

Spring 4-15-1992

Joint Artists' Project

Patrick Wynne

Paula DiSante

Sarah Beach

Lynn Maudlin

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



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

Recommended Citation

Wynne, Patrick; DiSante, Paula; Beach, Sarah; and Maudlin, Lynn (1992) "Joint Artists' Project," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 18: No. 2, Article 5. Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol18/iss2/5>

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

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



Online Summer Seminar 2023

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

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



Joint Artists' Project

Joint Artists' Project

Once again, a group of your friendly Mythopoeic Society artists present you with an interpretation of a scene from the work of J.R.R. Tolkien. This time around, the passage selected was that of Pippin's using the *palantir* of Orthanc. The parameters the artists were given were from the point where Pippin lifts the stone from Gandalf to the end of Gandalf's examination of the hobbit. Usually, we quote the passage for you, but you will appreciate that this time it is too long. We hope you enjoy the results (and we are interested in hearing your comments on our efforts — this time around, and in our previous experiments).

Pippin and The Palantir

by Patrick Wynne — Cover

The scene in which Pippin meddles in the affairs of wizards by gazing into the palantir is a wonderful exercise in suspense. However, translating that tension into visual terms was a problem, for the simple textual image of a horrified hobbit looking into a crystal ball seemed a little on the dull side, and I wanted my illustration to have lots of excitement and visual gee-whizery. My solution was to combine two scenes into one, not only showing Pippin looking into the Orthanc-stone but simultaneously showing — large and in living black and white — what he saw there, as described to Gandalf some ten paragraphs later:

"I saw a dark sky, and tall battlements," he said. "And tiny stars. It seemed very far away and long ago, yet hard and clear. Then the stars went in and out — they were cut off by things with wings. Very big, I think, really; but in the glass they looked like bats wheeling round the tower. I thought there were nine of them..."

My "neo-medieval" style seemed the best choice for this illustration. I attempted to maintain throughout a somewhat precarious balance between abstraction and fidelity to reality. The sleeping figures of Gandalf and Merry, for example, (inspired by a 12th-century mosaic of sleeping disciples in the church of San Marco in Venice) are plausible-enough representations of those characters as described in the text; yet the symmetry of their poses and placement in identical triangular sections on either side of Pippin makes them serve as decorative motifs as well.

Barad-dûr is shown as if viewed from far below, so that it looms threateningly over the helpless hobbit. The eye of Sauron with its flames streaming from a high window are not mentioned in the text of this scene, but their inclusion is a bit of artistic license taken from Frodo's view of the Dark Tower in III:219-20:

... and then he saw, rising black, blacker and darker than the vast shades amid which it stood, the cruel pinnacles and iron crown of the topmost tower of Barad-dûr. One moment only it stared out, but as from some great window immeasurable high there stabbed northward a flame of red, the flicker of a piercing Eye...

Another case of artistic license is the starry sky. The text refers to a "dark sky", but I could not use solid black since there would then be no contrast with the Dark Tower and the Nazgl, which are also rendered in black. So the "dark sky" with "tiny stars" has been reduced to a lighter pattern of op-art spirals which add to the looming effect by receding into the distance along the lines of perspective in precisely the same way real stars don't. We are, after all, dealing with a nightmare vision viewed through a magical seeing-stone.

The rather impertinent werewolf-heads decorating the upper corners are based on the "beak-head" motifs which are a common feature of Anglo-Norman architecture (the "beaks" are often actually lolling tongues). Such designs can be found carved over the doors of St. Peter's-in-the-East in Oxford, so if you will be attending the Centenary Conference there in August, perhaps you would care to join me on a hunting expedition for impertinent Anglo-Norman beasties ...

"What Mischief Has He Done — To Himself, And To All Of Us?"

by Paula DiSante — Back Cover

"So this is the thief!" said Gandalf. Hastily he cast his cloak over the globe where it lay. "But you, Pippin! This is a grievous turn to things!" He knelt by Pippin's body: the hobbit was lying on his back, rigid, with unseeing eyes staring up at the sky. "The devilry! What mischief has he done — to himself, and to all of us?" The wizard's face was drawn and haggard.

When I began tossing around ideas for this piece, I thought: "Oh, great, a night scene lit by the moon! Help!" In truth, this is a fun and challenging scene for an illustrator because there are plenty of ways to interpret it. But because of some intense personal stresses at the time I was producing this piece, I wasn't much in the mood to deal with character psychology. I was having a heck of a time just dealing with my own. So, instead, I decided to make this a straightforward exercise in composition.

Gandalf and Pippin were easy enough. But once these two figures were placed onto the paper, I found myself facing a big blank spot on the right-hand side. I knew when I started the drawing that something had to go here, but for a long time I couldn't make up my mind as to who or what that should be. I finally settled on Aragorn — or at least half of Aragorn — to balance the rightside. Pippin's outflung arm was leading my eye off the page, so I used the natural curve of his fingers as a "pointer" to direct the viewer's gaze to the blade of the sword.

The intention was to have the eye follow up the blade and, at the pommel of the sword, continue on to Merry's face. The angle of Merry's own sword then leads the eye back to

