the camps. See also Evans 88.

industrialization that recognizes only quantity, even when it defies common sense. As Farmer Cotton observes, “since Sharkey came they don’t grind no more corn at all” (1013); he goes on to describe the new mill as both an attack on the senses (“a-hammering and a-letting out a smoke and a stench”) and an assault on the environment (“they’ve fouled all the lower Water, and it’s getting down into Brandywine” [1013]).

#### A DARK SATANIC MILL IN THE SHIRE

Tolkien’s allusiveness deepens the satire. In depicting the gigantic mill that now looms disproportionately over the Shire, Tolkien likely combines an allusion to the Sarehole mill of his childhood and its subsequent defilement with the famous (or infamous) Albion Flour Mill that had once loomed at the south end of London’s Blackfriars Bridge near William Blake’s Lambeth neighborhood. Blake’s phrase “dark Satanic mills” in his poem, “Jerusalem,” most likely alludes to the same mill. Built in 1786 by Matthew Boulton and James Watt, this was the first steam-powered mill in England. Designed to grind day and night, the Albion mill overwhelmed London’s other mills and millers. Five years after it was built, the mill self-destructed; the fire that left it in ruins had been ignited by its own machinery. Besides having been a much-publicized innovation and the subject of rumor and speculation after it burned, it had also drawn the attention of pictorial satirists and was memorialized with a plaque executed by Rowlandson and Pugin.<sup>11</sup> Their images of the huge new mill incongruously

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<sup>11</sup> For an account of the Albion Mill see Fores. On literature and the Albion Mills, see James McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*, pp. 97ff. Tolkien expressed a particular fondness for an old sixteenth-century mill in the village of Sarehole that he recalled from his childhood and laments its demise—“an old mill that really did grind corn” in “a kind of lost paradise” (qtd. in Hammond and Scull, lxxviii). As Tolkien fondly recalls in the Foreword to the second edition: “Recently I saw in a paper a picture of the last decrepitude of the once thriving corn-mill beside its pool that long ago seemed to me so important” (Foreword.xxv). Ironically, the Industrial Revolution titan, Matthew Bolton, a developer of the Albion mill, had earlier been involved with the re-working of the Sarehole mill, and his name appears on a blue plaque at the site so much admired by Tolkien. Humphrey Carpenter cites a passage from Tolkien’s diary in which he recalls the “pangs” he experienced on re-visiting this site; he saw that “the old mill still stands,” but he expressed great disappointment in the surrounding scene of lights and traffic, resulting in a “violent and peculiarly hideous change” (*Biography* 125). In a 1996 interview with journalist John Ezard, Tolkien recalled the old mill: “There was an old mill that really did grind corn with two millers, a great big pond with swans in it, a sandpit, a wonderful dell with flowers, a few old-fashioned village houses and, further away, a stream with another mill. I always knew it would go—and it did” (“Tolkien’s Shire”). “Bag End under Hill,” the color frontispiece to *The Hobbit*, features an image of mill that may recall that memory from his childhood. Tolkien made several pencil sketches in preparation for what became the

towering over the landscape, its gigantic chimney belching smoke and polluting earth, water, and air, satirize the excesses in the transformation of England into a great industrial power during the preceding two centuries. The similar grotesque disproportion of the Albion Mill—with a production capacity that displaced existing mills—exists as well in Lotho's Shire counterpart with its redundant capacity; "there was no more for the new mill to do than for the old," as Farmer Cotton observes. Like the Albion Mill's redundancy, the increased mill capacity is meaningless in the Shire; as the hobbits are told, "you've got to have grist before you can grind." Even worse, "since Sharkey came, they don't grind no more corn at all" (VI.8.1013).

Lotho becomes a Quisling-like collaborator to further his vanity and self-aggrandizement. A member of the greedy Sackville-Baggins, the family branch that Bilbo had returned from his adventures to find looting his home, Lotho has dropped the "Baggins" from his Sackville-Baggins name, thus detaching himself from the side of the family that includes Bilbo and Frodo. Having designated himself as "Chief Shirriff," he had insisted on being addressed not by his name but as "Shirriff." Like the German industrialists who sought prosperity under the Nazis, Lotho hitched his fortunes to the occupiers, assuming that turning the mill into a grandiose factory-scale industry would automatically enrich him. As farmer Cotton explains,

He'd funny ideas, had Pimple. Seems he wanted to own everything himself, and then order other folk about. It soon came out that he already did own a sight more than was good for him, and he was always grabbing more [...]. He'd already bought Sandyman's mill before he came to Bag End, seemingly. (VI.8.1012)

This way to wealth was fully compatible with the National Socialist regime in Germany. Frodo's comment suggests just such a Nazi-like relationship of collaboration for profit: "Lotho never meant things to come to this pass. He has been a wicked fool, but he's caught now. The ruffians are on top, gathering, robbing, and bullying, and running or ruining things they like, in his name" (VI.8.1006). Industrialism in league with a tyrannical government was a phenomenon that had notorious counterparts in Nazi Germany's industry, as for example with I.G. Farben or the Krupp mills.<sup>12</sup>

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frontispiece, each including a mill along the river at the foot of the Hill. For comments on the drawings and frontispiece, see Hammond and Scull, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator*, 100-107.

<sup>12</sup> Cooperation between leading German industrialists and the Nazis is well known. Evans comments on I.G. Farben's "profit from the Third Reich" (375); on Krupp, see William

The gigantic proportions of the mill offer a culminating revelation of the futility of an overreaching industrialism. What the hobbits had seen from afar—Lotho's grotesque legacy—now greets them in its full horror:

It was one of the saddest hours of their lives. The great chimney rose up before them; and as they drew near the old village across the Water, through rows of new mean houses along each side of the road, they saw the new mill in all its frowning and dirty ugliness: a great brick building straddling the stream, which it fouled with steaming and stinking outflow. All along the Bywater Road every tree had been felled. (VI.8.1016)

The lurid image of the new mill as a defecating behemoth generates one of the most compelling moments of this satire. Overwhelming the landscape, the image also suggests a parallel with the Nazi domination; both jointly conspire to tyrannize over occupied land. This shocking description appears as the aftermath of a battle in which the hobbits have succeeded in driving the ruffians from the Shire, a juxtaposition that situates the mill as the ultimate symbol of what needs scouring.<sup>13</sup>

#### NAZI HORROR IN THE FACE OF DEFEAT

Lotho's fate satirizes with grim irony the Nazi-like culture of death swallowing its unwitting supporters. Their usefulness ended, *Untermenschen* are disposed of. While Lotho has deluded himself by thinking that he was at the top of the hobbit heap, he has been nothing more than a pawn for outside interests, as the ruffians know so well: "He'll do what Sharkey says. Because if a Boss gives trouble, we can change him" (VI.8.1005). Frodo is keenly aware of Lotho's plight, telling Pippin that Lotho has been a dupe, "a wicked fool" but now "a prisoner in Bag End now, I expect, and very frightened" (1006). Frodo, of course, is correct about Lotho—except in being unaware that Lotho is already beyond rescue. His ultimate disgrace has come at the hands of Wormtongue. "Worm killed your Chief, poor little fellow, your nice little Boss. Didn't you Worm? Stabbed him in his sleep, I believe," Saruman acidly tells the hobbits (1020). The added detail—"stabbed him in his sleep"—recalls the "Night of the Long

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Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Dynasty that Armed Germany at War*, pp. 359-75.

<sup>13</sup> Tolkien makes a passing connection between Nazism and industrial degradation of the environment at a celebratory "Hobbit Dinner" held in Rotterdam in 1958. He remarked on the destructiveness of "cold-hearted wizards." His further remarks have been summarized as saying that "Shire-polluting [...] Saruman[s]" (i.e., those wreaking havoc on the environment) "are everywhere" ("Long-lost Recording of Tolkien").

Knives,” the purge in which Hitler-led Nazis roused Röhm’s rival SA Nazis from their beds and murdered them. Such allusive content is necessarily subtle; otherwise the satire would intrude on the main narrative.

Where does Saruman fit into this satire? Tolkien conceived of using Saruman as “Sharkey” only after he had written an earlier version of this chapter. Now an exile from Isengard, Saruman, and not Lotho, whom the occupied hobbits had assumed to be the “Chief,” suddenly makes an appearance as the real “Chief.” Even in defeat—“a beggar in the wilderness,” as Frodo revealingly describes him for the unwitting ruffians—he remains a force (VI.8.1005). His spellbinding speech, so powerful that it nearly mesmerizes his hearers, is reminiscent of Hitler, whose feats of oratory had captivated a nation. Just as Hitler’s Nazis left a legacy from the murder and genocide directed at Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, and others he hated, Saruman takes satisfaction in gloating over the thought that his evil will leave its mark. In words that would have suited Hitler at the time of his defeat, Saruman muses, “I have already done much that you will find it hard to mend or undo in your lives. And it will be a pleasure to think of that and set it against my injuries” (1018). And such was the horrible legacy of Nazism. Despite this satiric applicability, Saruman, however, is not Hitler. His history in *The Lord of the Rings* apart from his connection to the Shire differs too markedly from the evil Hitler of history to make him a stand-in for the German dictator. Saruman serves in this episode as a remote figure overseeing a Nazi-like occupation, one who recalls Hitler in some of his most characteristically Nazi actions, but his Nazi mentality does not make him an allegorical Hitler, even though their similarities reinforce the connection of the occupied Shire and Nazism. Even more than with Lotho, Saruman’s fate at the hands of his henchman is a most dramatic instance of Tolkien’s recurrent theme of evil’s inclination toward self-destruction, second only to Sméagol’s end.

The Nazi horrors known during the war were compounded by even more shocking revelations following their defeat. These were the post-war years that saw the completion of Tolkien’s great work. All the repressive Shire practices he delineates are also characteristic—on a reduced scale—of the image of Nazi rule that became ever clearer during the post-war years when Tolkien was completing *The Lord of the Rings*. Features such as the Shire’s police-state occupation could apply to other cruel tyrannies besides the Nazis, yet when seen in combination with other features that recall the Nazis in more specific terms, such as the Lockholes, the racist language, the collusion of the entrepreneurial industrialists—those more general tyrannical features—brutal occupation, looting of the land, for example—elicit the Nazis. Instead of a more general satire on totalitarian oppression, as in George Orwell’s *1984* (published in 1949, the same year that Tolkien finished writing *The Lord of the Rings*), Tolkien’s satire in “The Scouring of the Shire” has a more precise applicability to contemporary

history. The allusive language, the similarity of events in the occupied Shire—all the particulars evocative of the Nazis are reinforced by the historical proximity of the composition and completion of *The Lord of the Rings* to the Nazi era.

#### RESTORING THE NORMS OF TOLKIEN'S SHIRE

The Scouring involves recovery, not revenge. Scouring away the evil and ugliness imposed on the Shire includes restoring its values—the satire's implied norms. Instead of retribution, Frodo sets an example by word and act against killing any hobbits and on behalf of a genuine peace. As for the physical restoration of the Shire, Tolkien implicitly shares with his contemporary, the economist E.F. Schumacher, the view that "small is beautiful," yet which in the Shire applies to the socio-political in addition to the industrial scale.<sup>14</sup> Restoration, as performed by the hobbits, becomes what Schumacher terms "appropriate technology," the application of technology and industry proportionate to actual needs. In the Shire, this becomes a "labour of repair" (VI.9.1022), the replacement of innovative ugliness and excess with the functional and harmonious scale of the old: "Before Yule not a brick was left standing of the new Shirriff-houses or of anything that was built by 'Sharkey's Men'; but the bricks were used to repair many an old hole, to make it snugger and drier" (VI.9.1022).

The Scouring includes both a removal of what has been imposed and a re-establishment of the former structure in which governance and industry serve the hobbits—the reverse of the Nazi-industrial complex in which citizens exist to serve the state, or its hidden ruler, Sharkey. With victory, the multiple narrative moments, figures, and language that recall or suggest Nazism are replaced by the values governing the satire. The ravages of the Nazi-imposed industrialism now disappear. The new mill and sheds are removed; a new sand pit is transformed into a garden; the Hill and Bag End are cleared, along with "the restoration of Bagshot Row" (1022). The Shire's implicit return to a bucolically slower pace is to be distinguished from what the occupiers and collaborators sneered at as laziness, as had been evident in a reference by one of the ruffians to "this fat little country, where you have lazed long enough" (VI.8.1005) and in Ted Sandyman's bragging that "We've got work to do in the Shire now" (1017). Most hobbits understand the value of leisure as well as work.

Yet, the return of the Shire to its former life is not simply an exercise in nostalgia. The Scouring replaces the occupiers' hatred and degradation with love and fecundity, as the final chapter illustrates. Recovering the Shire gathers the best of the past in a hope for the future, as intimated in the tree-planting and

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<sup>14</sup> E.F. Schumacher uses this thesis as the title of his book *Small is Beautiful*.

the births of an unusual number of children—a fecundity stimulated by Sam’s use of the magic dust that Galadriel had given him. If the departing Frodo is permanently wounded, the Shire has new and forward-looking life, as presented in the final chapter’s image of Sam, home again, “with little Elanor upon his lap” (VI.9.1031). The alternative to the Nazified occupation of the Shire provides a clear ideal in the conclusion to the narrative. With its exposure and crushing of an evil supplanted by a normative ideal, the presence of satire lends complexity and enriches the text of *The Lord of the Rings*.

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