



The Tale We've Fallen Into : Some thoughts on why we never outgrow The Lord of the Rings by Sarah Arthur

Do we ever grow out of the love for fantasy and fairytale? I don't think so. And it is not just about the desire to be entertained. If that were the case, a good college basketball game every now and then would do the trick for me. No, I think there are profound spiritual reasons why, even as young adults (and older ones, too!), we're drawn to stories.

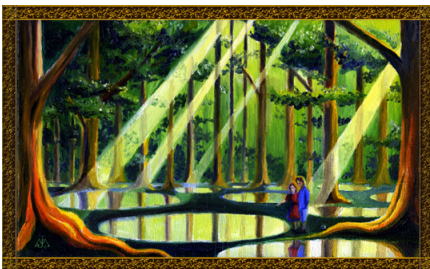
One of my favorite quotes is attributed to G.K. Chesterton, who once said something like, "The babe in the cradle knows about the dragon; he needs the stories to know about Saint George."¹ He was referring to the old English legend in which Saint George slays the dragon. Chesterton was saying, in essence, that from birth our imaginations naturally give concrete shape to nameless fears. We experience the terror of the dark and give it personality in the form of monsters in the closet. Nobody has to teach us about those monsters; our imaginations invent them without outside help.

What we need is help in the reassurance that the monsters can be conquered. We need to hear that Dark is vanquished by Light in the end; the dragon can be slain. That is why we need stories.

Devilry and Images of Evil in Tolkien by Colin Duriez

Much to Tolkien's surprise, C. S. Lewis dedicated his famous *The Screwtape Letters* to him. This is made up of letters from a senior to a junior devil. The dedication is less surprising when the extent of devilry is explored in Tolkien's fiction. As well as grand Satan figures – Morgoth and his lieutenant Sauron – his tales abound with images of evil. The same is true of the fiction of C. S. Lewis and, recently, J. K. Rowling. I'll be looking at some images, and in particular Sauron's Ring, with a glance at its affinities with Horcruxes in the Harry Potter stories. I'll also pick up the ongoing debate about the nature of evil in Tolkien. Is it dualistic – representing an eternal battle between good and evil – or is evil a perversion of good, having no substance of its own and therefore, on the grand scale of things, short lived?

The Landscapes of Narnia : C.S. Lewis and Northern Ireland by Melanie M. Jeschke



Carved in the pavement are the words: "Born 1898. Reborn 1931" and inscribed on the back of the wardrobe are quotes from Lewis. The wardrobe beckons. One can't help but try to peak inside. Where does it lead? To Narnia? Or eternity itself? In this strife-ridden city, The Searcher boldly proclaims a message of faith, hope, and peace.

...

On a full day trip north, one can visit the Lewis's holiday beach town of Castlerock, the ruins of Dunluce Castle which inspired Narnia's Cair Paravel, the amazing hexagonal volcanic rock formations of the Giant's Causeway, and the heart-stopping vistas through the Antrim Glens and along the coastal highway. Further south of Belfast en route to Dublin lie the Mourne Mountains and the peaceful town of Rostrevor nestled along the Carlingford Lough, which Lewis confided to his brother was his image of Narnia.



Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.

CS Lewis
Mere Christianity

Narnia and Middle - earth : The Stories that Meant Something by Jonathon D. Svendsen

One night she came into my bedroom, as always, and tucked me in. That's when she introduced me to the land of Narnia. A land where animals could talk and kids much like myself could become great heroes. Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter became fast friends of mine and took me with them on their amazing journey into Narnia. The house of the professor, the wardrobe, and the land the children found became places for me to visit during the emotional air raids in my own life. As I heard the stories I got a feeling inside me that I had never felt in any of the other books I had read. It was nothing short of enchantment.

Shards of Diamond by Douglas Gresham

Men who gather together will by nature discuss their work, their personal interests, the politics of the day, and many other common topics. The difference between most groups and the Inklings is that the Inklings were mostly interested in thoughts and thinking and writing and reading. Words were the bricks and thought the mortar of the edifices these men built, and books have a habit of outlasting even the greatest cathedrals of man's making, and have the advantage of being possible to disseminate throughout all the nations.

I attended several Inklings meetings in the years between about 1956 and 1961, and I was always given a half a pint of draught bitter and then left to amuse myself as the men who customarily made Jack the centre of their circle of friendship would arrive one by one or sometimes in pairs, and draw up chairs to join the growing group. Soon, pints would be on the table, pipes lit, the roars of laughter emanating from the Inklings would fill the room, and all could tell that no matter what the topic of conversation, these men were having a great time.

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For the Inklings

P.R. Miller

My heart imagines
where they met,
those men who tramped
through cold and wet,
arriving at that pub which bore
a sign above its simple door.
"The Eagle and the Child" it read,
"The Bird and Baby"
was, instead,
what it was called,
by guest and host;
but more than this,
what matters most
is that a marvel happened here,
within this world
of pies and beer.

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