

ot-my mini review of Children of Hurin

The Urth list — 26 messages, 10 voices, 16 Apr 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4818>

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don doggett — 16 Apr 2007, 07:24

There are no spoilers here, but then I imagine most of you are familiar with the Tale of the Children of Hurin anyway. Recently, I acquired two beautiful leather bound volumes of the Iliad and the Odyssey, both translated by Robert Fitzgerald (who I prefer). I've read them both, the Iliad more than twice. I bought Seamus Heaney's translation of Beowulf when it first came out in hardcover, several years ago, and I read Stephen Mitchell's translation of Gilgamesh even before it was released. I also bought, and loved, WS Merwin's translation of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. I don't mention this to brag, but only to say that Tolkien's Children of Hurin is of a piece with all of these works. It is not fantasy, except in the sense that the fantasy genre has often been a lesser (though the impulse is understandable) attempt to emulate his work. And of all the aforementioned epics, only the Iliad manages to stir me more, though Hector is the only man in Homer's tale who could perhaps earn his way into the ranks of the elf-friends. If this is unmitigated gushing, so be it, but I love Tolkien's vision of Middle Earth, and especially of the Elder Days, and I'm grateful to be able to visit it again after so many years. The text itself is around 220 pages and is constructed solely of JRR Tolkien's words, edited together so seamlessly by his son that one would never know it was taken from several manuscripts. I can only hope that the same treatment will be given to the Tale of Beren and Luthien and also to The Fall of Gondolin. The Children of Hurin is superb and tragic.

Don

Jesper Svedberg — 16 Apr 2007, 09:23 · in reply to don doggett

don doggett skrev:

It is not fantasy, except in the sense that the fantasy genre has often been a lesser (though the impulse is understandable) attempt to emulate his work.

In what way is it not fantasy? It's set in a world that's different from ours and is filled with magic and stuff, right? Both the type of literature and the word "fantasy" as a label for it existed before Tolkien, so I'm unsure why his stuff should be something else.

// Jesper

Batrinque at aol.com — 16 Apr 2007, 10:57 · follows Jesper Svedberg

In a message dated 4/16/2007 3:25:15 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, kingwukong at yahoo.com writes:

Recently, I acquired two beautiful leather bound volumes of the Iliad and the Odyssey, both translated by Robert Fitzgerald (who I prefer). I've read them both, the Iliad more than twice. I bought Seamus Heaney's translation of Beowulf when it first came out in hardcover, several years ago, and I read Stephen Mitchell's translation of Gilgamesh even before it was released.

Personally, I prefer the Lombardo translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey to those by Fitzgerald and Fagles and Mandelbaum (and about a dozen other versions I have), but these things are always subjective. I much enjoyed Heaney's translation of Beowulf, although I do wish there had been something a little more of the robust flavor of the mead hall in it, but I would be hard-pressed to name a translation I would recommend over it to anyone who had not previously read the poem (and definitely to read it as a poem, not prose). And I have the highest regard for Mitchell's Gilgamesh.

The Children of Hurin is superb and tragic.

I am happy to see your highly favorable mini-review; I have the book on pre-order and anxiously await its delivery.

Bruce Trinkle
Amston, CT

brunians at brunians.org — 16 Apr 2007, 11:23 · in reply to Jesper Svedberg

don doggett skrev:

It is not fantasy, except in the sense that the fantasy genre has often been a lesser (though the impulse is understandable) attempt to emulate his work.

In what way is it not fantasy? It's set in a world that's different from ours and is filled with magic and stuff, right? Both the type of literature and the word "fantasy" as a label for it existed before Tolkien, so I'm unsure why his stuff should be something else.

I believe that what Don is saying is that there are no fantastic elements in the story, that no incident in the story could not happen in the World that we know.

That's what I would mean if I said this, anyway.

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Batrinque at aol.com — 16 Apr 2007, 12:13 · follows brunians at brunians.org

In a message dated 4/16/2007 6:58:11 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Batrinque at aol.com writes:

I much enjoyed Heaney's translation of Beowulf, although I do wish there had been something a little more of the robust flavor of the mead hall in it, but I would be hard-pressed to name a translation I would recommend over it to anyone who had not previously read the poem (and definitely to read it as a poem, not prose)

Saying this left open the question of what I would recommend as a second translation of Beowulf, to follow after Heaney's to perhaps impart something more of that robust or raw mead hall flavor. There are so many possible choices. Maybe the Sullivan and Murphy translation, or that by Lehmann, or that by Rebsamen ... And it is fun to simply listen to a reading of the poem in the original language, just to hear the alliteration and insistent rhythm.

Speaking of translations, I would think that Wolfe's works -- especially the Book of the New Sun -- would be a formidable challenge to translate well.

Bruce Trinke
Amston, CT

Jesper Svedberg — 16 Apr 2007, 12:27 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org skrev:

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Well, I haven't read the book, but from what I've read of it there seems to be elves, evil overlords, dragons and orcs in it, so I don't think that's what he meant.

// Jesper

Batrinque at aol.com — 16 Apr 2007, 12:35 · follows Jesper Svedberg

In a message dated 4/16/2007 8:28:43 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, jsvedberg at gmail.com writes:

brunians at brunians.org skrev:

I believe that what Don is saying is that there are no fantastic elements in the story, that no incident in the story could not happen in the World that we know.

That's what I would mean if I said this, anyway.

Well, I haven't read the book, but from what I've read of it there seems to be elves, evil overlords, dragons and orcs in it, so I don't think that's what he meant.

Well, I suppose that all depends on one's own "World that we know."

Although I personally don't know any elves, I'm pretty sure that I encounter orcs and evil overlords and occasionally dragons.

Bruce Trinqué
Amston, CT

brunians at brunians.org — 16 Apr 2007, 14:27 · in reply to Jesper Svedberg

brunians at brunians.org skrev:

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That's what I would mean if I said this, anyway.

Well, I haven't read the book, but from what I've read of it there seems to be elves, evil overlords, dragons and orcs in it, so I don't think that's what he meant.

Well, no, it wouldn't be, and I'd have to say I'm as puzzled as you are.

Perhaps Don shall enlighten us at some point.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 16 Apr 2007, 16:11 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 4/16/07, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Well, I haven't read the book, but from what I've read of it there seems to be elves, evil overlords, dragons and orcs in it, so I don't think that's what he meant.

Well, no, it wouldn't be, and I'd have to say I'm as puzzled as you are.

Perhaps Don shall enlighten us at some point.

I would make a guess (and I'm fairly confident of it, though I too hope Don will step forth and say in his own words what he meant) that the estimable Mr Doggett was suggesting that, though it contains elements of the fantastic, Tolkien's work was not created in the context of the commercial genre of "fantasy," as we know it today, and in fact could not be because that commercial genre came to be in response to JRRT's work.

I agree that it is not a part of that genre; however, I would say that it was only *partially* in response to Tolkien's work that "fantasy" as a commercial category came into being. It certainly existed in the pulp magazines before the publication of The Lord of the Rings -- the first issue of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, a/k/a F&SF, was published (under the original title, The Magazine of Fantasy) well before the publication of LotR. Tolkienesque or "high" fantasy is only a part of the overall genre, which also includes such subgenres as swords'n'sorcery, urban/contemporary fantasy, dark fantasy (horror), and "the weird" -- all of which existed in some forms prior to the publication of The Hobbit, let alone LotR.

Nonetheless, the success of LotR in the '60s (ten years after publication), along with the Conan boom of the early '70s, opened the way for modern fantasy. LotR begat Lin Carter's "Ballantine Adult Fantasy" series, which begat the Del Rey line, which published the best-selling Sword of Shannara and Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever; between these two

and the publication of the _Silmarillion_, the existence of fantasy as a significant publishing category from then on was assured.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

Soon, where Toon Town once stood will be a string of gas stations, inexpensive motels, restaurants that serve rapidly prepared food. Tire salons, automobile dealerships and wonderful, wonderful billboards reaching as far as the eye can see. My God, it'll be beautiful.

don doggett — 16 Apr 2007, 19:35 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

--- Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

I would make a guess (and I'm fairly confident of it, though I too hope Don will step forth and say in his own words what he meant) that the estimable Mr Doggett was suggesting that, though it contains elements of the fantastic, Tolkien's work was not created in the context of the commercial genre of "fantasy," as we know it today,

Thanks Dan'!! This is more or less exactly what I meant, especially regarding the Children of Hurin, and the tales in the Silmarillion. They are written in the tradition of myth and epic romance - Tolkien was playing a different game, so to speak.

and in fact could not be because that commercial genre came to be in response to JRRT's work.

Partly, yes, but I'm also aware of other contributing factors to the fantasy genre. I guess you could say I got caught up in making the review flow and generalized things a bit. But thank you all for your interest in my opinion, it's quite flattering. (blushes)

Don

don doggett — 16 Apr 2007, 19:40 · in reply to Batrinque at aol.com

--- Batrinque at aol.com wrote:

And

I have the highest regard for Mitchell's Gilgamesh.

He signed my advance copy when he was at our store recently. He's a nice guy and a great writer, but a bit of a boring speaker. fwiw

Don

Jesper Svedberg — 16 Apr 2007, 21:05 · in reply to don doggett

don doggett skrev:

--- Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

I would make a guess (and I'm fairly confident of it, though I too hope Don will step forth and say in his own words what he meant) that the estimable Mr Doggett was suggesting that, though it contains elements of the fantastic, Tolkien's work was not created in the context of the commercial genre of "fantasy," as we know it today,

Thanks Dan'!! This is more or less exactly what I meant, especially regarding the Children of Hurin, and the tales in the Silmarillion. They are written in the tradition of myth and epic romance - Tolkien was playing a different game, so to speak.

It strikes me as very weird to define the book after what it tries to be rather than what it is. The fact is that when you look at what kind of story it is, it is indistinguishable from much modern fantasy. It's a secondary world story with magical or fantastical elements that draws its estetical inspiration from myth and epics, like most modern epic fantasy of quality. The fact that there are some hideously unoriginal role playing stories doesn't change this fact.

Tolkien did not invent this tradition. Before him there were writers like William Morris, Lord Dunsany and E. R. Eddison who did similar things and just because the tradition hadn't spawned widely marketable genre until after Tolkien doesn't make his stuff much different from what came later.

// Jesper

Nathan Spears — 16 Apr 2007, 21:30 · follows Jesper Svedberg

It strikes me as very weird to define the book after what it tries to be rather than what it is. The fact is that when you look at what kind of story it is, it is indistinguishable from much modern fantasy. It's a secondary world story with magical or fantastical elements that draws its estetical inspiration from myth and epics, like most modern epic fantasy of quality. The fact that there are some hideously unoriginal role playing stories doesn't change this fact.

I think the distinction is a matter of foundation - the bedrock for Tolkien's creation was the ancient Finnish myth, Arthur, etc. The bedrock for much of what is being referred to as "the modern fantasy genre," especially "high fantasy," is Tolkien. Even those writers who don't claim him as a primary influence would not have had the same atmosphere in which to peddle their trade without Tolkien having changed the publishing landscape. The use of the phrase "modern epic fantasy of quality" is also dubious.

Tolkien did not invent this tradition. Before him there were writers like William Morris, Lord Dunsany and E. R. Eddison who did similar things and just because the tradition hadn't spawned widely marketable genre until after Tolkien doesn't make his stuff much different from what came later.

Legions of Tolkien fans cry foul! Tolkien spent decades working on the source material which LotR sprang from, and he was much more intimately acquainted with the aforementioned

myths and epics than many of his followers. On the whole I think that this resulting in a work which approaches the quality and power of his sources better than most (all) subsequent work in the "modern fantasy genre." So the difference is not necessarily in the individual elements of quests, elves, wizards, strange creatures, but in the overall quality of the work which requires acknowledgment as a thing apart.

James Wynn — 16 Apr 2007, 21:46 · in reply to Jesper Svedberg

It strikes me as very weird to define the book after what it tries to be rather than what it is. The fact is that when you look at what kind of story it is, it is indistinguishable from much modern fantasy. It's a secondary world story with magical or fantastical elements that draws its estetical inspiration from myth and epics, like most modern epic fantasy of quality. The fact that there are some hideously unoriginal role playing stories doesn't change this fact.

On the issue of genre labels, I'm not sure I agree with this. Putting, say, "The Sword of Shanarah" in the bin with the works of William Morris is to me like labeling the music of the Ramones "Doo-Wop". Yes, the Ramones show self-evident influence from 50s music; in fact, the intention of the whole New Wave movement is a return to simple cords and the roots of Rock&Roll. Undoubtably, it is useful to your local record store to classify the Rolling Stones, Devo, and Lionel Richie in the same bin labeled "Rock", but it never helped me to organize my record collection (not that I own any Lionel Richie albums).

Tolkien's works occupy a middle ground between Morris and Brooks in that he was writing as a fan of Morris, and Brooks was rewriting Tolkien. Tolkien is the inventor of Adult Fantasy as we understand it today. "The Simarillion" of the Morris's Mythopoetic genre. "The Lord of the Rings" is the new animal that fills bookstores now.

The old Mythopoetic genre is as much the grandparent of modern horror (e.g. Lovecraft, Machen and Stephen King) as it is of modern Fantasy.

Tolkien did not invent this tradition. Before him there were writers like William Morris, Lord Dunsany and E. R. Eddison who did similar things and just because the tradition hadn't spawned widely marketable genre until after Tolkien doesn't make his stuff much different from what came later.

This is like saying Ellery Queen novels are not much different from Edgar Allen Poe's novels and that the divide that is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is just an over-sized landmark in the Mystery genre.

Jesper Svedberg — 16 Apr 2007, 21:57 · in reply to Nathan Spears

Nathan Spears skrev:

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So what? The fantasy tradition existed before Tolkien. It is undeniable that he has made a bigger impression on it than any other writer, but the types of stories he wrote are very similar in structure to what William Morris wrote before him and very similar to what Le Guin or Guy Gavriel Kay wrote after him.

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Never. He may be better, but that makes his stories GOOD fantasy, not a completely different genre. I can't believe that I have to defend the quality of modern fantasy on a Gene Wolfe mailing list of all places, since Wolfe more than anyone has proved that Tolkien is far from the end-all of fantasy literature. This is snobbism at its worst.

// Jesper

Daniel D Jones — 16 Apr 2007, 21:58 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Monday 16 April 2007 12:11, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On 4/16/07, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Well, I haven't read the book, but from what I've read of it there seems to be elves, evil overlords, dragons and orcs in it, so I don't think that's what he meant.

Well, no, it wouldn't be, and I'd have to say I'm as puzzled as you are.

Perhaps Don shall enlighten us at some point.

I would make a guess (and I'm fairly confident of it, though I too hope Don will step forth and say in his own words what he meant) that the estimable Mr Doggett was suggesting that, though it contains elements of the fantastic, Tolkien's work was not created in the context of the commercial genre of "fantasy," as we know it today, and in fact could not be because that commercial genre came to be in response to JRRT's work.

"Created in the context of..." What, precisely, does that mean?

The only reason I can think of to make the claim that Children is not fantasy is if one considers fantasy an inferior genre, one incapable of encompassing "real" literature or works of art. It seems to me to be a claim that the book exceeds the base or mundane genre of mere fantasy. Since I don't hold the genre of fantasy in contempt, I don't find it a particularly appealing characterization.

Daniel D Jones — 16 Apr 2007, 22:20 · in reply to Jesper Svedberg

On Monday 16 April 2007 17:57, Jesper Svedberg wrote:

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I suppose that the next time I write something about Shakespeare, I'll have to insist that his works are NOT plays.

Jesper Svedberg — 16 Apr 2007, 22:25 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn skrev:

On the issue of genre labels, I'm not sure I agree with this. Putting, say, "The Sword of Shanarah" in the bin with the works of William Morris is to me like labeling the music of the Ramones "Doo-Wop". Yes, the Ramones show self-evident influence from 50s music; in fact, the intention of the whole New Wave movement is a return to simple cords and the roots of Rock&Roll. Undoubtably, it is useful to your local record store to classify the Rolling Stones, Devo, and Lionel Richie in the same bin labeled "Rock", but it never helped me to organize my record collection (not that I own any Lionel Richie albums).

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I see fantasy literature as a world building genre (that is, where the construction of the world and its nature is of interest (much like sf)) with magical, mythical or supernatural elements. Morris, Tolkien and Brooks easily fit this description, even though there are other differences between them. Now, I wouldn't have any problems with further deviding Morris and Tolkien into mythopoetic fantasy and Brooks into adventure fantasy (or genre fantasy or commercial fantasy), but they are still all undoubtedly fantasy to me.

The old Mythopoetic genre is as much the grandparent of modern horror (e.g. Lovecraft, Machen and Stephen King) as it is of modern Fantasy.

One generally tends to make a difference between "supernatural fiction" (where the supernatural intrudes in normal reality) and fantasy (where the supernatural is the centre of reality). Horror is often supernatural fiction, but there's no denying that there's a lot of horror that comes closer to fantasy in nature. But then again, there's also plenty of horror that's very close to science fiction, so I think one can say that there's plenty of interbreeding between these genres.

Tolkien did not invent this tradition. Before him there were writers like William Morris, Lord Dunsany and E. R. Eddison who did similar things and just because the tradition hadn't spawned widely marketable genre until after Tolkien doesn't make his stuff much different from what came later.

This is like saying Ellery Queen novels are not much different from Edgar Allen Poe's novels and that the divide that is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is just an over-sized landmark in the Mystery genre.

No, it's like saying that stories about people solving crimes are stories about solving crimes, no matter what the development of genre looked like. I'm not saying that there are no differences at all between Brooks and Tolkien or Morris, but I find that the generally most sensible definition of fantasy easily includes all of these books. Whatever differences there might be are only a difference in flavour and quality, and not a difference in actual genre identity.

// Jesper

don doggett — 17 Apr 2007, 01:04 · in reply to Jesper Svedberg

Hi everyone,

This little argument is great and everything, but It wasn't my intention to denigrate the fantasy genre, only to say that Tolkien is apart from it; but it wasn't even my intention to start a discussion on that. I merely intended to express how much I enjoyed the new book and point out to those who were thinking of getting it that it is much closer in tone to Beowulf and the

Iliad than to any fantasy novel that I can think of.

However....

I have read in Tolkien's own words (somewhere in his letters which I will search for when I can) that his purpose in writing the Silmarillion and its attendant tales was to produce an alternate mythological history of England. To give the isles their own Iliad, so to speak. This puts him squarely in the tradition I have previously stated and outside of the modern fantasy genre imo. In this ambition I think he was successful with both the Silmarillion and The Children of Hurin. It is not snobbery to state what the author's clear intent was, and that he was successful at it.

Don

brunians at brunians.org — 17 Apr 2007, 01:07 · in reply to don doggett

There's something else.

Tolkien had a profound knowledge of deep history. Instead of arguing it in a serious academic forum (which, in the mid-20th, would have merely gotten him classified as 'an Atlantis nut') he chose to fictionalize it, and present it in ways which most suited his agenda.

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Don

Ahhh...imagining that irresistible "new car" smell?
Check out new cars at Yahoo!
Autos. _____

David Duffy — 17 Apr 2007, 02:34 · in reply to don doggett

On Mon, 16 Apr 2007, don doggett wrote:

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of England. To give the isles their own Iliad, so to speak. This puts
^^^^

Aeneid is more like it ;)

Keep up the discussion! Maybe we can circle back to Wolfe by way of _On Fairy Tales_, being a Catholic writer, and secondary creation.

David Duffy.

Nathan Spears — 17 Apr 2007, 07:12 · follows David Duffy

Never. He may be better, but that makes his stories GOOD fantasy, not a completely different genre. I can't believe that I have to defend the quality of modern fantasy on a Gene Wolfe mailing list of all places, since Wolfe more than anyone has proved that Tolkien is far from the end-all of fantasy literature. This is snobbism at its worst.

I'm not trying to be snobbist. If anything I would say that Wolfe has broken ground Tolkien never could have conceived of. However, I would also say that Wolfe has never been limited by the genre of fantasy and its rules. Perhaps the problem we are having is that I am assuming a "genre of fantasy" which includes mostly inferior works that copycat patterns established by superior works. When I think of Wolfe and LeGuin and other modern authors writing fantastic literature, that genre doesn't come to mind. I am probably confusing the situation because I dislike the use of the word genre to "define" a book's content and forget how other people use it.

Of course I concede that Tolkien wrote fantasy - I am not saying that Tolkien requires an entire genre, "genre of Tolkien," because he was so great. What I am saying is that hordes of writers have found themselves operating within boundaries that Tolkien created without even realizing it, and so find themselves essentially writing the same story with different names. They don't do this because Tolkien created those boundaries, but because they read Tolkien first and absorbed them from him. Writers like Wolfe and LeGuin easily escape that trap even when appropriating the same tools, as in *The Knight* or *A Wizard of Earthsea*. I don't think it helps that Tolkien's tale is superficially so simple - it leads to easy imitation. I've never read a copycat version of *The Book of the New Sun* and I doubt I will ever have to.

I am also saying (and I think Don was saying as well) that while Tolkien's work is fantasy, it ALSO merits being labeled an epic or mythology on the order of the great works like the *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, etc. Now that sounds snobbist, or at least awfully fanboyish. To bring the discussion back around - which of Wolfe's works do you think likely to merit this sort of distinction? Is the distinction worth the time to argue over?

don doggett — 17 Apr 2007, 07:52 · in reply to Nathan Spears

--- Nathan Spears <spearofsolomon at yahoo.com> wrote:

Of course I concede that Tolkien wrote fantasy - I am not saying that Tolkien requires an entire genre, "genre of Tolkien," because he was so great. What I am saying is that hordes of writers have found themselves operating within boundaries that Tolkien created without even realizing it,

Tolkien was a traditionalist. He had very set rules for what he was doing, especially with his background

material. He didn't create these boundaries, others have simply limited themselves to them. Not Wolfe, obviously. >

I am also saying (and I think Don was saying as well) that while Tolkien's work is fantasy, it ALSO merits being labeled an epic or mythology on the order of the great works like the Iliad, Beowulf, etc.

I am not saying that. What I'm saying is that his work was intended to be the kind of thing he wanted to read, epic mythology and heroic romance. Not fantasy as we call it today. When I see Beowulf, The Song of Roland, etc. etc. in the fantasy section of any bookstore or library, I'll call the Silmarillion or this new book fantasy. The Lord of the Rings is debateable (I'd put it in classics if I could), but I haven't spoken of it once in this entire discussion.

Now that sounds snobbist, or at least awfully

fanboyish.

I'm hardly a Tolkien fanboy. If you look hard enough on this list you'll find that I got on the wrong side of an argument here because I questioned the heterosexuality of Sam and Frodo's relationship and implied that Tolkien might have written it that way unconsciously. And I used Robert Graves to back myself up! But I have no interest in that fight and mention it only for illustrative purposes. (ducks and runs)

Don

Andy Robertson — 17 Apr 2007, 08:08 · in reply to don doggett

<http://home.clara.net/andywrobertson/wolfemountains.html>

In case any new listers have not read it

brunians at brunians.org — 17 Apr 2007, 09:26 · in reply to don doggett

I'm hardly a Tolkien fanboy. If you look hard enough on this list you'll find that I got on the wrong side of an argument here because I questioned the heterosexuality of Sam and Frodo's relationship and implied that Tolkien might have written it that way unconsciously.

Or even consciously.

The man **was** English.

.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 17 Apr 2007, 15:34 · in reply to James Wynn

On 4/16/07, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
Tolkien's works occupy a middle ground between Morris and Brooks in that he was writing as a fan of Morris, and Brooks was rewriting Tolkien. Tolkien is the inventor of Adult Fantasy as we understand it today. "The Simarillion" of the Morris's Mythopoetic genre. "The Lord of the Rings" is the new animal that fills bookstores now.

Distinguo: I think "the Mythopoetic genre" really exists more in retrospect than it did at the time. And, while I know Tolkien respected Morris's work, I don't think he was really all that much influenced by it (as Lewis said, "As well try to influence a Bandersnatch!")

To consider Tolkien as the "inventor" of the modern genre of Adult Fantasy is also kind of misleading -- he was essentially working in isolation, had no intention of creating a genre, and would probably be deeply distressed by a great deal of the work that is compared to his. The modern genre was really created more by Lin Carter and Lester Del Rey than by JRRT.

This is like saying Ellery Queen novels are not much different from Edgar Allen Poe's novels and that the divide that is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is just an over-sized landmark in the Mystery genre.

Quibble -- Poe never wrote a mystery novel, just short stories.

More important quibble: Doyle stands closer to Poe than to the modern mystery, in that modern mysteries (mostly) have a canon of "fairness," i.e., the information the detective uses to solve the mystery must be presented to the reader. This is a post-Doyle innovation, and in fact the Sherlock Holmes stories are decidedly *not* "fair," as a general rule (this is why Watson so often comes across as a bumbling idiot).

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Soon, where Toon Town once stood will be a string of gas stations, inexpensive motels, restaurants that serve rapidly prepared food. Tire salons, automobile dealerships and wonderful, wonderful billboards reaching as far as the eye can see. My God, it'll be beautiful.