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Nólë Hyarmenillo: An Anthology of Iberian Scholarship on Tolkien (2022), edited by Nuno Simões Rodrigues, Martin Simonson, and Angélica Varandas.

Marjorie Burns
retired, bjeeburns@gmail.com

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Nólë Hyarmenillo: An Anthology of Iberian Scholarship on Tolkien, edited by Nuno Simões Rodrigues, Martin Simonson, and Angélica Varandas. Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2022. [x], x, 186 pp. \$24.30 (trade paperback) ISBN 9783905703474.

Nólë Hyarmenillo (Quenya for “Lore from the South”) is an attractive collection of Tolkien essays by Spanish and Portuguese scholars. Five of the nine essays are traditional literary studies. The remaining four look beyond Tolkien to artistic creations or other developments inspired by Tolkien. Some of the post-Tolkien creations addressed in this collection hope to carry on with Tolkien’s vision through their own mediums; others move beyond the books, filling in what they feel is underdeveloped or lacking in Tolkien’s works; still others use Tolkien’s Middle-earth as a base for viewpoints or beliefs that would have at the very least, greatly puzzled Tolkien.

Changes of this sort are by no means always appreciated by Tolkien traditionalists. They are, however, easy enough to justify if we take a moment to look at Tolkien’s own creative habits. Tolkien, after all, was himself a borrower, a writer who drew ideas (characters, settings, situations) from earlier sources and wrote them anew. For Tolkien, these sources were Old Norse and Celtic beliefs, lost languages and past mythologies, Anglo-Saxon and Middle English works, as well as more modern writers (William Morris and John Buchan, for example). If Tolkien could create his fiction by borrowing freely from others, why should those who come after Tolkien not do the same?

The first essay, “I didn’t see the films, but I read the posters,” by Miguel Moiteiro Marques, falls within this group. Marques begins by educating the reader in poster interpretation before explaining the ways in which audience attitudes and responses to Peter Jackson’s films (already deviating from Tolkien’s literature) have driven poster design. There is more to the skill of poster-reading than some might suspect, and Marques’ informative essay is a deserving read.

The second *Nólë Hyarmenillo* essay with a focus beyond Tolkien’s literature is Ana Daniela Coelho’s “‘I see Fire’: Adapting *The Hobbit* beyond the Image.” Here again Tolkien plays the role of progenitor several steps removed. Tolkien’s tales of Middle-earth led to the films; the films inspired music; the music gained enough importance by itself that a specific work in a specific style could become the subject of study. Coelho takes us through a brief accounting of film music, pointing out how music lends “both grandeur and familiarity (important in trilogies) to the visual element” (61). Coelho then addresses music created for the Tolkien films in general terms before moving on to Ed Sheeran’s “I See Fire” (from *The Desolation of*

Smaug), a highly successful song in its own right and one that elevates Thorin's character as leader and king in the *Hobbit* films. This elevation strengthens parallels with Aragorn's intensified character in Peter Jackson's film of *The Lord of the Ring*.

"Shadows of Middle-earth: Tolkien in Subculture, Counterculture and Exploitation," by Mónica Sanz, is the third *Nólë Hyarmenillo* essay that takes us beyond Tolkien's fiction. This is the essay that best and most inclusively exhibits the phenomenon of Tolkien-inspired response—not only in music, films, illustrations, graffiti, and videogames but also in political movements, origami, theme parks, underground clubs, drag queens, and porn. Sanz's description of this almost boundless creativity is well worth reading for any student of Tolkien who wishes to learn "how pervasive and varied [Tolkien's] influence is" (150).

Amaya Fernández Menicucci's essay, "Aren't you Going to Search My Trousers?: Gender and the Representation of the Dwarves in Peter Jackson's Adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*," is the fourth and last Iberian essay to look at modern revisions and additions to Tolkien's stories. By focusing mainly on the depiction of Dwarves in the *Hobbit* films, Menicucci establishes Peter Jackson's failure to lessen, in any meaningful way, traditional gender roles. The films serve instead to reinforce longstanding ideas of both heroic masculinity and failed masculinity. Kili and Thorin have both been endowed with an impressive sex appeal, a quality not to be found in the remaining dwarves. This is particularly true of Bombur, who has been reduced to little more than a fat, comic joke—in spite of more admirable characteristics Tolkien granted him. In the end, even the addition of courageous, dynamic females does little to change traditional attitudes, and Jackson's attempt at improving and modernizing Tolkien's characters, leaves old mindsets and traditional preferences still firmly in place.

The remaining five chapters in *Nólë Hyarmenillo* follow a more traditional literary pattern. The first of these essays, "Facing Hope: *The Lord of the Rings*, *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Elegiac Tradition," by Angélica Varandas, is a well-documented, well-written study of how the "cycle of life and the inevitability of death" in Anglo-Saxon tradition appears in *The Lord of the Rings* (30). Varandas takes us through Tolkien's scholarship on *Beowulf*, explaining Tolkien's understanding of the poem as an accounting of life and the lot of humankind, rather than a heroic lay. *Beowulf* becomes, then, not only a version of everyman; but a depiction of "the life cycle of everything that exists" (30). *The Lord of the Rings* maintains a similar position, one that is particularly evident in Tolkien's poetry, with its emphasis on "losses, farewells and departures" (46). Nonetheless, Tolkien's Catholic religion gave him a hope not to be found in Anglo-Saxon belief.

Though cycles of evil exist and resistance against evil has no end, redemption exists as well.

Hélio Pires' essay, "Asgard and Valinor: Worlds in Comparison," is a well-informed study of Tolkien's dependence on Old Norse texts for his creation of the Valar world. Others have made the same or similar comparisons (as Pires readily admits), but Pires goes further by showing how Tolkien primarily (but not exclusively) makes use of *Grímnismál* as a base for Valinor. In spite of changes that grew and developed during his years of writing and rewriting, Tolkien's final version of Valinor still shows the marks of this Old Norse inspiration.

"The Voice of Nature in Middle-earth through the Lens of Testimony," by Andoni Cossio, is drawn from the dissertation Cossio is presently writing ("The Evolution of J. R. R. Tolkien's Ecological Perspective through the Portrayal of Trees and Forests: From *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*"). Cossio's essay understandably has the all-inclusive feeling of a dissertation, with more argument and background material than an essay standing on its own requires. Nonetheless, the essay is well worth reading. A key point in Cossio's argument is the anthropomorphic appearance and behavior Tolkien gave the Ents. Treebeard is more than an ambulatory talking tree; he is also humanized, both through his appearance and through the very name *Ent*, derived from the Anglo-Saxon for "mighty person" or "giant." By looking at Treebeard through the lens of testimony, Cossio gives new understanding and increased significance to Treebeard's story of loss and destruction, engaging the reader and thereby encouraging change.

Martin Simonson's persuasive and well-written essay, "Nonetheless They Will Have Need of Wood," is yet another approach to the importance of trees in Tolkien's literature. Simonson's subtitle, "Aesthetic and Utilitarian Approaches to Trees in *The Silmarillion* and *Unfinished Tales*," establishes the focus of his argument. The story of Valinor's Two Trees and the story of Númenor's White Tree provide clear examples of Tolkien's concept of the natural world, including his awareness of complexities that arise when protection of nature comes up against human desire or need. Disagreement between Yavanna and Aulë (in Valinor) and between Erendis and Aldarion (in Númenor) become, then, portentous examples of what occurs when there is no consideration for other positions and no compromise.

The essay, "Boromir: A Character Doomed to Die," by Alejandro Martínez-Sobrino, presents a thorough accounting of Boromir, one that makes good use of earlier scholarship. The author's comparison of Boromir to Hector and other tragic heroes is well done. The essay covers all we know about Boromir from his arrival at the Council of Elrond (where he is already set apart from others) to descriptions of his ambition and bravado, on to his final failure of judgment (including his death

and redemption). Boromir's strengths and weakness are well set out and well explained. I am less satisfied, however, by Martínez-Sobrino's claims that Boromir wishes "to become a god." It is true that Boromir resents his family's continued position as Stewards rather than kings; Tolkien makes this clear. But Tolkien gives no indication that Boromir wishes to become a "god." Better are the places where Martínez-Sobrino softens Boromir's desires to hopes of becoming a "legend" or a "legendary figure," a more appropriate claim and one easier to justify.

Marjorie Burns, Professor Emerita
Portland State University