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Hobbit Dream?

Rand Kuhl

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I do not know where Mr. Ready gets his facts, but he always manages to ravage the truth. ("Man dislikes the Truth; he never has believed in it enough to espouse it, nor will he ever". This appears to be true for Mr. Ready. However, for the Christian like Tolkien this is not true because he does espouse the truth in Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life".) I have said enough above about Tolkien's use of the concept of Northern courage. What I must respond to is Mr. Ready's dismissal of the happy ending or even the hope of it, when the consolation, the joy of the happy ending is an integral, indivisible portion of Tolkien's being. And then he calls it "Tolkien's great contribution to... literature"! Just a few remarks from Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories" to remind Mr. Ready of what Tolkien has to say about "the Consolation of the Happy Ending"... "I would venture to assert that all complete fairy-stories must have it"; "it denies... universal final defeat and in so far is evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world"...; "The peculiar quality of the 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth"; the Happy ending has as its ultimate inspiration and justification the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in human history, in our primary world. "The story begins and ends in joy".

I have spent my time in a thorough review so you will not have to waste yours reading Mr. Ready's book. I suggest you read either of the two Tolkien essays noted in this review, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" or "On Fairy-Stories", for they would be infinitely more interesting and rewarding.

I I search for a world

With bounds
Unbroken which beckons
With its hunger
And its beauty.
Where my short reach
Can yet touch
The hearts of my companions.
Where my living
Makes a difference;
When having done
I can say
Having loved
Has made a difference.
How the earth and people
Are in my blood
And I in them
And we in you.

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II What wishes contend
In the sun,
In the green spring tears
Within
The inclocted cities,
The nets of tension,
Of a multiplicity of knots.
Why do cities assume
Then consume
The coordinates of glory
Which are drawn in a polar rush
To tenement terrors
And sublime
Suburban placidities.

III My hand wishes some healing
Within its scope and circle
Upon the sadness
Of creation in travail.

(C.) Randall Kuhl, 1969

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