

Book Reviews

Scates, Bruce, *On Dangerous Ground: A Gallipoli Story*, (Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, an Imprint of the University of Western Australia, 2009). ISBN 9781742583938. (Pbk.). Pp. vii+263. Many sketches, maps, lithographs, etc.

This book is unique in its format, as it is in much of its engrossing methodology, let alone its distinctive genre of a chronicle which comes to life so dramatically for the reader, with so many movements in both time and place. For it offers, at once, some real history; many clever re-constructions of famous events already known of in rough outline; a genuine and gripping novel, much biographical material and a range of cultural insights, as well as its being an act of piety in remembering the acts of the writer's grandfather who fought at Quinn's Post in the Allied Forces' landing on the coast at Gallipoli in 1915. The very just comment on the text by the often historical novelist, Tom Keneally, is placed on the front cover –

A unique look at Gallipoli, in all its tragedy, calamity, and complexity. An eloquent and pacy narrative that will engross all readers who have any interest in this myth-founding event.

He might have also added that there is much satire directed at the hollowness of both politics and of the shallowness of the (national) press in the Federal Capital.

Bruce Scates, the writer, is described thus at the outset (p. 1) :

Bruce Scates is a prize-winning teacher, scholar, and story-teller. He has written many books about the Great War, and led several historical tours of Gallipoli. He is Professor of History at Monash University, and is Chair of the History Panel of the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board. This is his first novel, and his first imaginary history.' [p. i]

As a prose work, *sui generis*, the just cited lines serve as a most helpful summary of the style and thrust of the work under review. While the text may be read as faction (actual facts presented in fictional form—with much satire of historians, universities, Public Records officers, and the fear of the press in so many academic people, the whole is deeply engrossing, and it is surprisingly easy, indeed, satisfying and engrossing, to read the powerful text at several levels at once. For in the present time sequence, there is so much satire of the War Memorial's bureaucracy, of Canberra's Civil Service, of the contemporary university's researcher men and women, and of the contrasts between two Australian societies—the innocent and the tragic, the shallow, foolish, and so little comprehending what they do—nearly a century apart.

However, it is also possible to excerpt, and to savour the more, several of the discrete tales or clearly presented accounts –

- the work of the official historians and artists, Bean and others, from the time of the actual landing, and of their return as recorders, at the end of the war;
- the urge of two young Australian women motivated to serve for the duration as Army nurses, in Australia, in Egypt, and at Gallipoli, and so we experience their pain, loves, and inevitable losses;
- the brutally brief life of rankers, Australian and British—as well as enabling us to enter the hearts and minds of several philosophical and wise and compassionate Turks who have survived the first Gallipoli campaign, and the War itself.

Actual places, such as Quinn's Post, are treated in this fascinating and haunting reconstruction. Clearly these places / campaigns are both actual and symbolic, being set in specific times, and eternally in the ever more layered memory of ANZAC, and for all those who have been touched by it; in the head and the heart for soldiers both Turks and Australians, both then and thereafter; and the moving deeply authorial focus is ever on the lives of the women, those serving, or their mothers at home, all the accounts, and actions on the Peninsula, struggling to understand the pain and ghastly agonies of all those drawn into the catastrophic struggle .

Certainly the tale told, however *sui generis*, is one of the most powerful, and one which engrosses the reader totally, with its wry insights into the British military and political leaders, and, post war, the mindsets of several of the wise and surviving Turkish soldiers, and—still continuing—the ongoing pain of the members of the families of all the participants. Thus it becomes an extended elegy on the folly of war, a latter day epic of tragic sacrifice, with echoes of the Homeric struggles once fought close by. And it recalls quite subtly the acts of Rupert Brooke in the preceding campaign, just to the east of the landing.

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This is a memorable novel, one of great power, and one to read and re-read, as we anticipate the centennial preparations and observations which have so deeply scarred and maimed every longer settled family in either Australia or New Zealand. The whole work is poetic, epic-like, haunting, one enabling forms of awareness that we of the 21st century had not had in the past, even in the most thoughtful prose of C.E.W. Bean, once a writer of many relevant books of account, but now strangely brought to life, and so also in the preparations of an Official Artist, as they both set about their final reconstructions and historic records after the declaration of the Armistice.

J.S. Ryan

Baugh, Albert C. and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 6th edn (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2013). Pp. xvi, 446.

This always United States of America-authored volume is, indeed, one of the major classic accounts of / the most scholarly enduring story of (and, indeed) for many aspects of the speaking of the tongue; in short, it is the standard history of the English language as it is, and has long been used, indeed, now worldwide for both pleasant and informative writing, and now for those who will / actually do use it in their computing and word-processing.

Its original author and shaper of the whole was a much esteemed scholar of Middle English, and an excellent editor of a number of that period of the language's classic texts, as with the several very detailed chronicle /western texts works that he had edited for the Early English Text Society. This present edition of his history of the language, like its predecessor, the fifth has been assembled and revised by the much younger American scholar, Professor Thomas Cable, a deservedly renowned scholar of English dialects and idiom, right up to the present, and, more recently, in their variations worldwide; and 'Baugh' is now published by / an imprint of the Taylor Francis Group, as located in both London and in New York.

While the original/ earlier editions of the much admired text were 'traditional', and so concerned with the development of the language—and especially with its lexis—over a period of more than a thousand years of its use in the British Isles, and up to the end of World War II, the sequential versions have much expanded to include:

- i. progressive scholarship into the major and most widely encountered lexis, syntax, and sociology of the use of the language (this once called 'the / its dialects');
- ii. the demography of the language, and its ever more cosmopolitan vocabulary;
- iii. 20th century discoveries which added much from Hittite, Akkadian, etc., and so gave greater confidence as to the original home of the Indo-Europeans (here pp. 32ff.), a matter even more complex in the light of recent archaeology, and so evidence as to the rather unexpected movements of ancient peoples... much lurking far behind the earliest vestiges of 'lore' that have come down to us;
- iv. much expansion of the scholarly and exciting treatment of register, creoles, spelling reform, gender issues, and linguistic change, ever with the treatment used to be that of 'a liberal creed';
- v. the much more thorough treatment of American English; and so to
- vi. the twenty-first century in its treatment of the speakers—as opposed to the readers—of English, throughout / as largely influenced by the style, governance, and trade within the British Empire. For that old colonial world is now long become a region where there are comparatively few who are completely monolingual, or unfamiliar with a mass of material from other tongues, over and above English as the mother tongue.

Certainly the ‘recognition and English-slewed vocabulary’ of most persons on this planet is much greater than their mother tongue.

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Thus serious consideration nowadays needs to be given to the fate of the language in India or Nigeria (p. 397), or in the understanding of the Euro zone, or where it is the common next language, as is the case in Japan, and also in Korea. In all of this, judicious appraisal is furnished by the lucid additions to the older text by Thomas Cable (the reviser in several of the later editions, as he is also the author of the new ‘Preface’ (pp. xv–xvi), and obviously the author of most of Chapter 12, ‘The Twenty-First Century’). These are the sections that the reader may first turn to, but this would be a mistake, since such a course would mean serious neglect of the expressive and fascinating nuances added at so many points.

The most intriguing sections are, perhaps, those added to Chapter 10, ‘The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, which are found to be concerned with many minutiae of Australian English, as well as the nuances allowed to formal English ‘in countries like Australia’. This last slant is deservedly indebted to and indeed given to the work of George W. Turner, W. S. Ramson (both born in New Zealand, but long working in Australia), and to that of Barbara Horvath and to Arthur Delbridge, and the Macquarie Dictionary (p. 339), with a like sympathetic emphasis on the work entitled *The Dictionary of New Zealand English* as produced in 1997 by Harry S. Orsman, of the Victoria University, in Wellington.

The most challenging part of the whole work is Chapter 12, ‘The Twenty-first Century’, which gives a luminous account of the situation of English in the computer age, as well as it does of the Kachru-explored scholarship, and of his models, of cross-linguistic influences and so the further spread of the English language (pp. 399 ff.), even to the point of the elements of a meta-language, although Cable is more cautious than to make that bold prediction.

Another new section concerns the relative difficulty of languages, the areas / themes where new language experience / resource first occurs, and the remarkable importance of Chinese as through its network of language-teaching institutes (as from 2004).

Clearly trade and cultural preference have put Chinese in the position that had hitherto been associated with English and / or French in the post Renaissance age, or with Latin in the first millennium and for more than half of the second. And Cable very rightly queries English’s future / further linguistic ‘triumphs’. Significantly the last paragraph of his main text merits nuanced quotation:

Because the future of English in the world will depend in part on no-linguistic factors... of the economies and educational policies of India and China, the changing practices of business product outsourcing in the United States, the development of countries and of whole regions, the possibility of ideological resistance to English and so on—the global linguistic map in half a century may be different from anything anyone has imagined. (p. 406).

And the concluding sentences suggest that ‘intelligibility’ of language as from a core diction is contradicted by an opposite trend, that which defies regulation.

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Perhaps the last points to make are

- i. that the Index system is remarkably generous, as is indicated by the following (select) Austral(as)ian style / authorial entries as noted by the reviewer: Australia, the English language in; Baker, S.J.; Burchfield, R.W.; Delbridge, Arthur; Dobson, E.J.; New Zealand, English language in; Pacific creoles; Macgregor, R.S.; South Asia, English language in; Tok pisin; Turner, G.W.; etc.; and
- ii. that there is a very generous use of *OED* materials, of reference to the lexis and style of, quite literally, hundreds of writers of English from c. 1850 to the present; and that
- iii. there are a number of shrewd and insightful comments on several of the corpora of words that have only become available in very recent times.

J.S. Ryan

J.S. Ryan, *In the Nameless Wood: Explorations in the Philological Hinterland of Tolkien's Literary Creations* (Zürich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2013). Cormarë Series 30. pp. xv+365.

Never far beneath the surface, the works of J.R.R. Tolkien have again risen to prominence in the public mind: on the one hand the second instalment of the film adaptation of the *The Hobbit* soon to appear in cinemas, with the third and final instalment scheduled for release in December 2014; on the other hand, headlines have been made by the publication of Tolkien's translation of *Beowulf*, edited by his son, Christopher. While controversy surrounds the films due to their expansion of the plot and creation of new characters, the publication of *Beowulf* brings us right back to the very heart of Tolkien's intellectual world, upon which the Oxford professor of Anglo-Saxon philology drew so heavily in the creation of his own mythical world of Middle Earth.

It is on this latter aspect that J.S. Ryan concentrates in the second collection of his essays devoted to Tolkien and his works. Ryan, Professor of Folklore and Heritage in the University of New England, NSW, had studied under Tolkien as an undergraduate in Oxford in the years 1954–1957. He was also a member of Merton College during the period when Tolkien held the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature. With this background he is particularly well equipped to evaluate possible linguistic and literary influences that helped

to shape the material in Tolkien's published work and that deepen our understanding of his extraordinary achievement.

While Ryan's work offers various interpretations on how to understand aspects of Tolkien's work, these interpretations are always based upon a close examination of specific influences on his text. As such, the collection comprises a sustained attempt at *Quellenforschung* or 'source-research' rather than free literary interpretation (with all the risks which that involves). The task for the reader of this collection is to consider whether the sources that Ryan proposes were in fact of influence and, if they were, whether Ryan's assessment of this influence is illuminating.

The volume contains revised versions of 21 articles published between 1979 and 1995, together with an introductory essay and a considerable appendix. The papers are organized under four sections: 'The Ancient Middle East and its Associations', with an emphasis on linguistics and etymology; 'Romano-British Lydney and its Remarkable Importance for Tolkien's Oeuvre', which is concerned with archaeology; 'The North and West Germanic Tradition and Christianity', which focuses on more general thematic influence from various sources ranging from Old English poetry to Bram Stoker; and finally 'Twentieth Century Oxford and Tolkien', which looks at influences in Tolkien's own social, intellectual and theological *milieu*.

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The introductory essay discusses the concepts of the dark and nameless wood and the narrow path through it as found in Germanic and early English literature. It was long conceived as the antithesis to the orderly world of the city and its institutions: unstructured, lawless and dangerous (and for that very reason a place in which a hero could prove his real value); but it was also a liminal and therefore numinous place where contact was possible with the divine, in both its positive and negative manifestations. This figurative imagery extends to the metaphysical, and Ryan concludes that in Tolkien's works we have 'the most effective epic treatment of the nature of humanity and of Christian eschatology produced in the twentieth century' (p. 29).

The first essay attempts to establish a linguistic relationship between Tolkien's use of the word 'orc' and his designation of the orc-like race Uruk-hai. Ryan argues that 'orc', which first appears in English in *Beowulf* (at line 112 in the compound *orcneas*, whence its use by T.), ultimately derives from the name of the Sumerian city Uruk. Early contact by Proto-Indo-European peoples with that great city remained in their cultural memory, but over time became distorted, and came to have connotations of fear, death and barbarity. While it is almost certain that 'orc' in Old English was a borrowing from Latin *Orcus*, the god of the underworld, and certain that Tolkien was aware of the name of the Sumerian city Uruk, it is much more difficult to confirm that he saw an external linguistic connection between the two words. Given the lack of evidence to suggest that there was any contact between the Sumerians and Proto-Indo-European peoples, the linguistic connection must remain tantalizingly speculative.

The second essay examines the episode in *The Return of The King* that recounts how the Men of the Mountains reneged on their oath of allegiance to Isildur, which they had sworn by the black stone on the hill Erech. Ryan posits a connection with the sacred black stone in the Islamic shrine, the Ka'ba. He also draws attention to the importance of the oath in early English law. The essay also provides a good illustration of how Ryan identifies scholarly works current during Tolkien's professional career. Numerous such works are mentioned throughout the book, and are one of its outstanding merits.

The third and fourth essays both propose new etymologies for Tolkienian words. The name of the wizard Saruman is usually derived from Old English *searu*, 'crafty'. Ryan begins with the proposal that his nickname Sharkey, which Tolkien glosses as Orkish for 'old man' (*RotK* 298, note), may have been inspired by the derivation of Saracen from Arabic *sharqiy*, 'oriental' and the fact that the Arabic term of respect *sheikh* comes from *shaikh*, 'old man'. If this eastern background is conceded for Sharkey, then the name Saruman itself might also have such a provenance, and Ryan identifies this in the name Suruman referred to in the Annals of the Assyrian king Sargon (reigned c. 721–705 B.C.). In the shorter fourth chapter Ryan argues that the names Turamath, Turambar, Túrin and Turondo may have been suggested to Tolkien by the term Turanian, which the famous nineteenth century Oxford comparative philologist Max Müller had used to describe the peoples speaking Ural-Altai languages (among which was Finnish, which Tolkien had learnt due to his interest in the *Kalevala*).

Gollum is the most complex and memorable figure of Tolkien's published works. In essay five Ryan proposes several parallels between Gollum and the Golem of Jewish magic and folklore, which is formed from earth and animated by reciting certain Hebrew letters. Ryan equates the elemental nature of Gollum with the unformed and elemental Golem; Gollum as a detector of secrets is similar to the role of the Golem in the Prague ghetto; Gollum's return to the basic elements by falling into the Crack of Doom parallels the Golem's return to the elemental earth when 'unmagicked' by his human creator. Ryan would see these similarities as suggesting Tolkien's view's of the Jewish race, and their status as outsiders. While the identification is tempting, there is a fundamental difference between the two beings: while the Golem is formed from earth and animated only to the extent of an automaton, Gollum represents an involuntary degeneration from originally human (hobbit) form due to the operation of the ring. Too close an association with the Golem would detract from the compelling psychological and emotional tension Tolkien was able to generate from this background.

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In 1965, while working in the University Library at Cambridge, Ryan was approached by the accomplished Celtic scholar, Nora Chadwick. Noting that he was working on Tolkien, she urged him to look into the archaeological site at Lydney, near Bristol in Gloucestershire. The second section of the book sets out the results of Ryan's labour in following up that lead.

The site is located on a hilltop in the estate of the then Lord Bledisloe, who commissioned an archaeological survey which was completed over the

summers of 1927 and 1928. The dig brought to light what had once been a major shrine, dedicated to the Celtic god Nodens, and comprised of 'a guest-house, baths and other structures, indicating that the cult was an important centre of pilgrimage.' The dig itself was conducted by Mortimer Wheeler and his wife, who called upon various collaborators to assist in their work. Among these was the young scholar J.R.R. Tolkien, who contributed a philological discussion of the god's name 'Nodens' as an appendix to the archaeological report.

In essay six Ryan argues that the role of healing at the site at Lydney had influenced Tolkien's depiction of healing in *The Return of the King*, where special rooms ('The Houses of Healing') are set apart in the City of Gondor for healing the sick and injured. Tolkien's personal acquaintance with the archaeological investigations makes this connection seem very likely. More speculative, on the other hand, is Ryan's contention that Aragorn's role of healer-king may derive directly from 'the spirit of the place' at Lydney. Ryan himself rightly draws the comparison with Jesus as a healer; but to connect this with the pre-Christian cult at Lydney, as Ryan does, stretches the evidence too far, since there is no evidence to indicate what religious officials were involved in the shrine's administration, and the method of healing is assumed to have been by incubation rather than intervention by a priest. It is best to limit the influence of the Lydney site in this respect to the architecture of the citadel at Gondor, and to see the parallel between Aragorn and Jesus in their role as healers as a separate and independent analogue.

In addition to the temple complex at Lydney, there is also evidence for iron-ore mines at the site; also, the site had been known prior to excavation as 'Dwarf's Hill'. In essay eight Ryan explores the possibility that Tolkien, through his exposure to the work being conducted at the site, may have drawn upon this material for his depiction of Smaug's lair in *The Hobbit* and the Mines of Moria in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Indeed, there is a striking resemblance between a cross-section illustration of the mine in the Wheelers' published report and Tolkien's own illustration of Bilbo's conversation with Smaug in *The Hobbit*. This is one of the true gems uncovered by Ryan in his researches.

Any fictional account of unfamiliar topography is bound to draw upon several sources, and in essay seven Ryan identifies one further possible source for the Mines of Moria: this is the description of the mines of Mendip, Somerset, given in J.W. Gough, *The Mines of Mendip* (Oxford, 1930). Ryan claims that this book was known to R.G. Collingwood, the Professor of Romano-British archaeology, who was a fellow member of Pembroke College with Tolkien, and with whom Tolkien had consulted on the Lydney excavations for the Wheelers. If indeed Tolkien had read the work of Gough, the Mines of Moria may well owe some of their detail to this source. An appendix to the chapter seeks to establish a connection between the figures of Smaug in *The Hobbit* and the Balrog of the Mines of Moria in *The Fellowship of the Ring* with the monstrous worm depicted in Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm* (published in 1911).

In the final essay of the section on Lydney, Ryan puts forward the possibility that the mosaics uncovered in the excavations at Lydney may have

influenced Tolkien's own style of illustration, and especially the designs found on the cover of *The Silmarillion* and the images selected for the Silmarillion calendar of 1978. While there is no clear connection between the patterns to be found on the mosaics and Tolkien's own drawings, it is quite possible that study of the patterns in the mosaics may at least have influenced his style of illustration.

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In essay ten Ryan derives the name Frodo from the Old English word *frōd*, 'wise'. This is a straightforward and convincing etymology, and the -o ending will have been modeled on that of Bilbo (and Bingo: in the original versions of the story this was Frodo's name, whereas Frodo was originally Pippin's name). Ryan also adduces as a possible influence the Danish kings named Frothi, but the connection here seems tenuous. (At most Tolkien may have recalled the Froda mentioned at l. 2025 of *Beowulf*, but he is a minor character and any such connection would probably have been retrospective.) The essay concludes with reference to the names Odo and Dodo, historical names found in Gloucestershire, as potential sources. The names are relevant, but for a reason Ryan has not mentioned: Odo was originally Merry's name (see H. Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien*, 1977, pp.185-8).

During their arduous journey to Mount Doom, Frodo and Sam take a rest. While Frodo is sleeping, and Sam dozing while keeping watch, Gollum approaches:

Gollum looked at them. A strange expression passed over his lean hungry face. The gleam faded from his eyes, and they went dim and grey, old and tired. A spasm of pain seemed to twist him, and he turned away, peering back up towards the pass, shaking his head as if engaged in some interior debate. Then he came back, and slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee—but almost the touch was a caress. For a fleeting moment, could one of his sleepers have seen him, they would have thought that they beheld an old weary hobbit, shrunken by the years that had carried him far beyond his time, beyond friends and kin, and the fields and streams of youth, an old starved pitiable thing. [*The Two Towers*, p. 324]

Ryan relates, in essay eleven, that Tolkien had personally told him that this passage was one of the most painful to recall of all his creative writings. And for good reason: here, there is one final chance of real human connection, a chance for Gollum to reclaim his true self and free himself from the overpowering tyranny of the Ring. However, when Frodo starts from the touch Sam reacts with hostility and 'the fleeting moment has passed, beyond recall' (*TT* p. 324). We move forward ineluctably to Gollum's betrayal in the lair of Shelob, Frodo's ultimate failure to give up the Ring, and Gollum's act of violence and pure selfishness that destroys both himself and the Ring. This short episode is, therefore, pivotal for the profoundly ambiguous and disturbing climax of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Ryan relates Gollum's act of touching Frodo's knee to the sacrosanct stature of the monarch in early English thought, and with his throne, the *gifstol*, from

which Grendel is apparently debarred in a vexed passage from *Beowulf* (ll. 168-169). Ryan then weaves a complex of ideas identifying Gollum, Grendel and Cain, as outsiders in need of forgiveness and reintegration into the community from which they have been excluded, adducing further material from the Old English poem *The Wanderer*. The connection between the personalities and ideas within the different works (*The Wanderer*, *Beowulf*, the Bible and Tolkien) is not always clear, and the five separate points of significance that Ryan sees in Gollum's gesture may seem over-determined in its attribution of motif; yet the essay is a captivating *tour de force* in its exploration of the intellectual hinterland informing Tolkien's fictional creations.

In essay twelve Ryan gives a sensitive and nuanced summary of how the concept of wisdom is developed in the prose translations of Alfred the Great, ranging from the practical wisdom of the ruler to the spiritual wisdom of man in his relation to God. As a student of Old English, Tolkien would have been intimately familiar with these texts, and it is possible that they may have influenced his depiction of rulers such as Aragorn, Galadriel and Faramir, as well as the more spiritual wisdom discernible in Frodo.

In essay thirteen Ryan identifies many points of similarity between *The Lord of the Rings* and the medieval works on the Arthurian knight Perceval as depicted by the French poet Chretien de Troyes and the German prose author Wolfram von Eschenbach in his *Parzifal*. The bulk of the similarities are on a very general level, and can just as easily be identified in such similar epics as Homer's *Odyssey* or Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. The most salient parallel is the ignorant innocence of the two protagonists—Frodo, like Parzifal, untutored in military affairs and matters of state but nevertheless achieving greatness. Ryan himself concedes the lack of compelling parallels ('whether one accepts a specific or indirect influence or no', p. 180), but his discussion of these works is interesting in itself and draws attention to works with which modern readers of Tolkien may be unfamiliar.

Essay fourteen is a brief but helpful survey on the lore of dwarfs as found in Jacob Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology* (English translation 1880) and Thomas Keightley's *The Fairy Mythology* (1878), both of which could well have provided Tolkien with background material for his dwarves (Ryan notes similarities in clothing and, on a less mundane level, a flawed materialism that contributes to their undoing).

In essay fifteen Ryan explores the linguistic and folkloric associations of the 'Warg', the wolf-like creature that figures prominently in *The Hobbit* and less so in *The Lord of the Rings*. There is a nexus of ideas here connecting the wolf with the outlaw, which Ryan extends into a discussion of shape-changing in Tolkien (in figures such as Beorn from *The Hobbit* and the depiction of Sauron in *The Silmarillion*). He also traces 19th century academic discussion of werewolves.

The third section finishes with three short notes on possible sources for minor episodes in Tolkien's corpus. In essay sixteen Ryan suggests that the menacing song of the goblins, when Bilbo, Gandalf and the dwarfs are hiding from them in trees, may have been influenced by a similar such song in R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*: 'Fifteen birds in five fir trees' is similar in sound and rhythm to Stevenson's 'Fifteen men in the dead men's chest'. If the

influence is granted, it would be a good illustration of the sheer range of tools in Tolkien's creative workshop, from abstruse points of historical linguistics to the pages of popular literature. In essay seventeen Ryan detects a possible Christian motif in the elven rope used to bind Gollum on the journey to Mordor (*Two Towers* 224). The rope's burning effect, together with Ryan's observation that Gollum cannot eat the waybread, are both suggestive of damnation. Essay eighteen comprises a short note on the place-name Wetwang, 'a wide region of sluggish fen' (*FotR* p. 389) where the Anduin and Entwash rivers meet. In the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (1951) Eilert Ekwall had tentatively given the meaning as 'wet field', coming from Old English *wæt* ('wet') and *wang* ('field'). Ryan draws attention in this note to an alternative etymology proposed by Tolkien's former student, Hugh Smith, who adduces the Old Norse word *vaett-vangr*, 'a field for the trial of legal action'. Although the topography of Wetwang does indeed suggest that Tolkien here took the name to mean 'wet field', the article sheds light on a debate within a highly specialized field, but one with which Tolkien would have been familiar.

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The final section of the collection contains three papers that discuss aspects of Tolkien's own day. The first examines Kenneth Grahame's depiction of the Wild Wood in *The Wind in the Willows*, with its possible influence on Tolkien's conception of wild woodlands, both in their more idyllic aspects and in relation to their threatening, dangerous nature. Ryan also investigates the further development of the concept of the Wild Wood in the Jan Needle's 1981 novel of that name. The discussion in essay twenty of Tolkien's relationship with the poet Roy Campbell (1901–1957) makes interesting observations on Tolkien's affection for 'colonial figures' (Campbell himself coming from South Africa, where Tolkien was born). Ryan also uses this topic as a basis for critiquing Humphrey Carpenter's portrayal of Tolkien, and for promoting the need to gather anecdotes from students of Tolkien in order to bring out a more complete and intimate account of his life and character. It must be said that Ryan does not clearly explain what he understands to be the 'essential problem with trying to come at Tolkien... through Carpenter' (p. 237), apart from mention of his 'coldness' (p. 241), which is set in opposition to the warmth of Tolkien's own students. However, his call for further biographical treatment, based on such recollections (and also making fuller use of the correspondence edited by Carpenter himself after the biography was published) is fully justified. The final paper in this section (essay twenty one) gives a sensitive account of W.H. Auden's positive reviews of Tolkien's creative work, and carefully delineates Auden's own aesthetic, moral, and religious preoccupations as they emerge from his response to Tolkien's work. The paper also usefully outlines Auden's analysis of the 'quest' structure of Tolkien's work, so important to Auden himself and a staple of folklore studies since Vladimir Propp's analysis.

In a wide-ranging appendix, written especially for this collection, Ryan discusses Tolkien's important work on the Middle English homiletic text *Ancrene Riwe* (also known as the *Ancrene Wisse*). Ryan uses this discussion to investigate Tolkien's leading role in the reform of the English syllabus at

Oxford, and also his collaborative relationship with Simone d'Ardenne and Mary Salo, both of whom worked on the text under his supervision. There is a wealth of detail in this study, but of particular note is the way in which it stresses the fundamental importance of Tolkien's Roman Catholicism for his life and outlook.

The foregoing summary has attempted to communicate the sheer breadth of Ryan's studies on the work of his old teacher Tolkien. Whether or not the reader agrees with his specific conclusions, there is much to learn from this book about the history of the English language and its literature, folktale motifs and studies from pre-historic times to twentieth century scholarship, and, above all, the crucial role that Tolkien's academic studies had in the formation of his created universe, the verisimilitude of which could not have been achieved without such longstanding philological work. Another major contribution is Ryan's discussion of Tolkien's involvement in the Lydney excavations, which provides a helpfully specific example of the topography that may have influenced Tolkien's imaginary landscape. Finally, throughout the text and the footnotes there is a wealth of anecdotal recollections about Tolkien himself which augments the currently available biographical information of a man whose work has had such influence on the popular culture of the second half of the twentieth century, an influence that continues today.

Robert Bostock

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Regional (English) Folklore?

In Volume 124, Number 3 (2013) of the journal, *Folklore*, there is to be found a most useful article discussing these same volumes actually so issued, they being numbers 1-7, of the County Folklore Series, and appearing between 1892 and 1914, these constituting an uneven collection, but of considerable interest in suggesting the ways of recording and disseminating the lore of a discrete area, and also in their giving us the history of the fieldwork that was attempted, and achieved, in each case.

While the plans were over ambitious, and World War One was the great frustrating force against their being completed, they do tell us much about the chase for information, both the oral aspect, and the surviving forms of rituals and the like. Perhaps Pevsner's Guides of a later generation had their inspiration in these plans and their few printed products.

Clearly the point of the whole is the gathering in of records, the ways of going about it, differences met in labouring at the task, and the ways in which the surviving matter might be the better perceived. At a lesser level than the labours of gentlemen antiquarians, this work is fascinating, and an excellent training task for any who seek to collect the records of their own parishes, churches, hunts, or similar common interest groups.

In the end, the reading will be found to be intriguing, even as it may nurture antiquarians in Australia in the 21st century.

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