

# Reading and Use of English

## PART 1

Read the first part of a letter by J.R.R. TOLKIEN to Milton Waldman.

For questions 1-8, decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap.

My dear Milton,

You asked for a brief sketch of my stuff that is connected with my imaginary world. It is difficult to say anything without saying too much: the attempt to say a few words opens a .....<sup>1</sup> of excitement, the egoist and artist at once desires to say how the stuff has grown, what it is like, and what (he thinks) he means or is trying to represent by it all. I shall .....<sup>2</sup> some of this on you; but I will append a mere résumé of its contents: which is (may be) all that you want or will have use or time for.

In order of time, growth and composition, this stuff began with me - .....<sup>3</sup> I do not suppose that that is of much interest to anyone but myself. I mean, I do not remember a time when I was not building it. Many children make up, or begin to make up, imaginary languages. I have been at it since I could write. But I have never stopped, and of course, as a professional philologist (especially interested in linguistic aesthetics), I have changed in taste, improved in theory, and probably in craft. Behind my stories is now a .....<sup>4</sup> of languages (mostly only structurally sketched). But to those creatures which in English I call misleadingly Elves are .....<sup>5</sup> two related languages more nearly completed, whose history is written, and whose forms (representing two different sides of my own linguistic taste) are .....<sup>6</sup> scientifically from a common origin. Out of these languages are made nearly all the names that .....<sup>7</sup> in my legends. This gives a certain character (a cohesion, a consistency of linguistic style, and an illusion of historicity) to the nomenclature, or so I believe, that is markedly lacking in other comparable things. Not all will feel this as important as I do, .....<sup>8</sup> I am cursed by acute sensibility in such matters.

- |   |                |             |              |               |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | a) opportunity | b) flood    | c) floodgate | d) door       |
| 2 | a) inflict     | b) expose   | c) unveil    | d) explain    |
| 3 | a) in spite of | b) due to   | c) despite   | d) though     |
| 4 | a) dictionary  | b) nexus    | c) coherence | d) convention |
| 5 | a) described   | b) assigned | c) explained | d) proposed   |
| 6 | a) deduced     | b) made up  | c) proven    | d) induced    |
| 7 | a) appear      | b) fade     | c) vanish    | d) disappear  |
| 8 | a) before      | b) after    | c) that      | d) since      |

## PART 2

Read the second part of a letter by J.R.R. TOLKIEN to Milton Waldman. For questions 9-16, think of a word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

But an equally basic passion of mine ab initio was for myth (not allegory!) and for fairy-story, and above .....<sup>9</sup> for heroic legend on the brink of fairy-tale and history, of which there is far too little in the world (accessible to me) for my appetite. I was an undergraduate before thought and experience revealed .....<sup>10</sup> me that these were not divergent interests - opposite poles of science and romance - but integrally related. I am not "learned" in the matters of myth and fairy-story, however, for in such things (as far as known to me) I have always been seeking material, things of a certain tone and air, and not simple knowledge. Also - and here I hope I shall not sound absurd - I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its .....<sup>11</sup> (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); .....<sup>12</sup> nothing English, save impoverished chap-book stuff. Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful .....<sup>13</sup> it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing. For one thing its 'faerie' is too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive. For another and more important thing: it is involved .....<sup>14</sup>, and explicitly contains the Christian religion.

For reasons which I will not elaborate, that seems .....<sup>15</sup> me fatal. Myth and fairystory must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary 'real' world. (I am speaking, of course, of our present situation, not of ancient pagan, pre-Christian days. And I will not repeat what I tried to say in my essay, .....<sup>16</sup> you read.)

### PART 3

Read the third part of a letter by J.R.R. TOLKIEN to Milton Waldman. For questions 17-24, use the word in capitals given in the brackets to form a word that fits the gap.

Do not laugh! But once \_\_\_\_\_<sup>17</sup> a time (my crest has long since fallen) I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of \_\_\_\_\_<sup>18</sup> fairy-story - the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing \_\_\_\_\_<sup>19</sup> from the vast backcloths - which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. It should possess the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, be redolent of our 'air' (the clime and soil of the North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe: not Italy or the Aegean, still less the East), and, while possessing (if I could achieve it) the fair \_\_\_\_\_<sup>20</sup> beauty that some call Celtic (though it is \_\_\_\_\_<sup>21</sup> found in genuine ancient Celtic things), it should be 'high', purged of the gross, and fit for the more adult mind of a land long now steeped in \_\_\_\_\_<sup>22</sup>. I would draw some of the great tales in \_\_\_\_\_<sup>23</sup>, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a \_\_\_\_\_<sup>24</sup> whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. Absurd.

- 17. .... (ON)
- 18. .... (ROMANCE)
- 19. .... (SPLENDID)
- 20. .... (ELUDE)
- 21. .... (RARE)
- 22. .... (POET)
- 23. .... (FULL)
- 24. .... (MAJESTY)

## PART 4

For questions 25-30, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the words given. Do not change the word given. You must use between 3 and 6 words, including the word given.

25

"What a shame it happened in my time," said Frodo.

HAVE

"I wish it need \_\_\_\_\_ in my time," said Frodo.

26

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time we have."

IS

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time \_\_\_\_\_."

27

It is possible that Tolkien based his Hobbit-holes on Iceland's turf houses.

MAY

\_\_\_\_\_ his Hobbit-holes on Iceland's turf houses

28

The Two Trees of Valinor were made before the Elves awoke near the bay of Cuiviénen.

TO

The Two Trees of Valinor were made \_\_\_\_\_ the Elves near the bay of Cuiviénen.

29

Tolkien worked as if "these things were given to me and it's all I have to work with and I have to deal with it the best I can".

SHOT

He worked as if "these things were given to me and it's all I have to work with and I have to \_\_\_\_\_.

30

The pity shown by Frodo (sparing Gollum's life when he could kill him) helps him succeed in his mission after he is unable to surrender the Ring.

TO

The pity shown by Frodo (sparing Gollum's life when he could kill him) \_\_\_\_\_ of his mission after he is unable to surrender the Ring.

## PART 5

Read the following extract from a lecture Tolkien and the West by Michael Drout. For questions 31-36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

The lover of words and language, studies the ruins so that we can picture what the tower was, and tries to build this back up. We have little pieces and we fit them together and this is what Tolkien did in his literature. The most amazing thing about his literature is that he took the techniques that we use for a bunch of fragments and applied them to his own work.

And let me give you an example - in appendix F Section 2 at the very end of the Return of the King Tolkien says "*in presenting the matter of the Red Book as a history for people of today to read*" and you say: "What is this about?" Tolkien has set up a frame around all these books that there was something called the Red Book of Westmarch, a big book with plain red leather covers that Frodo gives to Sam. and it has a lot of titles on it when he gives it to Sam like Adventures of Five Hobbits, the Tale of the Great Ring compiled by Bilbo Baggins, What We Did in the War of the Ring and eventually it gets named the Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King that's Frodo's name for it so the conceit is that Tolkien is translating this book into modern English - it's where he's getting all this material. But at the very beginning of the book in a note on the Shire records, Tolkien explains that he's not translating any one red book that there's a bunch of red books and many copies of them were made and some had stuff written by a scribe in Gondor and Minas Tirith. There was much annotation and many corrections and fixing quotes in Elvish.

Now why is this important? Because Tolkien is being a philologist he isn't claiming to translate the original Red Book given to Sam he's instead translating the matter of the Red Book as it has passed through many other people. And this is really really important to what we're going to read because the implication is that this is not a realistic novel nor is it meant to be. So, criticism that "*a character couldn't have known this*" is unfounded. It doesn't matter because some scribe later on could have guessed what he can't have known. So, for example if a character just bursts into a song and the song is perfectly metrical and everything else. You say "*well that would never happen in real life*". Tolkien would say "*yes of course it would never happen in real life*". But more what Tolkien would do is say "*But another scribe knew that song and said Sam called 'O Elbereth Gilthoniel', well I'm gonna add in the whole poem since I know what it is*" and therefore you have this layering of scribes and texts. So, this is supposed to go back to Bilbo, back to the Elvish text he translated, and back further and further. It's a great chain of reading.

And in the end, I think that this is what Tolkien's great achievement was - to figure out how to make something that he sat down and wrote in the 1940s and 50s, make it seem like it's 1000 years old - for real, not *seem* like you know because I use some old fashioned language, but give exactly the same feel that we get when we read an edition of Beowulf and we have reconstructions and we have authorial notes and we have apparatus and give the illusion that the place being described is real.

So, building that frame of translation around everything was a really important start. A philologist sees a ruin and tries to figure out what it was when it was a tower. But Tolkien not only reconstructs ruins, but builds them up into the actual tower so that you can climb the tower, you can read the books and you cannot just guess that someone could see the sea, but you can see it yourself.

In one part of the Two Towers, Sam suddenly hears the voices of Elves in his mind and calls out "*A Elbereth Gilthoniel o menel palan-diriel*" and so forth. The thing is what Sam calls out is a poem he's never heard. It's a different variation instead of being the sort of simple praise poem. It has this line "*here overwhelmed in dread of death I cry oh guard me Elbereth*". Sam's never heard that in his life, he doesn't speak Elvish. How did that get in there? This is where the genius of the frame narrative comes in, right. That it's not Sam. I mean Sam said something in the quote "real world" of the poem but later on some scribe came along and put the actual guess as to what he would have said in there, in a poem. This is precisely what happened in a medieval manuscript and part of the western tradition that Tolkien is concerned with.

When people talk about the passive Lord of the Rings thing "*Oh you just read. It's just fantasy*" they don't realise how much work you're doing as a reader. A lot of the material, a lot of the information that you need can be found only in the poems (this is why I go crazy with my students skipping them). Tolkien wouldn't have bothered to stick it in somewhere else. If you don't read the poem, you're out of luck. This all could be confusing and it could make you miserable, but instead the mediating effect of the Hobbits that you learn information as Frodo and Sam and Merry and Pippin do makes it dramatic. I'm gonna hit this again: in Tolkien, learning is dramatic. And you have to be invested in doing that learning.

**31. The author uses the metaphor of *the ruins and the tower* because:**

- a) The way we reconstruct ruins is similar to the way J.R.R. Tolkien compiled his books.
- b) Studying ruins is similar to studying books.
- c) J.R.R. Tolkien saw an analogy between stories and ruins.
- d) Techniques we apply to rebuild a tower are similar to those we use to compile a story.

**32. The appendix F Section 2 and a note on Shire records suggest that:**

- a) J.R.R. Tolkien made numerous books.
- b) J.R.R. Tolkien got all the material from Frodo.
- c) J.R.R. Tolkien sees himself as a scribe of Minas Tirith.
- d) J.R.R. Tolkien is translating various versions of a book written by other people into modern English.

**33. Criticism that “a *character couldn't have known this*” is unfounded because:**

- a) the scribe later on knew exactly what had happened from the accurate historical records.
- b) a person compiling the story later on might have embellished it so that it would be more beautiful.
- c) the scribe deduced that if Sam had called “O Elbereth Gilthoniel”, he must have known the whole poem.
- d) such a thing would never occur in real life.

**34. The author uses the metaphor with *the ruins and the tower* to:**

- a) emphasise that the reader cannot really understand how characters in the book feel.
- b) suggest that the author should not only make readers imagine seeing the sea, but also encourage them to go and see it themselves.
- c) demonstrate the difference between imagining and visualising things and actual experience.
- d) illustrate how J.R.R. Tolkien's style of composition enables his readers to savour his books more deeply.

**35. Frame narrative J.R.R. Tolkien uses in his book(s):**

- a) is fundamentally different from that used by medieval authors.
- b) is identical with the one applied by medieval authors.
- c) is vaguely similar to the one applied by medieval authors.
- d) concerns the author of the text.

**36. The author suggests that those who skip poems in *The Lord of the Rings*,**

- a) can still find the needed information somewhere else in the book.
- b) cannot enjoy it.
- c) are bound to miss some important information.
- d) don't like learning.

## PART 6

You are going to read the opinions of different people on the themes of evil and death in Tolkien's works. For questions 37-40, choose speakers A-D. Each speaker may be chosen more than once.

A

The evil in the world as portrayed by Tolkien has nothing whatever to do with social or economic causes. It is evil, pure and simple. Consequently, there is no need for change of socio-economic conditions, the environmental conditions of life, relations between different classes, etc., etc. — all these things which make up the very fabric of a society, of any society, are perceived by Tolkien as totally beyond any need or possibility of change.

B

If evil were a problem, something that can be solved, that has an answer, like a problem in fifth grade arithmetic.... That is escapism, that posing evil as a 'problem,' instead of what it is: all the pain and suffering and waste and loss and injustice we will meet all our lives long, and must face and cope with over and over, and admit, and live with, in order to live human lives at all.

C

Of course my story is not an allegory of Atomic power, but of Power (used for Domination). Nuclear physics can be used for that purpose. But they need not be. They need not be used at all. If there is any contemporary reference in my story at all it is to what seems to me the most widespread assumption of our time: that if a thing can be done, it must be done. This seems to me wholly false. ... However, that is simple stuff, a contemporary & possibly passing and ephemeral problem. I do not think that even Power or Domination is the real centre of my story. ... The real theme for me is about something much more permanent and difficult: Death and Immortality ...

D

Each 'Kind' has a natural span, integral to its biological and spiritual nature. This cannot really be increased qualitatively or quantitatively; so that prolongation in time is like stretching a wire out ever tauter, or 'spreading butter ever thinner' — it becomes an intolerable torment.

Which person:

describes a condition which becomes unbearable in time? \_\_\_\_\_ 37.

addresses the dilemma of whether or not to carry out things only because they are possible? \_\_\_\_\_ 38.

implies that the main idea of Tolkien's work tends to be misinterpreted? \_\_\_\_\_ 39.

claims that Tolkien's works are simplified and lack an essential aspect present in our world? \_\_\_\_\_ 40.

## Part 7

**You are going to read an extract from a story about the creation of the Dwarves. Six paragraphs have been removed from the text. Choose from the paragraphs A-G the one which fits each gap (41-46). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.**

It is told that in their beginning the Dwarves were made by Aulë in the darkness of Middle-earth; for so greatly did Aulë desire the coming of the Children, to have learners to whom he could teach his lore and his crafts, that he was unwilling to await the fulfilment of the designs of Ilúvatar. And Aulë made the Dwarves even as they still are, because the forms of the Children who were to come were unclear to his mind, and because the power of Melkor was yet over the Earth; and he wished therefore that they should be strong and unyielding. But fearing that the other Valar might blame his work, he wrought in secret: and he made first the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves in a hall under the mountains in Middle-earth.

\_\_\_\_\_ 41

Then Aulë answered: 'I did not desire such lordship. I desired things other than I am, to love and to teach them, so that they too might perceive the beauty of Eä, which thou hast caused to be. For it seemed to me that there is great room in Arda for many things that might rejoice in it, yet it is for the most part empty still, and dumb. And in my impatience I have fallen into folly. Yet the making of things is in my heart from my own making by thee; and the child of little understanding that makes a play of the deeds of his father may do so without thought of mockery, but because he is the son of his father. But what shall I do now, so that thou be not angry with me for ever? As a child to his father, I offer to thee these things, the work of the hands which thou hast made. Do with them what thou wilt. But should I not rather destroy the work of my presumption?'

\_\_\_\_\_ 42

But Ilúvatar spoke again and said: 'Even as I gave being to the thoughts of the Ainur at the beginning of the World, so now I have taken up thy desire and given to it a place therein; but in no other way will I amend thy handiwork, and as thou hast made it, so shall it be. But I will not suffer this: that these should come before the Firstborn of my design, nor that thy impatience should be rewarded. They shall sleep now in the darkness under stone, and shall not come forth until the Firstborn have awakened upon Earth; and until that time thou and they shall wait, though long it seem. But when the time comes I will awaken them, and they shall be to thee as children; and often strife shall arise between thine and mine, the children of my adoption and the children of my choice.'

\_\_\_\_\_ 43

Since they were to come in the days of the power of Melkor, Aulë made the Dwarves strong to endure. Therefore they are stone-hard, stubborn, fast in friendship and in enmity, and they suffer toil and hunger and hurt of body more hardily than all other speaking peoples; and they live long, far beyond the span of Men, yet not for ever. Aforetime it was held among the Elves in Middle-earth that dying the Dwarves returned to the earth and the stone of which they were made; yet that is not their own belief. For they say that Aulë the Maker, whom they call Mahal, cares for them, and gathers them to Mandos in halls set apart; and that he declared to their Fathers of old that Ilúvatar will hallow them and give them a place among the Children in the End. Then their part shall be to serve Aulë and to aid him in the remaking of Arda after the Last Battle. They say also that the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves return to live again in their own kin and to bear once more their ancient names: of whom Durin was the most renowned in after ages, father of that kindred most friendly to the Elves, whose mansions were at Khazad-dûm.

\_\_\_\_\_ 44

But Aulë answered: 'That shall also be true of the Children of Ilúvatar; for they will eat and they will build. And though the things of thy realm have worth in themselves, and would have worth if no Children were to come, yet Eru will give them dominion, and they shall use all that they find in Arda: though not, by the purpose of Eru, without respect or without gratitude.'

\_\_\_\_\_ 45

'It is true,' said Manwë. 'But why dost thou ask, for thou hadst no need of the teaching of Aulë?'

Then Yavanna was silent and looked into her own thought. And she answered: 'Because my heart is anxious, thinking of the days to come. All my works are dear to me. Is it not enough that Melkor should have marred so many? Shall nothing that I have devised be free from the dominion of others?'

\_\_\_\_\_ 46



'All have their worth,' said Yavanna, 'and each contributes to the worth of the others. But the *kelvar* can flee or defend themselves, whereas the *olvar* that grow cannot. And among these I hold trees dear. Long in the growing, swift shall they be in the felling, and unless they pay toll with fruit upon bough, little mourned in their passing. So I see in my thought. Would that the trees might speak on behalf of all things that have roots, and punish those that wrong them!'

'This is a strange thought,' said Manwë.

'Yet it was in the Song,' said Yavanna. 'For while thou wert in the heavens and with Ulmo built the clouds and poured out the rains, I lifted up the branches of great trees to receive them, and some sang to Ilúvatar amid the wind and the rain.'

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A

Then Aulë took up a great hammer to smite the Dwarves; and he wept. But Ilúvatar had compassion upon Aulë and his desire, because of his humility; and the Dwarves shrank from the hammer and were afraid, and they bowed down their heads and begged for mercy. And the voice of Ilúvatar said to Aulë: 'Thy offer I accepted even as it was made. Dost thou not see that these things have now a life of their own, and speak with their own voices? Else they would not have flinched from thy blow, nor from any command of thy will.' Then Aulë cast down his hammer and was glad, and he gave thanks to Ilúvatar, saying: 'May Eru bless my work and amend it!'

B

'If thou hadst thy will, what wouldst thou reserve?' said Manwë. 'Of all thy realm what dost thou hold dearest?'

C

Now Ilúvatar knew what was done, and in the very hour that Aulë's work was complete, and he was pleased, and began to instruct the Dwarves in the speech that he had devised for them, Ilúvatar spoke to him; and Aulë heard his voice and was silent. And the voice of Ilúvatar said to him: 'Why hast thou done this? Why dost thou attempt a thing which thou knowest is beyond thy power and thy authority? For thou hast from me as a gift thy own being only, and no more; and therefore the creatures of thy hand and mind can live only by that being, moving when thou thinkest to move them, and if thy thought be elsewhere, standing idle. Is that thy desire?'

D

The spouse of Aulë is Yavanna, the Giver of Fruits. She is the lover of all things that grow in the earth, and all their countless forms she holds in her mind, from the trees like towers in forests long ago to the moss upon stones or the small and secret things in the mould. In reverence Yavanna is next to Varda among the Queens of the Valar. In the form of a woman she is tall, and robed in green; but at times she takes other shapes. Some there are who have seen her standing like a tree under heaven, crowned with the Sun; and from all its branches there spilled a golden dew upon the barren earth, and it grew green with corn; but the roots of the tree were in the waters of Ulmo, and the winds of Manwë spoke in its leaves. Kementári, Queen of the Earth, she is surnamed in the Eldarin tongue.

E

Now when Aulë laboured in the making of the Dwarves he kept this work hidden from the other Valar; but at last he opened his mind to Yavanna and told her of all that had come to pass. Then Yavanna said to him: 'Eru is merciful. Now I see that thy heart rejoiceth, as indeed it may; for thou hast received not only forgiveness but bounty. Yet because thou hiddest this thought from me until its achievement, thy children will have little love for the things of my love. They will love first the things made by their own hands, as doth their father. They will delve in the earth, and the things that grow and live upon the earth they will not heed. Many a tree shall feel the bite of their iron without pity.'

F

'Not unless Melkor darken their hearts,' said Yavanna. And she was not appeased, but grieved in heart, fearing what might be done upon Middle-earth in days to come. Therefore she went before Manwë, and she did not betray the counsel of Aulë, but she said: 'King of Arda, is it true, as Aulë hath said to me, that the Children when they come shall have dominion over all the things of my labour, to do as they will therewith?'

G

Then Aulë took the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves, and laid them to rest in far-sundered places; and he returned to Valinor, and waited while the long years lengthened.

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## Part 8

**You are going to read a part of an article comparing Tolkien and his books to other universes, companies and authors. For questions 47-56, choose from the options A-D. Each option may be used more than once.**

### A - Disney World

Let me draw two more instructive contrasts. The first is with the most commercially successful purveyor of fairy-tales in the world, in the form of the movie. Then there is the tie-in book, the action figures, the home video, the clothes, the shampoo, the fast food... Yes, it's the Walt Disney Company, which merged with the American Broadcasting Corporation in 1995 to become one of the world's biggest multimedia conglomerates, in a billion-dollar industry second only to the aerospace industry as America's top export earner. But aren't we talking about some of the same things that inspired Tolkien: old European fairy-tales and folk-tales? Yes and no; but mainly no, because Disney uses them to produce something very different: what Ariel Dorfman aptly calls "industrially produced fiction". Disney's versions of the Brothers Grimm really convey the American Dream, that epitome of chrome-plated unsustainability which celebrates the very values that are ripping up what little remains of the world - local communities in a still-enchanted nature — that produced the old stories in the first place. As a former employee remarked, Disney "could make something his own, all right, but that process nearly always robbed the work at hand of its uniqueness, of its soul, if you will.... He always came as a conqueror, never as a servant." Exploiting to the full the tendency of film as a medium tending to literal-mindedness, Disney's images violently occupy the mind, gradually destroying the child's imaginative ability to visualize for him/herself. Alternating between brutality and sentimentality (which, as Carl Jung once remarked, is merely a superstructure covering brutality), they communicate not real hope or wonder but commercially-driven imitations. The result is indeed universality, but of a very different kind. The amount of deliberate manipulation that goes into a Disney 'product' cannot be overestimated. 'Pocahontas', for example, was based on American supermodels, but became even more stereotypic during development, 'the rationale being that a chief character has to be iconic enough to work as merchandise and be recognizable to the worldwide market.' All Disney films therefore involve massive market research, and are made in consultation with child psychologists and 'tested' on young audiences before release; characters are rendered deliberately juvenile to exploit protective impulses. Then there are the lucrative spin-offs such as DVDs, merchandise, and tie-ups with (naturally) McDonald's. Compare this kind of universality to that of Tolkien. His was unforeseen, largely unsought, and very much despite rather than because of the well-named 'cultural industry. Once again, it is the difference between magic and enchantment. Disney's magic is put at the service of the empire of cultural capital, whose limits of brutality and banality in search of the lowest but most lucrative common denominator have not yet been plumbed. Of course, it contains worse things than 'Snow White': apart from endless glamorized killings and car chases, the banality of 'Reality TV,' MTV and advertising (it's often hard to tell the difference) — and more frightening: the memory-chip 'Soul-catcher' I have already mentioned, for example, or the 'Doppelgänger. This computer system is currently being developed by MIT's Media Lab. It uses sensors to watch the TV viewer, accumulate information about his/her responses, and alter programming accordingly. Specializing in smile detection, the Doppelgänger thus only shows you images that will make you smile. It is 75% funded by business. "What we like best," said a frank spokesman, 'is for our sponsors to make lots of money from our patents... and then come back and invest some more.' Small wonder, then, that everything soon becomes a commodity in the market-place, even irony about it, just as everyone becomes first and foremost a consumer, and a citizen later, or never. You can't blame all this on Disney. But it is a major player and founding father of the contemporary cultural industry, which in turn is a billion-dollar part of the contemporary international consumerism. Its fairy-tales thus lie at the very heart of modernity. No wonder that Tolkien once confessed to 'a heartfelt loathing' for all the works of the Disney studios. Walt Disney was indeed, in his way, a genius. As a matter of historical record, he was also a ruthless, anti-Semitic, sexist, union-busting employer who worked as a Special Agent for J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, cooperating in the witch-hunts of 'unAmerican subversives' by spying on friends and colleagues. But I am not trying to portray Tolkien as some kind of left-wing saint by comparison; and to prove it, my next contrasting example is the late Angela Carter.

### B - Angela Carter

Angela Carter was a hard-living, independently-minded and strongly feminist writer who produced some of the first and best revisionist fairy-tales for girls and women. She was a complex and controversial writer, and I am only going to touch on the apparent overlap of her work with that of Tolkien. The contrasts are clear enough: in addition to Carter's earthy and sensual feminism, there was a big generation gap between her 1960s anti-authoritarian populism and Tolkien's residually Edwardian love of a quiet, green world. But the two authors drew upon many of the same European and English folk- and fairy-tales; and Alison Lurie thinks Carter shares a Northern air with Karen Blixen, one that I have already said links the latter with Tolkien. It seems to me, however, that ultimately their projects were exactly opposite. Carter was primarily interested in disenchanting her readers - freeing them from a false glamour cast by a sexist and racist capitalism — whereas he, despite sharing to a surprising extent the same concerns, was trying to work an alternative re-enchantment. These represent very different strategies. Neither is necessarily more effective than the other; Carter's sophisticated and anti-mythic subversion of enchantment limits her audience in one way, just as Tolkien's contrary approach does his in another. In terms of appeal discernible through sheer numbers of readers, of course, Tolkien obviously has the edge. But I would also reject the suggestion that, Carter's left-of-centre affiliations notwithstanding, her work is inherently more 'radical.' Indeed, if I am right about the destructiveness of unchecked modernity, then Tolkien's is

more needed, and, ironically, less naïve. Carter's best fiction centres on the circus and the theatre, both arenas whose magic, while potent, falls well within the humanist and secular ambit of drama. This is an art-form which, if Tolkien was right, is necessarily anthropocentric. He contrasted it in this respect with literature, which can admit nature in its own right, which then in turn can enter into art. And literature that hearkens back to ancient myth has a special impetus and ability - perhaps even responsibility — to let the voices of non-human nature speak. It is also significant that both Carter and Salman Rushdie - the former rightly praised by the latter as 'a thumber of noses, a defiler of sacred cows' — have declared their devotion to The Wizard of Oz. For the fundamental point about the Wizard of Oz himself, 'Oz the Great and Terrible, is this: he was a cheat and a fraud. As such, the tale is a comforting anti-fairy-tale for secular and modernist Grown-Ups; its namesake is just 'a little, old man, with a bald head and a wrinkled face.' "Hush, my dear... don't speak so loud, or you will be overheard — and I should be ruined. I'm supposed to be a Great Wizard." "And aren't you?" ... "Not a bit of it, my dear; I'm just a common man"?

#### C - Discworld

As a final contrast, let us briefly consider the work of the hugely successful writer Terry Pratchett. His books are stuffed with wizards, witches, trolls, dwarves and magic generally, which would seem to define him squarely as a fantasy writer, albeit a 'comic' one. Yet he is not; at least, not in the same sense as Tolkien. For these are basically literary devices Pratchett uses to produce quintessentially humanist tales: not humanist in the modern sense of a scientific and universal secular religion - Pratchett's idiom is unmistakably local, that is, English (not even 'British') - but in the best classical, pre-modern tradition (and this is a link with Tolkien) of the human, sceptical and tolerant. It is also comic in Elgin's sense, that is, accepting of nature, the body, and material limits — just what are despised by the intense ambition, individualism and 'spirituality' of tragedy, so beloved of modernity. As such, Pratchett's stories partake of a postmodern emphasis on the local, plural and contingent; they refresh rather than dessicate the contemporary soul.

#### D - Tolkien's True Company

The only books I can think of that seem comparable to The Lord of the Rings, in the terms in which I have analysed it here, are other examples of mythic fiction. Those that spring to my mind are Herman Melville's Moby Dick, Mikhail Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita, Alain-Fournier's Le Grand Meaulnes, Russell Hoban's Riddley Walker, and Karen Blixen's autobiographical Out of Africa. (There are undoubtedly others, some perhaps among the fantasy novels that I mentioned earlier.) These books too draw their power from a profound and fresh connection with the mythic. And significantly enough, they have also presented literary critics with intractable problems — resulting partly from an absurdly narrow definition of 'literature,' and partly from sheer lack of empathic imagination — and who are thus usually obliged to treat them, at best, as unclassifiable. Except perhaps for Hoban's, they could also be described, like The Lord of the Rings, as their authors' life-works. For all the reasons I have given, this is Tolkien's true company of peers. He is saved by his deep and tough roots in an ancient place from the pathetically deracinated (and therefore shallow) universalism of Star Wars, with its bargain-basement Jungian archetypes as eulogized by Joseph Campbell; and by his profound re-creation of myth from the ghastly death-in-life of Disney's commercial imitations, with their plastic grass and 'genuine replica' fairy castles.

#### Which paragraph mentions a universe, company or author:

- that lacks depth compared to Tolkien? \_\_\_\_\_ 47
- whose approach/objective is contrary to Tolkien's in principle? \_\_\_\_\_ 48
- expressing admiration to a book/drama whose main protagonist is a charlatan? \_\_\_\_\_ 49
- that analyses their readers'/audience's behaviour in order to boost sales? \_\_\_\_\_ 50
- whose primary goal is profit and whose priority is quantity rather than quality? \_\_\_\_\_ 51
- that fails/failed to meet some generally accepted moral standards? \_\_\_\_\_ 52
- whose works imply that magic is merely a trick. \_\_\_\_\_ 53
- containing characters based on certain psychological principles? \_\_\_\_\_ 54
- with a more local focus compared to Tolkien? \_\_\_\_\_ 55
- whose works have a revitalising effect on the reader/audience \_\_\_\_\_ 56