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A Celebration of Tasker Hepplewater's Mock Turtle (1935)

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Tolkien's literary work derives its scope from his medieval studies and its form from his theory of subcreation, the rearranging in the secondary world of the artist the components perceived in the primary world. He has rearranged material in *Beowulf* as he interprets it from his own scholarly and Christian perspective to create *The Hobbit*. He has given us the opportunity for seeing with new eyes things which have lost their meaning through familiarity, for "seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them."

Endnotes

- ¹ P. 57 of the revised essay in *Tree and Leaf* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1965; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965).
- ² (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1937, 1951; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938, 1958; New York: Ballantine Books, 1965, 1966; London: Longmans, Green, 1966.) My citations are to chapter numbers.
- ³ My text is *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. Friedrich Klaeber, 2nd ed. (New York: D.C. Heath, 1928), since it is the edition Tolkien would have known in the thirties.
- ⁴ Proceedings of the British Academy, XXII (1936), 245-295. Reprinted in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), and in *The Beowulf Poet: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Donald K. Fry (Englewood Cliffs, 1968). My citations are to Nicholson.
- ⁵ *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, p. 67.
- ⁶ Publication came some years later in the *Dublin Review*, CCXVI (January 1945); twenty years afterwards it was reprinted with "On Fairy-Stories" in *Tree and Leaf*; and a year later both were reprinted in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966).
- ⁷ Consisting of three volumes, "The Fellowship of the Ring," "The Two Towers," and "The Return of the King" (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1954-55; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954-56; New York: Ace Books, 1965. *Ibid.* Rev. ed. New York: Ballantine Books, 1965. *Ibid.*, 2nd Ed. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1966; Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1967; *Ibid.* 1 vol. paperback, omitting the Appendices except for "Aragorn

- and Arwen." London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1968).
- ⁸ "Preliminary Remarks" to *Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment, A Translation into Modern English Prose*, by John R. Clark Hall (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1940).
 - ⁹ Tolkien attacks the general position held by Chambers, Klaeber, et al, but he does not deal specifically with Klaeber. Yet much of his discussion parallels.
 - ¹⁰ *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, p. 86.
 - ¹¹ "Preliminary Remarks," p. xi.
 - ¹² The Anglo-Saxon's doom Tolkien calls in his essay on *Beowulf* "his paradox of defeat inevitable yet unacknowledged," concluding that "It is in *Beowulf* that a poet has drawn the struggle in different proportions, so that we may see man at war with the hostile world, and his inevitable overthrow in Time" (p. 67). *Beowulf* has the comfort of knowing at his death that he has shown courage, "the exaltation of undefeated will" (p. 66). He knows that his foes are God's also:

Man alien in a hostile world, engaged in a struggle which he cannot win while the world lasts, is assured that his foes are the foes also of Dryhten, that his courage noble in itself is also the highest loyalty: so said thyle and clerk. (p. 78)

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Celebration of Tasker Hepplewater's Mock Turtle (1935)

All the assembled authors were discussing the extraordinary behavior of the Book of the Moment selectors in awarding their ephemeral crown to Tasker Hepplewater's *Mock Turtle*. "I finished this book," one distinguishing adjudicator had said, "with the tears running down my face."

—Dorothy L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night*, Ch. XI

Hidden and deep the writer's meaning lies,
about a swimming instructor, weary eyes
had seen the bathing beauties, seen them all,
had seen them swim a little, sunbath and loll;
mysteriously, his id in ashes dies.

Upon a whaler then, 'neath northern skies,
a female Eskimo the hero spies
who's covered with furs - her beauties him enthrall,
hidden deep.

Brought to a London suburb, quickly she hies
with a vegetarian nudist; the hero lies,
his ego in ashes, unto the Aquarium hall
to watch a turtle swim within its shell
(such is the meaning expressed which wins the prize),
hidden and deep.

—Joe R. Christopher