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Abstract

Takes Tolkien's concepts of sub-creation and Secondary Belief as a basis for discussion of Leonardo's humanistic philosophy, "exact fantasy," and Christianity. Discusses the question of "our synthesis of reality as individuals."

Additional Keywords

Epistemology and fantasy; Fantasy—Philosophical aspects; Leonardo, da Vinci—Philosophy; Philosophy; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Theory of Secondary Belief; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Theory of sub-creation; Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy-stories"



Leonardo, Tolkien, and Mr. Baggins

by COLIN DURIEZ

This paper on Leonardo, Tolkien, and Mr. Baggins is not a technical dissertation. Rather it is more like an essay in the form which Montaigne practised.

Shakespeare allowed seven hundred lines to the first three scenes of *Othello* when he conceivably could have used half that number; his dramatic purpose being to introduce his characters adequately. I think I shall follow his example and take some time to introduce mine. I trust you will not consider me presumptuous.

Leonardo, the most distinguished of my dramatis personae, was the illegitimate son of a notary of Vinci, a town in Tuscany, Italy. His father, who did not marry the peasant girl who bore the child, adopted him, but considered him unworthy of formal education. It was not until 1468, when Leonardo was sixteen, that his father, perhaps on the advice of Verrocchio, allowed him to enter the latter's shop. Under this brilliant master, the young apprentice's education really began. Although Leonardo, who has been described as "the greatest genius of the Renaissance", was throughout his life acutely self-conscious of his lack of formal book-learning, history has on record no other

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person to compare with him for sheer originality, profundity and breadth of mind, diversity of talent, inventive genius, and not least, the amazing combination of scientist, artist, and natural philosopher. Allowing science, on the one hand, the task of describing the universe mathematically and mechanistically, Leonardo on the other hand assigned to the artist, preeminently the painter, the task of painting the soul; the universal and personal aspect of the cosmos, including sentence and the aesthetic.¹

A good dramatist must somehow also give his audience a hint as to the subject of his play during the embryonic scenes. So, on to the stage of this discussion of "aspects of the nature and methodology of human knowledge", I now bring my second character: a person until fairly recently unknown except either in the ivy-clad arches of Merton College, Oxford, or to a few learned philological scholars, but whose name is now lauded in such diverse places as seminars of a theological nature and the hippie syndrome of "psychedelia". Even today, in the post-hobbit era of the 'sixties, it is surprisingly difficult to gain an acquaintance with John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, M.A., Hon. D. Litt., Hon. Dr. en Phil. et lettres, F.R.S.L. Born in 1892, of Danish extraction, Mr. Tolkien attended King Edward VI Grammar School, Birmingham, and gained his M.A. at Exeter College, Oxford. After some years he returned to Oxford to become Merton Professor of English Language and Literature until 1959. (Incidentally, he became friends with C. S. Lewis in his undergraduate days, a friendship that lasted until Lewis' death in 1963.) Tolkien was, at his retirement, one of the greatest living scholars of Old Norse and Germanic language, literature and mythology. As well as his immortal The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings trilogy, Mr. Tolkien has produced several shorter works; mainly fairy-tales, and was the joint editor of a highly praised text edition of "Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight".

The third member of my cast cannot exactly be called "fictional"; he is, in fact, an important figure in the history of another world than ours: the famed "Middle-earth". Part of this history is chronicled in The Hobbit and the Ring trilogy, the former work taking its name from this same character, Mr. Bilbo Baggins, who is a middle-aged peace-loving hobbit at the time of the events recorded in that book. For the benefit of those of you who have not read these important histories, and consequently might be too geocentric and earth-bound to really appreciate our discussion, the hobbits are a little people about half the height of mortal men, and even smaller than the bearded dwarves. They themselves have no beards, and are inclined to be rather fat in the stomach. Dressing in bright colors, they wear no shoes, but, unlike their hippie counterparts, their feet grow "natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair". Mr. Tolkien tells us that they also have "long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs". Mr. Baggins is only one of many superbly drawn characters in The Hobbit: Gandalf the Grey, Smaug the Dragon, Gollum, the trolls William, Bert and Tom, the dwarf-king Thorin Oakenshield, to name a few. A remark by Thorin Oakenshield concerning Bilbo Baggins perhaps best sums up this diverse and many-sided character: "a hobbit full of courage and resource far exceeding his size, and if I may say so possessed of good luck far exceeding the usual allowance."

Lacking the genius of Shakespeare, and hampered by the necessary brevity of a production of this nature (in respect for my audience), I must confess that I cannot do full justice to the important additions that our three main characters can add to our discussion.

But how, you might ask, can such singular characters as Leonardo, Mr. Tolkien, and Mr. Baggins possibly add anything to an epistemological discussion?

This is how the discovery came to me: I was writing a critical essay on The Hobbit, the history of Mr. Baggins, with a thesis of realism in mind which is put forward in C. S. Lewis' book, An Experiment in Criticism. This basically makes a differentiation between "realism of presentation" and "realism of content" in literature. The Hobbit, of course, is a fairy-story, and it is only through the efforts of a few people such as professors Lewis and Tolkien that stories of this nature have, as it were, been rescued from the nursery.

For the part of my study devoted to "presentation", I used the usual literary critical techniques: discussing characterization, realism of geography, time, and so forth. (In fact, through reading the hobbit books, I know the topography of Middle-earth far better than I know England's.) I was trying to analyze the book's amazing power, which Tolkien believes is a quality of all true fairy-stories; to cause something of what Coleridge called "a willing suspension of disbelief".²

But, however, it is far more profound than that. Tolkien believes, in fact, that the art of true fairy-story writing is "sub-creation", creating another or secondary world with such skill that it has an "inner consistency of reality" which is so potent that it compels Secondary belief or even Primary belief (the belief we give to the Primary or real world) on the part of the reader. Tolkien calls the skills to compel these two degrees of belief "fantasy" and "enchantment" respectively. A clue to the concept of sub-creation lies in the fact that the word "fairy", or more properly "faery", etymologically means "the realm or state where fairies have their being". A faery-story is not thus a story which simply concerns faery beings; they must have a geography and history to surround them.

While discussing the very interesting question of "Realism of content", I turned to Mr. Tolkien's essay called "On Fairy Stories", found in Tree and Leaf. As The Hobbit is both a fairy-story and has Christian overtones, the aspect of content needed a good defense.

The key concept of Professor Tolkien is that Faery, the realm or state where fairies have their being, contains a whole cosmos: the moon, the sun, the sky, trees and mountains, rivers, water and stones, as well as dragons, trolls, elves, dwarves, goblins, elves, and even mortal man when he is enchanted (through giving Primary belief to what he is reading). It is, in fact, "sub-creation" rather than either representation or allegorical interpretation of the "beauties and terrors of the world". The making of fairy-stories comes, says Tolkien, as a result of a two-fold urge in man: (1) the urge to survey the depths of space and time, and (2) the urge to communicate to living beasts other than man, to escape from hunger, poverty, death, to end the separation between man and nature; to be absorbed into or accepted by the

universe: In short, to overcome the tension of man's smallness in an infinite cosmos.

Before I discuss this concept of Tolkien's further, I should briefly like to put and expand it into Christian terms so as to have a base for introducing Leonardo into the discussion: Man is made in the image of his creator, the infinite-personal God. The creation, like a piece of art, reflects its creator. When man creates the world of "faerie", he is creating in the image of God's creation. His sub-creation therefore ideally contains the cosmos within its finite limits. We may call this sub-creative act a "miniaturization" of the cosmos, a microcosm, so long as we are clear that it is not a conscious, allegorical miniaturization. I shall discuss why conscious allegorization cannot be true sub-creation later.

A few months after writing the critical essay, I happened to pick up a volume of the Mentor series of philosophers, "The Age of Adventure". Reading the section on Leonardo, and subsequently a few other pieces concerning him, I was struck by several interesting parallels with the concept of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien.

Leonardo seems basically to have sought to solve two problems. The first is that if one starts rationalistically and mathematically with the particulars of the material world, one ends up merely with mechanics; to a complex machine with no place for qualities, personality, or the soul.⁵ The second problem was the conflicting verbal wrangles of the philosophers which had continued, almost without a break, throughout all the centuries since Thales and the ancient Greeks.⁶

Because, as monistic naturalist and pantheist, he did not have the traditional Christian position of a personal-infinite God-creator (personality being the unifying link between both sides of the apparent soul-matter, unity-particulars dualism⁷), Leonardo could not solve the first problem. It might possibly be said that he almost succeeded because he made himself the unity of the dualism; he was both artist and scientist. Even though he was a personal "link", however, he was not sufficient for he was merely in God's image; he was merely in the finite image of the infinite Unity. Teaching that science and art both have the same natural object, the former describing it in terms of mathematics, while the latter presented its form⁸, color, sound, and other qualities to the senses, Leonardo as a scientist described matter mechanically and as an artist tried to paint the unity, the soul.

The answer to the second problem is really a corollary to the first because Western philosophy throughout most of its history has tried to find a unity of truth, a monism, a system comprehensive enough to include all particulars, including man and the soul. In other words, the philosopher was interested in classifying in one filing system all data presented to him, including that of the Unseen World. He was not interested in the data merely of the Seen World, and ultimately that part of the Seen World that has a mathematical correlative. In his analysis of the evolution of modern thought, Dr. Schaeffer believes that around the time of Hegel and Soren Kierkegaard's existential leap, philosophy gave up trying to find such a unity, and made a consistent system of truth which excluded man and the soul.

Leonardo died 250 years before Hegel was born. This Renaissance genius, as we have seen, was still seeking a unity, but he decided that the only way to avoid the philosophical and conflicting disputes was by appealing to an objective reference point: "experience"--as he termed it. Experience, not books and verbal heeklings, must be the be-all and end-all of knowledge. "Wisdom," he wrote, "is the daughter of experience." To him, the two pillars on which science--then in its birth pangs--stands are experience and mathematical calculation. Experience never deceives, but to avoid bad judgement, it must be subjected to mathematical verification.⁹ This was a titanic anti-rationalistic step.

According to Giorgio de Santillana, Leonardo had a strong epistemological position. Like Vico, he believed basically that man cannot know the truth about nature, but unlike the former (who said that man can only know what he "makes" himself, namely history), Leonardo is thinking of what man is able to create, both artistically and technically. "Nature can only be guessed at; she gives at most 'clues' to her own designs; but the unlimited world of Man's creation is his very own."¹⁰

Santillana continues: "Leonardo's guiding idea was not that the eye alone is able to see reality; but that it is the trained intent eye, the eye 'knowing how to see', which controls the skilled hand, (that) can come as close to the hidden structure of reality as it is possible for man to read insofar as he has redesigned it himself."¹¹

Bearing in mind that Professor Tolkien calls the power to sub-create a world with an "inner consistency of reality", commanding Secondary belief on the part of the reader, the main aspect of "fantasy", it is very significant that this kind of experimental knowledge, this operational and creative knowledge, is called by Leonardo "exact fantasy".

The artist's mind is on a hidden foundation, a law inside nature, which is revealed through his creative effort, his "exact fantasy". With the aid of geometry, perspective, proportion and mechanics, he, as artist (and, in a sense, as engineer), is able to create or build afresh and thus, by experience, to uncover this law which is "not wholly reducible to abstractions",¹² that is, to mathematics.

In "Naturalistic Science is Poor Science",¹³ Dr. Schaeffer suggests that science is progressing today while philosophy is at a standstill because the former assumes a basic reason and order to the universe. Certainly, if Leonardo is right about experience and the "exactness" or "exact fantasy" being the two pillars of science, we can see the base on which this assumption is built. By this "exact fantasy" science discovers at least that the universe seems to have an inherent order and mathematical symmetry. Unfortunately, according to Abbagnano, after Leonardo's death Copernicus and Galileo, who shared his belief that nature is written in "mathematical characters", helped to bring scientific consideration "from the domain of quality (of natures or essences) to that of quantity by permitting" a reduction of the objectivity of a natural object to its mathematical measurability.¹⁴ This was a gigantic narrowing of reality. Gone now was the artist's place, and soon to go was any attempt to include personality and man's essential humanness in science's and also in philosophy's system of

truth. Man then would be "dead"; he would only be able to be described in mechanistic terms, with even the personal pronoun being meaningless.

Bearing in mind Leonardo's concept of knowing by experience, by operational and creative knowledge, or, as he calls it, "exact fantasy", let us again return to J.R.R. Tolkien's concept of the true fairy-story as "sub-creation", rather than a conscious, allegorical miniaturization of the universe. And let us think of the fairy-story maker in the same light as Leonardo regarded the artist and technician: as the creator of "exact fantasy", the key by which he thought all true knowledge is uncovered.

The phrase "exact fantasy" is beautiful, for it contains a true concept of humanity: both the senses and conscious skill or art are involved. I think that both Leonardo and Mr. Tolkien would agree that it is the extent to which a person is balanced between the sensuous (or sub-conscious, or imaginative) mind and the intellectual (or mathematical) mind that he truly and individually exists and has "humanness". Plato calls this balance the "chest"--the liaison officer between "cerebral and visceral man" (to quote C.S. Lewis). In the same passage of his book, The Abolition of Man, Lewis comments, "It may even be said that it is by this middle element (i.e. the chest) that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal."¹⁵ That this fact is what Leonardo seems to believe is borne out by his statement, "Mental things which have not gone in through the senses are vain and bring forth no truth except detrimental." Conversely, according to Giorgio de Santillana, he also taught that "what the 'senses' receive without creative participation can also be detrimental, and the artist knows it too well, for he is the magician who can arouse passions at his will."

These two general concepts of Leonardo I have just mentioned regarding the balance of "creative" or "exact" fantasy bear remarkable parallels to an epistemology which may readily be inferred from Professor Tolkien's beliefs concerning fairy-story. This I shall discuss in a moment.

A good dramatist, however, must provide relief for his audiences at the psychological moments throughout his play, and I shall follow his example. Furthermore, no doubt, the more inquisitive of my audience will be wondering what has happened to our character, the inimitable Mr. Bilbo Baggins, whose resourcefulness and courage helped to kill Smaug, the dragon.

Mr. C.S. Lewis, although he was referring to a drama, has pointed out in his essay, "Hamlet, the Prince or the Poem", that it is possible to over-emphasize the importance of a main character and his creation as an individual, and thus to lose a possible cosmic or universal theme. In the case of Hamlet the play, he feels that a good case may be made out for the man Hamlet's being Everyman facing the uncertainty of death, and that which lies beyond: being or nothingness. If The Hobbit achieves the status of true fairy-story, and if Mr. Tolkien is right, then it is more than possible that it also has a cosmic theme and significance. Now in the story, the reader travels with Mr. Baggins from the beginning to the culmination of the action. Consequently, because the "depths of space and time" pass before Mr. Baggins' eyes,

and through him, as Everyman, the readers' eyes, Tolkien (probably unconsciously) seems to convey the impression of the fact that you and I and all who have consciously existed have been faced with a vast and terrifying complexity of reality which you and I and they must somehow synthesize to the best of our individual abilities. Poor Mr. Baggins! How many times during the midst of dangerous adventures in the Misty Mountains or Mirkwood did he wish he were back in the Shire sitting in his comfortable hobbit-hole by a roaring fire with a pipe in his hand?

It is the whole question of our synthesis of reality as individuals that I should like to discuss. Inferring now from both Tolkien and Leonardo, I am presenting my conclusions as an epistemological position: with certain important qualifications from a Christian point of view.

Briefly I wish to recapitulate on two concepts mentioned above concerning what Leonardo called "exact fantasy" in regard to the artist and scientist generally and what Mr. Tolkien, in specific regard to the fairy-story maker, called "sub-creation". This is that it (a) is produced by the total or balanced man, not merely either the "romantic," emotional mind or the intellectual mind; and (b) that it reflects the nature of the cosmos, or, in Christian terms, is made in the "image" of primary creation. This reflection of reality is as true for Donald Campbell's Bluebird as it is for The Hobbit. I mentioned that Tolkien's sub-creation, in his desire to "survey the depths of space and time", does not allegorically represent the Real World surrounding him. This is precisely because such a representation would be overbalanced on the intellectual side. The "exactness" or art would be there, but the "fantasy" would not. An answer as to why it is important that the unconscious or romantic mind must have a place in sub-creation or the artistic/scientific "exact fantasy" as a means, via experience, to knowledge, falls into two areas.

The first reason why it must have a place is that our conscious minds are prejudiced or biased by the presuppositions we hold; and without them it is impossible to think. For example, when we think, we usually presuppose that logic or reason is universally valid. Another example is the two main possible presuppositions regarding the origin of the universe. One presupposes that everything that is has come from eternal mass and/or energy. (Pantheism is included in this category.) The other presupposes that everything has come from a personal-infinite God who existed meaningfully before all else. Leonardo as we have seen, realized that the verbal disputes of philosophy would go on indefinitely and get nowhere; these would never succeed in conceptualizing in one finite synthesis infinite reality. This is because philosophy was within a rationalistic prison of presuppositions. He proposed the idea of an objective reference point, free from presuppositional bias: this was "experience". Said Leonardo, "Wisdom is the daughter of experience." Christianity, on the other hand, while agreeing with experiential knowledge, teaches that the only sufficient answer to this prison-house of presuppositions is knowledge from "outside" of man: propositional revelation of truth from God.

To introduce the second reason why the unconscious or sentient mind must play a part in the epistemological attempt of certain forms of "sub-creation" or "exact fantasy", the following quotation from

C.S. Lewis will be pertinent: "Symbolism is a mode of thought, but allegory is a mode of expression."¹⁶ Symbols must be used in "creative" or "exact fantasy" generally; and what is true of symbols is also true of images, which are not, I think, like the former, restricted to fantasy in literature and painting. Images also, like symbols, come from the sub-conscious mind, specifically from the imagination. The difference between allegory (or, as it might be called, arbitrary symbol: a term of linguistics and mathematics) on the one hand, and symbols and images on the other, might be that the former either necessitates qualifications or memorization in order for its meaning to be communicated, whereas the meaning of the latter may largely be deduced from the bare symbol or image itself. Mr. W.H. Auden, in a recent B.B.C. "Listener" article, makes the interesting point that "with all genuine symbolic creations" it is "much easier to grasp (them) imaginatively than to analyse (them); for analysis always tends to reduce symbolism to a false and boring allegory." In short, the symbol transcends its explanation. Furthermore, just as verbal articulations are a poor translation of our thought, so too symbol and imagery approach nearer to the essence of thought than does allegory. I must add, however, that the distinction between symbol and image on the one hand and allegory on the other is very elusive. In my terminology, the symbol or image would intrinsically more resemble the nature of the object being expressed than would an allegory. The allegorical resemblance is more extrinsic. I shall give four examples of images or symbols: (1) when Satan is spoken of as a symbol of evil (although I believe he is a person), (2) the pictorial representation of the atomic structure, (3) Einstein's saddle-shaped space as one of three possible shapes of space, and (4) Einstein's statement that the universe is like a well-designed crossword puzzle into which only the appropriate words will fit.

It should not be too surprising a fact that the subconscious mind should play such an integral role in sub-creation and exact fantasy. To put it in another way, it should not be surprising that the total person is involved; for how do we perceive the Real World? The answer, of course, is that we perceive it through our total persons. How much of this perception is universal may partially be seen in the following example: the Turk and the foreigner speaking no Turkish who stand together by the side of the Bosphorus at the same moment in history and look in the same direction will receive identical sense perceptions. The senses therefore cannot be ignored.

In connection with this, let us return to the problem of our being biased by our presuppositions. When we consciously analyse the perceptions we have received largely, but not completely, through our senses, we do this personally and individually. In normal verbal communication, we learn the personal and individual analyses, by others, of their perceptions. From this acquired and stored information we make our individual and personal syntheses of the vast and terrifying complexity of reality that confronts us. Every time that such analyses and syntheses are made, presuppositions bias and qualify them.

This is why humanistic philosophy has got nowhere (using "humanistic" in the wider sense of man knowledge-seeking totally and autonomously from himself).

"Exact fantasy", and sub-creation, as it comes from the total person, is not so idiosyncratic as allegorical or bare intellectual creation. It is a translating of the Real World, as perceived through the five senses and the soul, (or the mannishness of man, or the Collective Unconscious) into the finite and graspable terms of creative fantasy. The intellectual mind, art and skill also plays an integral part, of course; but a complete domination by the intellectual mind, to the exclusion of the romantic, is fatal, and vice versa. It is possible that Thomas Aquinas, with his unbiblical teaching that the intellect is unfallen, is the key to modern man's dilemma of the "ghost in the machine." 17

Leonardo did teach, however, that this fantastic creation must be verified by mathematics; that is, abstract, logical, defined reasoning. This is basically why he felt that both the artist and the scientist had a place in the gaining of knowledge: natural objects were not merely to be understood by the sensuous mind, but by the abstract intellectual mind. Form and color were as important as chemical and physical composition; chemical and physical composition as form and color. Qualities were as vital to Leonardo as quantities. Matter was important as spirit, and spirit as matter.

On the basis of what "experimental knowledge" tells our total persons regarding the nature of reality, we can then modify our presuppositions instead of the reverse process. Science claims to work by this method. Certainly, such a method is agreeable to a Christian, who believes that true or real knowledge will not contradict the true knowledge of revelation. Yet modern science has taken the philosophical presupposition, with no ground from her mother, experience, (a) that qualities are unimportant and (b) that the universe has come from eternal matter and/or energy. It has made its system of truth a tightly closed circle with both qualities and man, as man, outside of it; an esoteric system grounded merely on rationalistic philosophical presuppositions. Man inside this circle can only be described mathematically and thus "dies".

Having considered the validity of experimental knowledge over the humanistic prison of presuppositions, let us return to our central thesis.

As a sub-creator or producer of "exact fantasy", Tolkien's fairy-story maker has, I feel, several distinct advantages. Unlike the painter and applied scientist, for example, who work in specific rather than general media, the word-artist has tools for his trade which are universals. (My mother is a particular of the universal word "mother.") In verbal sub-creation, therefore, the total person--which I shall oversimplify into imagination and intellect--of both the sub-creator and his reader is employed. This, of course, greatly facilitates the creation of a universal or cosmic sub-creation: one which contains within its finite limits infinite reality. On the other hand, to be fair, the applied scientist is more up against the exactness of the forms of the universe in his fantasy.

In closing this discussion, I should briefly like to mention, to serve as an illustration of the potentiality of literary "exact fantasy", two singular characteristics of what Tolkien calls the true fairy-story; i.e. a story, having amongst other things an "inner

consistency of reality", which concerns the realm or state where faery creatures have their being.

The first characteristic is one which Mr. Tolkien singles out as preeminent: this is the quality of Joy; Joy which kindles in the reader what C.S. Lewis calls: "sehnsucht" or longing or desire. Desire for an ideal world: longing for a far-off country one has never seen or conceptualized: hunger to be at one with nature; an instinctive urge to end the great gulf of alienation that so haunts one's consciousness: desire to communicate with living creatures other than man. Professor Lewis described the whole disire like this: "We do not want merely to see beauty... we want something else which can hardly be put into words--to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves." (Incidentally, this quality of Joy is the same that played such a part in Lewis' conversion, as recorded in "Surprised by Joy")

As a Christian, I feel that the separation of man and nature, the conscious and subconscious mind, spirit and matter, subject and object, form and content, has become apparent as one of the consequences of the fall of man. Our natures, as men, are as yet unfulfilled because we are alienated from Christ, and this is also true of Christians to varying extents. Our identities as individuals and men are indelibly linked with Him. He is the fulfillment of all things.

The second characteristic of true fairy-stories is what Tolkien, in Tree and Leaf, calls "eucatastrophe"; the consolation of the Happy Ending which is far more than merely the consolation of the imaginative satisfaction of ancient desires." This "eucatastrophe" is the denial of "universal final defeat and in so far is evangelism, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief".¹⁸ Tolkien later remarks that the Gospel narratives have all the qualities of fairy-story, with the added and supreme quality of being in the actual space-time history of the Primary world, rather than merely in a sub-created, Secondary one.

Finally, it is necessary to make several qualifications on this epistemological position.

The first is that at this period of the twentieth century, we must be careful with any use of fantasy in the arts: it must always be "exact fantasy", i.e. that which can be verified by our conscious minds. Unlike Lewis Carroll, who built his fantasy upon logic, the makers of the New Cinema often make no delineation whatsoever between reality and fantasy. (An example is Fellini's "Juliet of the Spirits".) Neither is it possible for the viewer to distinguish between the two. When it comes to The Hobbit, however, the contrary is true. Mr. Baggins is a member of a genus other than Homo sapiens; the Shire cannot be found in an Atlas, Bilbo meets a dragon, trolls, wargs, and goblins--to be seen neither in a zoo nor anywhere else on earth. Any belief is induced solely because the reader, through the skill of the sub-creator, enters another, distinct creation. The setting is not in our familiar world, as is invariably the case in modern films. To a modern person, however, lost as he is between fantasy and reality in an absurd

universe, The Hobbit is deadly serious.

The second qualification is that "exact fantasy", whether it is in the arts or sciences, cannot give final knowledge; it can only verify and qualify (in the sense of defining and describing) the objective framework of truth revealed in the Bible. I think Dr. Schaeffer's point that this revelation gives true but not exhaustive knowledge is vital. Therefore within the "form" of scripture (using the word in the sense of "form and freedom"), "exact fantasy" is tremendously valid, for it reveals more of God and His artistic handiwork, the creation. It tells us that the intrinsic character of nature does not contradict what God's revelation tells us of reality. This is one of the senses in which the Bible is "true".

Footnotes

1. Cf. Article on Leonardo da Vinci by Nicola Abbagnano in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, MacMillan.
and L.A. Schaeffer, Escape from Reason, Chicago, Inter-Varsity Press. pp. 17, 18.
2. J.R.R. Tolkien, Tree and Leaf, London, Allen and Unwin. p.36.
3. Ibid., pp. 36, 44, 45.
4. Ibid., pp. 15, 18, 26.
5. Schaeffer, Escape from Reason. p. 18.
6. Abbagnano, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy
7. Schaeffer, ibid. pp. 25, 26.
8. It is interesting that Michael Polanyi, a Czech-born scientist who worked with Francis Crick in cracking the genetic code, strongly attacks Crick's determinism. His attack takes the thesis that a purely physical and chemical description of a natural object fails to account for the all-important factor of the object's form: it fails to explain the "machineness" of a machine, the "cellness" of a cell, and so forth. See "Life Transcending Physics and Chemistry" by M. Polanyi in Chemical and Engineering News, August 21, 1967.
9. Abbagnano, ibid.
10. Giorgio de Santillana, The Age of Adventure, Mentor. p. 68.
11. Ibid., p.69.
12. Ibid.
13. A tape that is based on an article by H.A. Post in the B.B.C. Listener, February 10, 1966.
14. Abbagnano, ibid.
15. C.S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man, New York, Collier Books, 1962. p. 34.
16. C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958. p.48.
17. The title of a recent book by Arthur Koestler.
18. Both quotations from Tree and Leaf, p. 60.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?...
YOU CAN'T FIND HOBBIT
IN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA!

