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The Lord of the Rings:  
Critique of the Two Chinese Translations

評論「魔戒之主」的兩個中譯本

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For My Parents

# ***Acknowledgements***

First, I would like to thank my parents for letting me grow up in an environment where books always played an important role. At a very young age they aroused my interest in works of literature, be they original or translated. This is how I first got into contact with Chinese culture, reading translations of classical novels like 紅樓夢 or 西遊記. My parents also introduced me to the fantasy world of J.R.R. Tolkien, and I soon became engrossed in the “secondary world” of Middle-earth. In a way, my fascination with Chinese culture and language, with translation, and with Tolkien, all go a long way back to my childhood, and I am deeply indebted to my parents for their support and stimulation in pursuing all these interests.

This thesis, with all its strengths and shortcomings, is a crystallization of my efforts in learning foreign languages and exploring different cultures. I wish to thank all my family, friends and classmates in Taiwan, Germany, and elsewhere, who have provided me with the support and motivation to hang in there and continue on my chosen path—even and particularly when things got rough and I felt like giving up.

Much credit for the completion of this thesis has to go to Professor Ching-Hsi Perng, who with great patience and understanding directed and advised me as I struggled with both the format and the content of my treatise. I thoroughly enjoyed our cooperation, and appreciated his always insightful and crisp advice. Without him, the reader would have to put up with a much less condensed version of this thesis. If it is still “too lengthy” in some parts, no one but author is to be blamed.

Father Daniel J. Bauer has been an invaluable mentor on my path to becoming a translator ever since I had the good fortune to call him my literary translation teacher during my second year at the Fujen University’s Graduate Institute for Translation and Interpretation. Without his encouragement, and the training I received under his guidance, I would never have dared to even attempt this critique, or the translation of any literary works into English or Chinese.

Many thanks also to Professor Wen-chao Li, who took the time to share his insights into the fictional works of Tolkien with me, and made valuable suggestions for improving the quality of my thesis, especially of my own translation of the first

chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Last, but not least, I want to thank S. for all the unwavering support and critical advice that were essential to the completion of this thesis.

May this thesis help to build a solid bridge from Middle-earth to China...

# ***Abstract***

This thesis grew out of my love for the fictional works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Its main part is a detailed discussion of the two Chinese translation's of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's classic that firmly established the genre of fantasy literature. I hope that my close-up translation critique will help to show that and where the Chinese versions failed to produce a satisfactory rendering of this intriguing novel that has fascinated millions of readers around the world and continues to be a bestseller not just in English, but virtually all the languages it has been translated into so far.

The thesis is divided into four chapters and one appendix.

Chapter One first gives a brief introduction of *The Lord of the Rings* and lines out the amazing success story of the trilogy, as well as describing its twin roots in Norse mythology and Christianity. A short biography of the author follows, showing him as both a distinguished linguist and enthusiastic storyteller. A short glimpse is provided into Tolkien's view on fantasy literature (Faërie) and its function for the modern reader. Finally, the first chapter gives an overview of the existing translations of Tolkien's works into Chinese, that are the Variety (萬象) and Linking (聯經) Publishers' versions of both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Translations into languages other than Chinese, particularly German and Dutch, are also commented on briefly.

Chapter Two deals with the philological and mythological background of Tolkien's fictional works, thus preparing the main point of my treatise: one of the major reasons the Chinese translations failed was the translators' lack of sufficient understanding of the complicated linguistic and cultural backdrop against which Tolkien's fantasy novels are placed. Tolkien created the Middle-earth saga primarily as a pseudo-historic setting for his invented languages, and as a "Mythology for England."

Chapter Two shows how a would-be translator needs to be aware of the unique character and genesis of Tolkien's fantasy world, and how the invented languages, plot, and humorous style of *The Lord of the Rings* require special attention during the translation process. The chapter concludes with concise synopses of Tolkien's three

major fictional works, which contain most of the background information a scrupulous translator would need.

Chapter Three forms the bulk of my thesis. It is a detailed analysis of the Variety and Linking translations with the original. By taking a closer look at seventeen prose passages and three poems, I provide a representative profile of the categories of mistakes and problems characteristic of both Chinese versions. Special emphasis is placed on how the translators' insufficient appreciation of the work's multifaceted structure and framework, combined with linguistic insensitivity, led to very unsatisfactory renderings of Tolkien's most famous work. Wherever necessary, suggestions are given for more adequate ways of translating problematic passages.

The three poems, or rhymes, are discussed in a separate section. They all have a pivotal function within the intricate story line(s) of the book, and abound in allusions to, and explanations of, major events and characters. Therefore, they serve as particularly good examples of how the secondary world of Middle-earth, with its elaborate historic, linguistic, cultural, geographical and mythological setup, will have to be understood and appreciated in its entirety before a translator may attempt to preserve the content and spirit of the original in his rendering of the work.

Chapter Four concludes my thesis by summing up the problems of the existing Chinese translations, and shortly discussing possible reasons for their poor quality. I touch shortly upon ethical problems involved in translating fictional works. I also indicate what the "ideal" translator of Tolkien's works should be like, and how he would have to approach his task.

The Appendix consists mainly of my own translation of the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, "A Long-expected Party." This is preceded by a discussion of some of the more interesting difficulties I encountered in the translating process.

Hopefully, this thesis will in some way contribute to the improvement of literary translation into Chinese, and point the way for future translators, especially of Tolkien's fictional works.

# 論文提要





## NOTES BY THE AUTHOR:

If not indicated otherwise, the page numbers in in-text notes and footnotes always refer to the editions listed in my bibliography at the end of this thesis.

Where examples for wrong or awkward translations are given, the problematic passages are rendered in italics. The original text will usually also be given by way of comparison, and here the relevant passages or words will also be in italics. (Italics in the original text will be underlined to avoid confusion.)

Where, for the benefit of the reader, I have inserted explanatory remarks in a quote, I have done so within square brackets in the following fashion: "...But its chief appeal lay, as Lewis [**C.S. Lewis, well-known Catholic writer and Tolkien's close friend**] had seen long ago, in its unabashed return to heroic romance."

For the sake of clearness, I have always capitalized the names of peoples and languages invented by Tolkien (except, of course, in quotes). I also took this approach with some other terms significant in Tolkien's stories, e.g. "The Nine (Ringwraiths)," or "The One (Ring)."

For abbreviations used for Tolkien's major works in my in-depth analysis of the two Chinese translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, see Chapter 3. *The Lord of the Rings* is often referred to simply as *Lord*.

Throughout the thesis I have retained the Chinese names of the publishers of the existing two translations of *The Lord of the Rings*, 萬象 and 聯經, for I found they stand out more from the English text, and thus make orientation easier, especially in Chapter 3 (where the discourse sort of "hops" from one translation to the other in my in-depth analysis of problematic passages).

# Contents

<b>Chapter One: <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>: The Book and the Author</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>First Part: A Classic of Popular Fiction</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Second Part: Introduction of the Author</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Third Part: Existing Translations</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1. Chinese Translations of Tolkien's Works So Far</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>The Hobbit</i>	<b>18</b>
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	<b>20</b>
<b>2. Translations Into Languages Other Than Chinese</b>	<b>23</b>
 <b>Chapter Two: The Philological and Mythological Background of Tolkien's</b>	
<b>Fictional Works</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>First Part: A Secondary World Created as Backdrop for Tolkien's</b>	
<b>Invented Languages and "Mythology for England"</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>1. Genesis and Character of the Middle-earth Books</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2. Pitfalls for the Translator</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>The Languages</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>The Plot</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Second Part: The Mythological Setup: <i>The Silmarillion</i>, <i>The Hobbit</i>, and</b>	
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	<b>38</b>
<i>The Silmarillion</i>	<b>38</b>
<i>The Hobbit</i>	<b>42</b>
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	<b>43</b>
 <b>Chapter Three: Analysis of the Existing Translations. Suggestions for More</b>	
<b>Adequate Ways of Translation</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>First Part: Categories of Mistakes. Abbreviations Used</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Second Part: Analysis of Problematic Passages in Order of Appearance</b>	
<b>in the Narration</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Example 1</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Example 2</b>	<b>50</b>

<b>Example 3</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Example 4</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Example 5</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Example 6</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Example 7</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Example 8</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Example 9</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Example 10</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Example 11</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Example 12</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Example 13</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Example 14</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Example 15</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Example 16</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Example 17</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Third Part: Translation of Poems</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Poem 1</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Poem 2</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Poem 3</b>	<b>124</b>
 <b>Chapter Four: Conclusion</b>	 <b>134</b>
 <b>Appendix: Chapter 1 of <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> in My Own Translation</b>	 <b>138</b>
 <b>Bibliography</b>	 <b>167</b>

## Chapter One

### *The Lord of the Rings: The Book and its Author*

#### First Part: A Classic of Popular Fiction

The reasons why I chose J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* for my translation critique are manifold.

First of all, I have enjoyed Tolkien's books ever since I first read his *The Hobbit* as an 8-year-old boy. Since then I have repeatedly read practically all his other literary works, including *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*. I was looking forward to the Chinese translations of *The Lord of the Rings*, and have to admit they both turned out to be a bitter disappointment, unable to bring the fascinating secondary world of Middle-earth closer to readers in Taiwan. I hope this critique will give the interested reader an idea of the sheer width of Tolkien's imagination, and thus rekindle an interest in his works that may very well be smothered by the Chinese translations of his works so far.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the very fact that the existing translations of *The Lord of the Rings* are far from satisfying makes them perfect materials for case studies of the pitfalls of translation, in particular where works from a very different linguistic and cultural background are involved. Add to this the fact that the genre "fantasy literature," which was firmly established through Tolkien's Middle-earth sagas, is still rather foreign to Taiwan's literary environment (even though terms like 魔幻小說 do exist to describe certain kinds of imaginative fiction), and you have ample reason to take a closer look at these recent translations. The Chinese tradition closest to fantasy literature in the

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<sup>1</sup> So far, only *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* have been translated into Chinese. Both books have been published by both 萬象 and 聯經 publishing houses in Taiwan, with 聯經 having the copyrights on the translation of both books. For a thorough analysis of the two *Hobbit* translations, see 李淑珺: 《以「The Hobbit」譯本為例, 探討台灣翻譯青少年小說問題》, 輔仁大學翻譯學研究所, 碩士論文, 1998年。The main focus of that thesis is not on *The Hobbit*, though, but on Taiwan's young adult novel market, and the quality of youth literature translations into Chinese in general.

West may be 武俠小說, kung-fu or knight-errand novels<sup>2</sup>, and the popularity of that genre among the Chinese is indeed reminiscent of the enduring popularity Tolkien's fiction has enjoyed in the West over the four decades since *The Lord of the Rings* was published.

When *Lord* was first published, reactions were strangely polarized. W.H. Auden, for instance, heaped enthusiastic praise on the trilogy, comparing it to Melville's *Moby Dick* for its staggering epic dimensions (Auden 40), and Edmund Wilson, with equal gusto, called it "juvenile trash" ("Oo, Those Awful Orcs" 314). This is how it remains up to this day: one faction champions the book as a masterpiece, while its enemies cannot abide it. As Auden said: "Nobody seems to have a moderate opinion" (41). Tolkien himself was amused by these extreme positions, writing once:

*"The Lord of the Rings*

is one of those things:

If you like it, you do:

If you don't, then you boo!" (Carpenter, *Biography* 226)

As for the average reader, the numbers speak for themselves. *The Lord of the Rings* has been reprinted, reedited and licensed so many times that it is difficult to keep track even of the English-language editions. Generations of readers have enjoyed this trilogy and Tolkien's other literary works, and there is no sign that the book is going to lose its status as a long-term bestseller anytime soon. The first US edition by Ace Publishers was pirated, by the way, as is Taiwan's 萬象 edition. Yet that did not prevent the first full-fledged Tolkien-cult in the United States, which was soon followed by waves of enthusiasm in other countries. This was made possible through translations of the book into all major European, and a number of other languages,

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<sup>2</sup> What Tolkien's works are not, though, are science fiction novels: sci-fi literature has its settings in the future, not the past (like *The Lord of the Rings*), and it has a clear predilection for and is closely concerned with technological development, space travel, and human inventions—topics Tolkien either abhorred (he was very critical about the pervasion of modern life by technology) or thought boring. Even so, in many bookstores in Taiwan Tolkien's works are in the sci-fi section. Where I bought my 萬象 edition, it was stacked away under 科幻小說—science fiction. Other bookstores have the books under foreign literature, or under 武俠小說, kung-fu novels, which may not be entirely inappropriate. Like most kung-fu novels, Tolkien creates a pseudo-historic fantasy world with comparatively simple good-evil patterns and idealized characters. However we categorize him, Tolkien is much closer to medieval romances and Arthurian quests in spirit and content than to any form of science fiction.

most of them published soon after the English original. The first translation was into Dutch (1956—only one year after the last of the three volumes was published in English), reviewed and approved by the author himself. Other translations followed, and while the quality may have varied, the success of the book was unstoppable.

Humphrey Carpenter, the author of the authorized biography of J.R.R. Tolkien, found one possible explanation for the immediate success in the United States: “Clearly there was much in Tolkien’s writing that appealed to American students. Its implied emphasis on the protection of natural scenery against the ravages of an industrial society harmonized with the growing ecological movement, and it was easy to see *The Lord of the Rings* as a tract for the times. But its chief appeal lay, as [C.S.] Lewis had seen long ago, in its unabashed return to heroic romance” (Carpenter, *Biography* 232).<sup>3</sup>

Even today, these words ring true. Tolkien’s trilogy strikes a chord in most readers who are longing for a break from the realistic, stream-of-consciousness, psychologically refined genres that have dominated novel-writing in the 20th century. The novel’s reversed quest motif,<sup>4</sup> its medieval narrative pattern,<sup>5</sup> its creation of an anti-Faust figure in Frodo,<sup>6</sup> who renounces the power of the Ring—all these themes, together with an underlying “return-to-nature”-leitmotif, appeal to readers of all ages who long for a world where good and evil are easily discerned, where the technology/information revolution and environmental pollution have not yet made an impact, a world where the heroic deed of one Christ-like figure can still bring salvation to the whole creation.

Some harsh critics have labeled this kind of attitude “escapism.” Tolkien himself, in his long essay “On Fairy Stories,” concedes that “Escape is one of the main

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the overwhelming success of and the cult triggered by Tolkien’s fictional works in the United States and other countries, see Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1978) 231-234.

<sup>4</sup> Frodo, unlike Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, sets out to *destroy* something (the Ring of Power), not to find something (a dragon’s hoard of treasures). This is also a reversal of the Arthurian quest motif, the hunt for the Holy Grail.

<sup>5</sup> See West, “The Interlace Structure of *The Lord of the Rings*,” and Miller, “Narrative Pattern in *The Fellowship of the Ring*.”

<sup>6</sup> See Helms, “Frodo Anti-Faust: *The Lord of the Rings* as Contemporary Mythology,” *Tolkien’s World* 56-76.

functions of fairy-stories,” but he uses the word in a positive sense, meaning a “recovery or regaining” of a clear view, denominating “consolation” in a fallen world (*Tree and Leaf* 53-60).<sup>7</sup> These are clearly religious notions, and it would be interesting to know how many of his readers are aware that they are actually comforted by something they thought they had long left behind: Christian religion on the one hand, and old Norse mythology on the other. These are the two main sources (apart from the authors vivid imagination) that feed the characters and the plot of *The Lord of the Rings*. Part of the fascination of the book lies in the tension between the fatalistic, tragic power of the Nordic elements in the story and the Christian notions of salvation and a fundamentally moral universe.

Last but not least, one of the most obvious, yet sometimes neglected, reasons for the books’ amazing success is the simple fact that Tolkien is a skilled narrator. He used to tell long stories to his children (his first literary success, *The Hobbit*, partly grew out of such a story), and enjoyed it thoroughly. It was only after the great success of *The Hobbit*, basically a children’s book, but also appreciated by many adult readers, that he set his mind on writing a sequel of much grander scope. He took great care in arranging the complicated, interlaced plot of *The Lord of the Rings*, a book that overwhelms some readers with the sheer number of characters that appear in it. He was painstaking with his self-assigned task of creating a secondary world that should be nothing less than convincing in every detail, be it linguistic, geographical, political, botanical, zoological, chronological, or historical in nature. This meticulous attention to every minute aspect of plot and setting communicates itself to the reader throughout the three thick volumes, leaving even the less enthusiastic impressed with the scope of the author’s imagination and his “scholarly” seriousness in creating a world supposedly our own at a much earlier stage of history.

In Chapter 2 we will have a closer look at the genesis and interrelation of

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<sup>7</sup> Tolkien obviously considered our world with its high-tech environment, its destruction and exploitation of nature and its resources a fallen, warped one. This notion is also reflected in *The Lord of the Rings* and his other works. *The Silmarillion* is one long story of fallen creatures in a “marred” Middle-earth: Morgoth on the one hand, and the Elves, Men and other free peoples on the other, though engaging in fierce battle over the Silmaril, are yet very similar in that they have betrayed the Valar, the Gods of their world, and are thus “fallen.” In Tolkien’s cosmos, evil is nothing but defection from what is good and true—a Miltonian notion, and indeed some critics have pointed that for example Sauron, the Dark Lord of *The Lord of the Rings* is in its character and background indebted to Milton’s Satan.

Tolkien's three major works of fiction that together create the Middle-earth saga. For now it may suffice to state that *The Lord of the Rings* is truly a classic of modern popular fiction, a well-told, intricate story in a comprehensive fantasy setting that successfully mixes the comical elements prevalent in *The Hobbit* with the mythical depth, heroic seriousness, and high tone characterizing *The Silmarillion*.

## Second Part: Introduction of the Author

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, Englishman, scholar, and storyteller, was born of English parents in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on Jan. 3, 1892 and died in England on Sept. 2, 1973. His entire childhood was spent in England, to which the family returned permanently in 1896 upon the death of his father. He received his education at King Edward's School, St. Philip's Grammar School, and Oxford University. After graduating in 1915 he joined the British army and saw action in the Battle of the Somme. He was eventually discharged after spending most of 1917 in the hospital suffering from "trench fever." It was during this time that he began work on *The Book of Lost Tales*, which contains much of the mythological corpus later published in a very condensed version as *The Silmarillion*.<sup>8</sup>

Tolkien was a scholar by profession. His academic positions were, in chronological order, staff member of the New English Dictionary (1918-20); Reader, later Professor, of English Language at Leeds, 1920-25; Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford (1925-45); and Merton Professor of English Language and Literature (1945-59). His principal professional focus was the study of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) and its relation to linguistically similar languages (Old Norse, Old German, and Gothic), with special emphasis on the dialects of Mercia, that part of England in which he grew up and lived, but he was also interested in Middle

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<sup>8</sup> *The Silmarillion* was published in 1977. When it became clear that interest in even more Middle-earth lore was huge, the longer versions (in the epic form of rhymed verse) of the stories related in *The Silmarillion* were also published in the 1980s and 1990s. Even now new books are forthcoming, as almost everything Tolkien ever wrote is being published, including drafts of *The Lord of the Rings* and other works. These are compiled and edited by his son Christopher Tolkien in a series called "The History of Middle-earth" which so far comprises ten volumes. Though lengthy at times, these books



English, especially the dialect used in the *Ancrene Wisse* (a twelfth century manuscript probably composed in western England). Moreover, Tolkien was an expert in the surviving literature written in these languages. Indeed, his unusual ability to simultaneously read the texts as linguistic sources and as literature gave him perspective on both aspects; this was once described as “his unique insight at once into the language of poetry and the poetry of language” (“Professor J.R.R. Tolkien: Creator of Hobbits and inventor of a new mythology” [Obituary], *The Times*, 3 Sep 1973).

From an early age he had been fascinated by language, particularly the languages of Northern Europe, both ancient and modern. From this affinity for language came not only his profession, but also his private hobby, the invention of languages. He was more generally drawn to the entire “Northern tradition” (as preserved for example in the English epic *Beowulf*, but also in the Icelandic/Scandinavian *Edda*), which led him to wide reading of its myths and epics and of those modern authors who were equally drawn to it, such as William Morris and George MacDonald. His broad knowledge inevitably led to the development of various opinions about Myth, its relation to language, and the importance of Fairy Stories, interests which were shared by his friend C.S. Lewis.

Much of Tolkien’s opinions and theories on Fairy Stories, Myth, and their applicability for the modern reader is to be found in his essay “On Fairy-stories.” In it Tolkien states his belief that Fairy Tales in their “unadulterated” form are very much for the adult reader, and have a function close to that of the Christian gospel, i.e. is to communicate a “fleeting glimpse of joy . . . beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief” (*Tree and Leaf* 60). Tolkien also makes it clear that the element of “Magic” is *the* essential constituent of a good Fairy Story. It is important to Tolkien that this Magic be taken seriously and not being explained away by a *Rahmenerzählung*, or frame story, that disqualifies the magical events related as a mere dream (as in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*), or denotes them in some other way as “unreal,” or a mere means of satire (as in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*). Beast fables and other allegoric forms are also not considered as belonging into the realm of Faërie, as Tolkien calls it, but Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* qualifies: its author maintains an adequate seriousness of tone and never indicates that the story is but a

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provide some interesting materials for those doing research on Tolkien and his work.

figment or illusion.

It is obvious that Tolkien desired his literary works to be Fairy Tales for our time, for he wanted the stories related in his three major fictional works to form a “Myth for England.” It is for the reader to judge how successful he was in achieving this, yet it is undeniable that with Middle-earth he created a secondary world so credible in every tiny little detail and so fascinating in its timeless appeal that millions of readers have enjoyed to roam in this realm of Faërie (and felt the joy that Tolkien describes as one of the cardinal purposes of Fairy Tales as he defines them), some even claiming they would rather live there than in the “real world.”

All the various perspectives mentioned above, language, the heroic tradition, and Myth and Story (and a very real and deeply-held belief in and devotion to Catholic Christianity), came together with stunning effect in his stories: first in the legends of the Elder Days which served as background to his invented languages, and later in his most famous works, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. With these works, Tolkien heaved imaginative fiction into the higher echelons of 20th century literature, creating a new genre now commonly referred to as “Fantasy.”

### Third Part: Existing Translations

#### 1. Chinese Translations of Tolkien’s Works So Far

##### *The Hobbit*

Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* has been translated into Chinese twice. One edition was published by 聯經出版社(Linking Publishing Company), the other by 萬象出版社(Variety Publishing Company). Neither is very satisfying in its approach and style. The Chinese is stiff and often outright awkward, making comprehension difficult and sometimes impossible.

Yet at first glance the 萬象 edition (《霍比特歷險記》) looks more interesting. First, it generally reads a little smoother, and does not try to please little children (who are by no means the only possible readers for the book) by adopting a rather condescending tone. Also, unlike the 聯經 edition, it can appeal to adolescents *and* grown-ups, which is in great part due to the cover design/illustrations and to the

edition's size: two pocket-books that can easily be carried around like 金庸 (Louis Cha) kungfu novels. To split the book into two small volumes is quite appropriate in this case, since in some aspects, Tolkien is a 金庸 of the West. This edition does not render any of the author's illustrations (or *any* illustrations, except for those on the cover), though it does give a copy of Tolkien's original map (in English, with no Chinese explanations or translations) at the beginning of Book 1.

As for 聯經, they published their 《小矮人歷險記》 in a series called 世界兒童文學經典, a clear indication the book is targeting children and maybe young adults. This edition comes in one, large volume, containing (at the very beginning of the book) Tolkien's original map of the part of Middle-earth where most of the story takes place. It even gives (at the very end of the book) a map that was originally published in *The Lord of the Rings* as one of four maps depicting the northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast of Middle-earth.<sup>9</sup> Since *The Hobbit's* story takes place mostly in the northeast, the editors correctly picked the corresponding map.

These maps are not simple copies, but are heavily edited. Chinese translations are given for geographical names deemed important. Secondly, while the first map (Tolkien's *Hobbit* map) is basically a photocopy of the original with Chinese explanations added, the entire map at the end of the book (from *The Lord of the Rings*) was *redrawn* by the editors, with the English names *hand-copied*. Sadly, a number of mistakes occurred in the process, probably because the editor of the map had trouble reading the letter-type of the original. For example, "Withered *Heath*" becomes "Withered *Hearh*," and "Western Lands" becomes "Wesrern Lands" (italics mine). It should be noted that these are not names in one of Tolkien's invented languages, in which case a misreading by an editor lacking sufficient background information may at least be understandable. These misspellings must throw a strange light on the professionalism of those who edited the maps. Also, English names not even contained in the original map were *added* without any reason given for doing so (or even indicating that it was done). Again, many of these names are misspelled, e.g. "Hobbiton" becomes "*Hobbiron*," and the "Great River Anduin" becomes "Great River of Wilderland," an expression used nowhere by Tolkien, and geographically

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<sup>9</sup> This is the same approach the Dutch paperback edition of the *Hobbit* takes, which also gives two maps, one at the beginning, and one at the end of the book.

incorrect.<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Lord of the Rings***

Both 萬象 and 聯經 in 1998 also published translations of *The Lord of the Rings*.

萬象's has the title《魔戒之主》, and splits Tolkien's original three thick volumes into a total of 13 small volumes. They are published together with the *Hobbit* translation as 《魔戒之主》系列 of 15 volumes. (For a more detailed description, see the bibliography at the end of this paper.) The cover design/illustrations, layout and price of the 萬象 edition are of the same kind as for the *Hobbit* translation, making it a homogenous series, not unlike kungfu novels or Japanese comics. Certainly a promising marketing strategy (though sales of both the 聯經 and the 萬象 translations are a far cry from the best-selling success the book had in virtually any other language), but it can hardly cover up the serious flaws I discovered in the translation even while I flipped through the pages of the introduction and first chapter of that translation.

As for the 聯經 edition, it takes a much more “adult” approach to this book. After all, *The Lord of the Rings* has by now become a classic of fantasy literature; you could even say it established the whole genre and epitomizes everything typical of it. It has been translated into most European, and quite a few non-European, languages, and until today (some 40 years after its first publication) remains a bestseller worldwide. Yet like the 萬象 edition, the 聯經 edition abounds in mistakes that often show an amazing sloppiness on the side of translators and editors.

The 聯經 edition, going under the title《魔戒》, publishes all the six books of the English original as one single volume (in the English original, two books are incorporated in each of the three volumes, i.e. *The Fellowship of the Ring* includes Books 1 and 2, *The Two Towers* includes Books 3 and 4, and *The Return of the Ring* includes Books 5 and 6).

Interestingly, the 聯經 edition does render a translation of both the “Foreword” and the “Prologue” of the original, while the 萬象 edition shuns Tolkien's “Foreword,”

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed discussion of translation problems proper, the thesis by 李淑珺 on the two Chinese *Hobbit* editions is highly recommended.

probably deeming it too “serious” for its edition that tries to appeal to comic and kungfu novel readers. On the other hand, 萬象 does have maps. They do not, however, retain the maps provided in the English original (and virtually all translations into other languages), which were drawn by Tolkien himself, but decided to edit and slightly redraw the original maps. (This is different from what 萬象 did with the map in the *Hobbit*, where they gave an unaltered copy of the English map with no Chinese explanations whatsoever.) 聯經 decided to drop the maps, probably feeling they were not “serious” enough, and would have been contradictory to their approach of treating Tolkien more as a work of “high literature.”

Let me dwell on the maps a little longer. In a way, they are an essential part of the books, part of Tolkien’s attempt to create a convincing secondary world with its own topography and history.

Basically, the same map is given in the first volume of each of the subtitles (i.e. 《魔戒同盟》，第一冊；《雙塔記》，第一冊；《國王歸來》，第一冊). The maps are clearly based on Tolkien’s maps for *The Lord of the Rings*; yet the editors, who have to be praised for not leaving them out entirely, have to be criticized for not leaving a good thing alone—first, all the three redrawn maps look slightly different, mainly because, for no apparent reason, the annotations and explanations in Chinese are different each time.<sup>11</sup> While it was not a bad idea to add Chinese translations for geographical names, might it not have been better—for the sake of clarity, and since 萬象 went to the trouble of editing the map, anyway—to give *only* the Chinese names, and remove the English names entirely? The way Chinese names (in black print) are superimposed on the geographical features and English names (in gray print) is a main reason why these maps look so confusing to the average reader.

Secondly, a quick look at the maps reveals that they are virtually useless, because they are drawn up rather chaotically. A sharp cut in the print divides them in the middle. It is extremely difficult for the reader to follow the routes taken by the

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<sup>11</sup> Interesting that in the first map, only very few Chinese names of main importance are given, like 摩爾多, 貢多, and 埃裡亞多. The second and the third maps have a much greater number of Chinese translations inserted, as if the editors were well aware that the first map was not good enough, but could not decide to take the radical step of leaving out the English names, and give a unified and identical set of Chinese ones. They then settled for the awkward “solution” to erratically increase the number of Chinese names, without making any other significant changes.

main characters with only these maps at hand—which was the main purpose of the maps in the first place.

One last remark on the maps: in 《魔戒同盟，第一冊》，萬象 has inserted a small map of the Shire (the country where the Hobbits live) at the left bottom corner of the larger *Lord of the Rings* map. Obviously, they got the idea from the English original, which also gives a map of a part the Shire, not together with the larger map at the end of the book, but—very fittingly—inserted between the “Prologue” and the first chapter, “A Long-expected Party.” One has to wonder why the editors did not retain the detailed and intelligible original map, but came up with a virtually meaningless map of their own, which hardly conveys even the most basic geographical traits of the Shire (only 12 distinct topographical features are contained in this map!).

As for the translation problems in the “Prologue,” these will be dealt with in Chapter 3. The “Prologue,” unlike the “Foreword,” is quite important for an understanding of the story itself, since it gives an overview of the history, calendar, political organization, and way of living of the Hobbits. This is significant for the reader (and the translator!), since everything in *The Lord of the Rings* is recorded by Hobbits, and in their language (with insertions of other languages, like Elvish, of course). A good translation of the “Prologue” will help the reader to gain the right perspective on the whole story.

The 聯經 edition does not trouble itself with translating the comprehensive “Appendices” (also by Tolkien himself) that are added to the third and last volume, *The Return of the King*, of the English edition. Though not exactly making a great job of it, 萬象 *did* bother to translate these appendices that are very important for those who wish to gain a more detailed understanding of Tolkien’s secondary world, its peoples, customs, geography, languages, calendars, history, and mythology.

Both Chinese editions lack the index of the original.

What is appalling about the 聯經 translation is that it uses three different translators for each volumes of the English original, a team of three translators for the first volume (張儷、鄭大民、張建萍 for 魔戒團 上、下集 [Books 1 and 2, or Part One, of the English original], and one different translator each for the other two volumes(吳洪 for 雙塔記 上、下集 [Books 3 and 4, or Part Two, of the English original]; and 楊心意 for 國王歸來 上、下集 [Books 5 and 6, or Part Three, of the

English original]. It remains a mystery how unity of style and the overall narrative pattern and smoothness of the story are to be retained if so many different people work on the translation of one book, probably even without reading the parts they did not have to translate. No editor can probably make up for the breaks and irregularities that will occur in the design of a story if many different people, probably working under tight deadlines, translate parts of one single story that are then deliberately put together. At least, no such editor was available for the 聯經 edition of *The Lord of the Rings*.

## 2. Translations Into Languages Other Than Chinese

To round up this little overview, I would like to comment briefly on the Dutch and German renderings of *The Lord of the Rings*, and give the reader an idea how differently the translators handle the text.

A big plus of the Dutch *Hobbit* and *Lord* editions, in my view, is that they were done by the same translator: Max Schuchart, a man of letters who has made his mark in Dutch literary translation. I found his renderings of the two works highly enjoyable, and it is interesting to note that Tolkien himself had much praise for the Dutch edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, which happened to be the first translation of the book into another language. Tolkien had a working knowledge of Dutch (and, in fact, most of the living Germanic tongues), and after making some stringent criticisms of Schuchart's first attempts to render the complex series of names in the story into his own language, he was very satisfied with the translation. While it may not always be possible to secure the same translator to translate Tolkien's main fictional works, it certainly has the advantage that the renditions are much more likely to show the unity of terms, smooth incorporation of background knowledge, and overall congruity that is desirable (and quite absent from the Chinese versions).

The Dutch version has made extensive use of Tolkien's own "A Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*," and—following the author's advice—has given semantic translations wherever possible (especially for Westron, or Common Language, names), while mostly retaining the Elvish or Dwarfish names/passages (a method that is not feasible in Chinese, unless you want to have Latin letters in a Chinese text). In Chinese, the translator will in most cases be forced to use phonetic

translations for many expressions in Elvish and Tolkien's other invented languages.

The Dutch edition gives one complete map of Middle-earth (identical in topographical features to the English original, but with Dutch renderings of the "translatable" terms). The map is given at the back of Book 1, *De Reisgenoten*. The map that precedes Chapter 1 in the English edition, "A Part of the Shire," is also given as "Een deel van de Gouw." The Dutch edition gives the full "Appendices," the "Foreword," and the "Prologue."

All in all, the Dutch edition retains the format of the original, coming in three volumes and making no unmotivated changes or omissions. Major translation blunders are virtually absent.

The German translation, also in three volumes, is by Margaret Carroux, but the publisher made the interesting decision to ask another translator to do the poems: E.-M. von Freymann, who specializes in poetry renditions. While the literary value of the poems in themselves may be debatable, they *are* (as in *The Hobbit*) an essential part of the story, often coming in the form of (ancient) songs and verses, riddles, spells, or prophecies, and they often contain valuable background information for the reader. It is thus essential that they are rendered faithfully, and not treated as mere "props" or "accessory." Personally, I found some lines were rendered even more forcefully and "poetically" than in the original, e.g. in the case of the line "In the Land of Mordor, where the Shadows lie" (in the Ring poem given at the very beginning of the book), which is translated into "Im Lande Mordor, wo die Schatten drohn." The German verb "drohen" (meaning "to threaten, to menace") conveys—in my opinion—more of the dark atmosphere dominating Sauron's kingdom than the English "lie," and it also makes for a nice, additional rhyme with the "Thron" (English: "throne") in line four of the Ring poem. This is also an example of proper use of a translator's freedom, especially when dealing with poetry: by using a different, yet semantically very adequate, expression, and making lines four, five, and eight rhyme (whereas in the original, line four does not rhyme with lines five and eight), the translator, if anything, has actually "improved" on the original.

The German edition has all the maps, including the "A Part of the Shire" map. Note that Shire is not translated as "Gau" (which would correspond to the Dutch "gouw"), although this would be lexically and semantically the closest word to the English Shire. Obviously, the translators were sensitive enough to avoid the Nazi



connotations this word had acquired since the German Third Reich.<sup>12</sup> Instead, the slightly idyllic “Auenland,” conveying images of green pastures and rural peace, is used quite appropriately.

Finally, the German paperback does not give the “Appendices” in Part 3. For what are probably commercial reasons, these are published separately as a small volume called *Anhänge* (“Appendices”).

Like the Dutch edition (and virtually all translations into other languages I have had access to, including the French and Swedish ones), the German edition does not undertake any major changes to the original format. Both the German and the Dutch translations are largely satisfactory in transporting the atmosphere of the original and the author’s width of imagination.

In Chapter Three, we shall examine where and why the Chinese translations failed to do so, and how the—admittedly—very challenging task of rendering *Lord* into Chinese could be approached differently.

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<sup>12</sup> Tolkien himself says under the entry “Shire” in his own “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*” that “Gau seems to me suitable in German [as a translation], unless its recent use in regional reorganization under Hitler has spoilt this very old word.”

## Chapter Two

### The Philological and Mythological Background of Tolkien's Fictional Works

#### First Part: A Secondary World Created as Backdrop for Tolkien's Invented Languages and "Mythology for England"

##### 1. The Genesis and Character of the Middle-earth Books

In his foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien says:

This tale grew in telling, until it became a history of the Great War of the Ring and included many glimpses of the yet more ancient history that preceded it. It was begun soon after *The Hobbit* was written and before its publication in 1937; but I did not go on with this sequel, for I wished first to complete and set in order the mythology and legends of the Elder Days [i.e. the mythological setup related in *The Silmarillion*], which had then been taking shape for some years. I desired to do this for my own satisfaction, and I had little hope that other people would be interested in this work [published after Tolkien's death by his son Christopher Tolkien as *The Silmarillion*], especially since it was primarily linguistic in inspiration in order to provide the necessary background of "history" for the Elvish tongues.

When those whose advice and opinion I sought corrected *little hope* to *no hope*, I went back to the sequel, encouraged by requests from readers for more information concerning hobbits and their adventures. But the story was drawn irresistibly to the older world, and became an account, as it were, of its end and passing away before its beginning and middle had been told. The process had begun in the writing of *The Hobbit*, in which there were already some references to the older matter: Elrond, Gondolin, the High-Elves, and the orcs, as well as

glimpses that had arisen unbidden of things higher or deeper or darker than its surface: Durin, Moria, Gandalf, the Necromancer, the Ring. The discovery of the significance of these glimpses and of their relation to the ancient histories [of Middle-earth] revealed the third Age and its culmination in the War of the Ring. (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 9)

Here, in a nutshell, the author affords us an insight into the genesis of, and interrelations between, his three major works of fiction. This section from the “Foreword” reveals that one of his main concerns was to get the stories published that tell of the creation of Arda, and of the First Age of Middle-earth. (In the end, Tolkien would not live to see their publication as *The Silmarillion*.) Tolkien also admits that he had no fixed outline for the *plot*, and certainly no “allegorical concepts” (as some critics would later like to claim), for the story “grew in telling.” From Carpenter’s *Biography* and Crabbe’s *J.R.R. Tolkien* the reader can obtain further information on a writing process in which the author himself was never sure where the story line would lead him next. Tolkien’s tone also suggests that he is eager, even in this “Foreword,” to maintain the fiction that he is only a historian, a chronologer, who is *handing down* a story, not *inventing* one (see for example the last sentence of the long quotation above).

For our purposes it may suffice to state that the three works form one larger unit, a chronology spanning the entire history of Middle-earth.

This is not to say that the books are identical or even similar on counts of tone, style, and atmosphere: they are not. What binds them together is the larger concept of creating a mythology for England<sup>13</sup> through the author’s considerable powers as a story-teller, and drawing upon medieval language and literary work, as well as Norse and Celtic languages and mythologies.<sup>14</sup>

*The Silmarillion* is clearly for adults, and with its overwhelming number of names and invented languages, it disclosed Tolkien’s role as a philosopher of language, who was “always primarily interested in the aesthetic rather than the

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<sup>13</sup> Tolkien had hinted this as early as his undergraduate days when he wrote of the Finnish *Kalevala*: “I would that we had more of it left—something of the same sort that belonged to the English” (Carpenter, *Biography* 97).

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed discussion of some of the sources for Tolkien’s imaginative fiction, and his invented languages, see Chance, *The Lord of the Rings*, 13-17.

functional aspects of language” (Tolkien, *Letters* 231).<sup>15</sup> Here, even more maybe than in *Lord*, Tolkien realized his three major intentions as a writer: creating a background for his invented languages, creating a mythology for England, and relating (in prose, though he would rather have done it in verse) his own favorite epic stories and romances, many of which were conceived as early as 1917.<sup>16</sup>

*The Hobbit* is basically a children’s book, though towards the end of the story its tone becomes more “adult” as the story itself turns more complicated and its contents more serious. This happened during the writing process, for like *Lord*, this story grew in telling, and the author became more and more aware of how his children’s story became part of his larger mythological concept, and turned into an account of historic events in Middle-earth some six decades before the War of the Ring.

Tolkien himself was aware that *The Lord of the Rings* was less easy to categorize as “adult” or “children’s literature,” and it is probably part of the book’s lasting success that it appeals to all ages. In tone and style, it is somewhat “in between” the other two books. *Lord* and *The Hobbit* are surely not “the same story told twice,” as Helms suggests.<sup>17</sup>

Dieter Petzold in *Fantasy Literature* gives a rather insightful description of the relationship between Tolkien’s three major fictional works. Helms states that “the real importance of *The Hobbit* is what the creator learned in its writing. As Bilbo Baggins grew up, so did Tolkien’s imagination” (*Tolkien’s World* 53). Petzold observed quite accurately that it was not so much the relation between *The Hobbit* and *Lord* that deserves attention, but that between *The Silmarillion* and *The Hobbit*. It was not that Tolkien’s imagination needed “to grow up,” or that he had to learn to handle serious topics and moral depth (the stories in *The Silmarillion*, written long before *The Hobbit*, abound in these), what Tolkien really learned in writing *The Hobbit* was to introduce comical and realistic elements into the overly serious and profound fantasy world of

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<sup>15</sup> For more on Tolkien’s “aesthetic philology,” I highly recommend Verlyn Flieger’s *A Question of Time: Tolkien’s Road to Faerie*. On the names in *The Silmarillion*, the myth of language, and Tolkien’s sheer joy in “playing with language,” see also Kreeft, “The Wonder of the Silmarillion,” and Pesch, “J.R.R. Tolkien’s linguistische Ästhetik.”

<sup>16</sup> Many versed versions of the stories in *The Silmarillion* were later published, among others in *The Book of Lost Tales, Part 1* and *Part 2*, and in *The Lays of Beleriand*.

<sup>17</sup> “. . . one says without exaggeration that *The Lord of the Rings* is *The Hobbit* writ large” (Helms, *Tolkien’s World* 21). Helms even claims that “*The Hobbit* . . . was aimed wrong, childish” (19).

Middle-earth as it is outlined in *The Silmarillion* (*Fantasy Literature* 45-48).<sup>18</sup> In doing so, Tolkien wrote *Lord*, a story that breaks away from the pompous emotionalism of his early work, and creates a modern hero in the figure of Frodo.

Finally, I would like to share with the reader what I feel is a very adequate way of illustrating the relationship between *The Hobbit* and *Lord*. It is certainly important for the translator to be aware of the differences in tone and scope in these two works.

Paul Kocher, while admitting that the basic plot structure of the two is astonishingly similar,<sup>19</sup> goes on to say that “if *The Hobbit* is a quarry, it is one in which the blocks of stone lie scattered about in a much looser and less imposing pattern than that in which the epic [*Lord*] assembles those it chooses to borrow” (Kocher, *Master of Middle-earth* 32). Indeed, there are quite a few characters, places, and objects that *The Hobbit* and *Lord* share (e.g. Gandalf, the Wizard, Gollum, Bilbo, Elrond, Hobbiton, the Ring). Yet the quality and stature of these “borrowed” elements differs amazingly between the two works. Kocher remarks correctly:

Bilbo’s [main character of *The Hobbit*] enemies are serial, not united under any paragon of evil, as is to happen in the epic. *The Hobbit*’s trolls, goblins (orcs), spiders, and dragon know nothing of one another and are all acting on their own. They are certainly not shown to be servants of the nameless and nebulous Necromancer [later to “become” Sauron] whose only function in the story is to cause Gandalf to leave Bilbo and company to confront existing perils unaided for a time. Nor . . . is that magician linked in any way with the Ring, which comes out of nowhere and belongs to no one. Also, as there is no alliance on behalf of evil, so there is none against it. Dwarves, elves, and men act mainly for their selfish interests, often at cross-purposes, until a coalition is forced upon them by a goblin army hostile to all at the very end. Even then the issue is relatively localized and not worldwide in its ramifications [as the destruction of the Ring is in *Lord*].

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<sup>18</sup> The quoted passage is: “. . . nicht größeren Ernst und moralische Tiefe mußte Tolkien lernen, sondern das Einbringen komisch-realistischer Elemente in seine allzu ernsthafte und tiefgründige Phantasiewelt.”

<sup>19</sup> This statement could also be challenged, considering that the interlace structure of the *Lord* (reminiscent of the entrelacement employed in medieval works like the *Prose Lancelot*) is far more

Some of the places later to be brilliantly visualized in the epic appear for the first time in *The Hobbit*, but its geography tends to be rudimentary and uncertain and is not given a continental context. Bilbo's home is simply The Hill. No Shire and no Hobbit society surround it. Rivendell is a valley where the last homely house stands, hardly described at all and not resembling the splendidly civilized place it is to be. Bilbo's journey leads him north-eastward to Erebor, without the slightest indication that the broad cities of Gondor, capitals of the West, lies facing Mordor to the south . . . . In fact, . . . Bilbo's world is never called Middle-earth . . . . Tolkien has not yet learned to take the pains he later takes to make us accept this world as our own planet Earth and the events of his story as a portion of Earth's distant prehistory.

The case is the same for the individual characters and the races in *The Hobbit* who will reappear in *The Lord of the Rings*. As the Necromancer of *The Hobbit* is not yet Sauron, Gandalf is not yet Gandalf. The wizard of the child's story who "never minded explaining his cleverness more than once," who is "dreadfully afraid" of the wargs, who tricks Beorn into accepting thirteen unwanted dwarves into his house, and the like, needs nothing short of a total literary resurrection to become the messenger sent by the Valar to rally the West against Sauron . . . . Even Elrond the wise is a much lesser digit who must be raised to a considerably higher power. And the elves of Rivendell and Mirkwood! No self-respecting elf in the epic would perpetrate the nonsense they sing in *The Hobbit*, or dance and carol on midsummer eve, do disappearing acts at the approach of travellers in the forest, and the like, as if they were the tiny nonentities of our debased folklore, as Tolkien everywhere else deplores it. (Kocher 32-33)

Indeed, "a total literary resurrection" of the elements of *The Hobbit* is needed to fit the more serious tone of *Lord*. And yet, compared with *The Silmarillion* on the other extreme, *Lord* abounds in comic relief, provided mainly by the Hobbits, of course.<sup>20</sup>

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complex than the simple there-and-back-again pattern of *The Hobbit*.

<sup>20</sup> They are, together with the immortal elves, the author's favorite creation. "I am in fact a hobbit," he once wrote, "in all but size. I like gardens, trees, and unmechanized farmlands; I smoke a pipe, and like

One might add that Gollum, the fallen Hobbit, also undergoes a major transformation from *The Hobbit* to *Lord*. A nasty, slimy, and rather anonymous creature in the children's book, he becomes one of the central figures of *Lord*, essential to the plot and fascinating because of his split personality. In a way, he is the most tragic character in the epic.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Pitfalls for the Translator

Complex and inventive as the stories' backgrounds are, any successful attempt to translate any of Tolkien's fictional works has to be preceded by a thorough study of Tolkien's mythology. In a letter to the Houghton Mifflin Co., Tolkien himself declared that "the invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were rather made to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. I should have preferred to write in 'Elvish'" (*Letters* 219). "Stories" here refers mainly to the *Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Therefore, numerous passages will be unintelligible (and thus hard or impossible to translate) if one does not gain a deeper understanding of the background mythology and Tolkien's languages before venturing a translation of the books—something the translators of the existing Chinese translations obviously failed to do.

### The Languages

Tolkien's fourteen self-invented languages, most importantly the two Elvish tongues Quenya and Sindarin, should also be studied to some extent by a translator, as well as Tolkien's own helpful (and quite comprehensive) guide for would-be translators—even though Tolkien was certainly not thinking so much about Chinese, as about other European languages. An important tool is also the Pronunciation and Spelling Guide given as part of the "Appendices" of *The Return of the King* (493). Ruth S. Noel has devoted a whole book on the subject, her *The Languages of Tolkien's Middle-earth* is a terse guide to the basics not to be missed by the responsible translator.

An at least superficial understanding of Tolkien's invented languages is

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good plain food (unrefrigerated)..."(Carpenter, *Biography* 179).

<sup>21</sup> For more on Gollum, see Christensen, "Gollum's Character Transformation in *The Hobbit*," and Perkins and Hill, "The Corruption of Power."

necessary, because many names of places, persons, and things are given in these languages (again, mainly Quenya, more classical and spoken by the Elves in the Undying Lands, and Sindarin, spoken by those Elves who stayed behind in Middle-earth); and instead of always transliterating these proper nouns, with a little understanding of these tongues, a real translation (by sense) may sometimes be possible.

While it is difficult, and not desirable, to give a rigid standard for deciding when to use semantic translation (意譯), and when transliteration (音譯), a translator should still develop his own set of linguistic and aesthetic criteria to help him make the often difficult choice between the two. For translations of foreign proper names into Chinese, the current custom is to prefer a translation by sense wherever possible where the original word does have a distinct meaning, as in the case of 白宮 for “White House.” In other cases, translation by sound is the usual option.

Let us look at the word “Orcs” to illustrate my point. An evil race, they are the servants and foot soldiers of Sauron. Bred first by Morgoth in mockery of Elves,<sup>22</sup> they are described as fierce worriers, tending to be short, squat, and bow-legged, with long arms, dark faces, squinty eyes, and long fangs.

萬象 decided to use the expression 妖怪 for “Orc,” which would not be all that bad, except for the fact that Tolkien’s Middle-earth is peopled with many creatures that one could rightfully describe as 妖怪. I personally prefer 聯經’s 奧克魔怪, which is actually a mixture of semantic translation and transliteration—not a bad solution in some cases. In *The Two Towers* then, the Uruk-hai appear on the scene, a special race of Orks bred by Sauron. 聯經 sticks to its original path, rendering it as 烏路克魔怪. 萬象 came up with 烏魯凱人, which is misleading, because the Uruk-hai are not a race of Man, but monsters similar to the Orks. It is thus appropriate to give both races similar names. This only to hint some of the problems involved in 意譯 versus 音譯.

Where transliteration is required, it is particularly important to consult the pronunciation guides, for vowels and consonants in, let’s say, Sindarin or Black Speech are by no means always articulated the same as in English. The “i” in Westron and Sindarin, for example, is always pronounced like in German (or in the English word “machine”), and never like in the English word “side.” Thus, 萬象’s rendering

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<sup>22</sup> In fact, Melkor used Elves he had captured, and corrupted them in his dungeons, to create Orcs.



of “Rivendell” as 利文德爾, used consistently in *The Hobbit* and *Lord*, seems more appropriate than the 萊文戴爾 used by 聯經 in its translation of *The Hobbit*.

In *Lord*, though, 聯經 takes a different approach, rendering “Rivendell” as 裂谷—which is a Chinese rendering of Imladris (the Sindarin [Elvish] name for Rivendell), which literally means “deep-dale-cleft.” This is something I noticed in both editions: often the translators avoid dealing with the difficulties that arise from Middle-earth’s multi-lingual environment, namely that many places, persons, and things have different names in the languages of different peoples, and are thus referred to in different terms depending on who is speaking. While it is true that Imladris, Rivendell, and “The Last Homely House” all refer to roughly the same thing—it would still be worth the trouble to find different Chinese rendering’s for all these terms, and not just settle for one translation and just stick with it, arguing that “it stands for the same place anyway!” In doing so, the translators have failed to convey the linguistic variety of the original, and robbed the Chinese reader of the opportunity to fully appreciate the author’s inventiveness and attention to detail.

By the way, “Rivendell” is a Westron expression. As stated elsewhere, Westron, also known as Common Speech, was a lingua franca used by all peoples of Middle-earth, even understood and spoken by the servants of Sauron. It was also the native language at the end of the Third Age of all those Men and Hobbits living in the old areas of Gondor and Arnor (the old Numenorean Kingdoms), and of the inhabitants of the west bank of the River Anduin, with the exception of the Woses, the Dunlendings, and the Rohirrim.

Most “non-English” expressions in *Lord* are either unassimilated, genuine Westron terms, or Sindarin. Some are Quenya. These Elven languages were “no arbitrary gibberish but really possible tongues with consistent roots, sound laws, and inflexions, into which he [Tolkien] poured all his imaginative and philological powers” (“Obituary”). Furthermore, they were both derived from a “proto-Elvish” language, again in a linguistically realistic manner. Sindarin was the “everyday” Elvish language while Quenya was a kind of “Elf-Latin.” Therefore, most Elvish words in *the Lord of the Rings* were Sindarin, with notable exceptions, e.g. Galadriel’s lament.

Tolkien’s obsession with providing a “realistic” linguistic background for the epic is also founded in his fiction that he was the “translator” of *Lord* from the *Red*

*Book of Westmarch*, written in Westron (the Hobbits' language). Tolkien "translated" Westron into English, which included "rendering" all the Common Speech (Westron) place names into the equivalent English place names. The object of this exercise was to produce the following effect: names in the Common Speech (which were familiar to the Hobbits) were usually "rendered" into English (in which form they would be familiar to the English-speaking readers); names in other languages (usually Sindarin) were "left alone," and thus were equally unfamiliar to the Hobbits and to us. Since the story was told largely from the Hobbits' point of view, that the English reader should share their linguistic experience was a desirable result (especially for Tolkien, who was of course unusually sensitive to such matter).

In portraying the linguistic landscape of Middle-earth Tolkien carried this procedure even further. For example, he "substituted" Anglo-Saxon for Rohirric. The rationale was that the Hobbits' dialect of Westron was distantly related to Rohirric; therefore, when Hobbits heard Rohirric they recognized many words, but the language nevertheless remained just beyond understanding.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Tolkien attempted to further "duplicate" Hobbit linguistic perceptions by "substituting" that language of our world (Anglo-Saxon) which has—more or less—the same relation to English that Rohirric had to the Hobbit version of Westron.

Though there are many other nuances in the intricate linguistic web Tolkien devised, always in the interest of "reproducing" the linguistic map of Middle-earth in a way that could be easily assimilated by modern English-speaking readers, this has to suffice to give the reader an idea of the immense task facing a Chinese translator venturing to appropriately reflect this linguistic background in his rendering of *Lord*.

As I have indicated elsewhere, a good rule of thumb would be to translate by meaning all meaningful English (Westron, the Hobbit's tongue) names of places, peoples, person, and things, and to transliterate all names given in Tolkien's invented languages (including Sindarin, Quenya, Black Speech, the Dwarf language, Entish, and so on).

## **The Plot**

First it is necessary to say a few things about the plot structure of *Lord*.

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<sup>23</sup> See also Chapter 3 of *The Two Towers* in which the Hobbit Merry listens to Rohirric: "It was a language in which there seemed to be many words he knew, . . . yet he could not piece the words together" (*The Two Towers* 72).

As Richard C. West has pointed out, the book employs a story line (or rather, lines) very similar to medieval interlace structures:

Interlace . . . seeks to mirror the perception of the flux of events in the world around us, where everything is happening at once. Its narrative line is digressive and cluttered, dividing our attention among an indefinite number of events, characters, and themes, any one of which may dominate at any given time, and is often indifferent to cause and effect relationships. The paths of the characters cross, diverge, and recross, and the story passes from one to another and then another but does not follow a single line. Also, the narrator implies that there are innumerable events that he has not had time to tell us about; moreover, no attempt is made to provide a clear-cut beginning or end to the story. We feel that we have interrupted the chaotic activity of the world at a certain point and followed a selection from it for a time, and that after we leave, it continues on its own random path. The author, or someone else, may perhaps take up the threads of the story again later and add to it at beginning, middle, or end.<sup>24</sup>

Yet the apparently casual form of the interlace is deceptive; it actually has a very subtle kind of cohesion. No part of the narrative can be removed without damage to the whole, for within any given section there are echoes of previous parts and anticipations of later ones. (“The Interlace Structure of *The Lord of the Rings* 83-84)

The above should be particularly enlightening for the translator, since not only can no part of the story be “removed” without damage to the whole: mistranslations, insufficient explanations, lack of clarity, missing unity of terms, and a general misunderstanding or unawareness of the complex plot pattern are every bit as damaging as omissions (which, sadly, also happen in the Chinese *Lord* translations). In other words, the book requires *at least one* careful reading (of all its parts!) before the actual translation work should begin. As also mentioned elsewhere, I doubt that the total of *five* translators cooking the broth of the 聯經 translation bothered to do so. Under such circumstances, almost complete failure to grasp the intertwining story

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<sup>24</sup> This is something Tolkien frequently did, as many Middle-earth stories published after his death show. Some of these stories can be read in *Unfinished Tales*, the title of which in itself suggest an interlace concept.

lines is not surprising, as is the carelessness in many details, “echoes of previous parts and anticipations of later ones,” that are actually very important for a true understanding of the story. As will be shown in Chapter 3, both Chinese translations reflect such carelessness in numerous parts of the text.

Part of the problem are the many allusions to persons and things of the past, i.e. a time before the story of *Lord*, often events and people of many ages ago. Take the White Tree of Gondor: as an investigative translator can learn from *Silmarillion*, it is one of the heirlooms the Men of Numenor had brought to Middle-earth after the sinking of their island as a punishment by Iluvatar.

The White Tree was grown from Nimloth the Fair that stood in the courts of the King at Armelos in Numenor, ere Sauron burned it; and Nimloth was in its turn descended from the Tree of Tirion, that was image of the Eldest of Trees, White Telperion, which Yavanna caused to grow in the land of the Valar. The Tree, memorial of the Eldar of the light of Valinor, was planted in Minis Ithil [in Gondor] before the house of Isildur, since he it was that saved the fruit from destruction. (*The Silmarillion* 351)

This should suffice to show that the White Tree in *Lord* is not just a meaningless prop, but one of the many entities linking *Lord* up with the vast history of Middle-earth. It is significant of the former greatness of the House of Isildur,<sup>25</sup> of which Aragorn in *Lord*, the King mentioned in the title of the last volume, and traditional-style hero of the epic, is also an offspring. The White Tree leads in a direct line back to Yavanna, the “Giver of Fruits.” She is the Valar, or angelic spirit, who is responsible for trees and plants.

The White Tree even connects to the Silmarilli, the jewels made by Feanor, most gifted of Elves, before the First Age of Middle-earth, because the White Tree is “descended” in a long line via Numenor and Tirion (Elven-city in Valinor, the Undying Lands) from the “Eldest of Trees,” the light of which was only preserved in

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<sup>25</sup> Isildur, though not in it, being an important figure for the epic: he lost the One Ring early in the Third Age, after cutting it off with Sauron’s hand at the end of the Second Age. He dies in the River Anduin, and the Ring is lost, called thereafter “Isildur’s Bane” (mentioned in an important prophetic rhyme that is quoted at the Council of Elrond in Book 2. Isildur’s was also the “sword that was broken,

the Silmarilli after the tree itself was destroyed by Morgoth. One also learns from the above quote that Sauron was around wreaking havoc in Morgoth's (the Dark Lord in the First Age of which Sauron is but a servant) place throughout the Second Age. (Morgoth was exiled into the Void after the Final Battle of the War over the Silmarilli.)

The point is: it's not just *a white tree*, it is *The White Tree of Gondor*, with its own history and significance, and that is something the translator should be aware of.

The translator should also recognize that Tolkien, in what resembles a *Rahmenerzählung* plot pattern, wrote *The Lord of the Rings* as a historian, as he often called it himself, who translated the whole story, as well as the *Hobbit*, from *The Red Book of Westmarch*, an account of the events at the end of Middle-earth's Third Age written by the Hobbit protagonists of the two books, i.e. Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam. Tolkien maintains the fiction that he found a late copy (from the Fourth Age of Middle-earth), written in Westron, and that he then went ahead and "translated" that copy into English. Another, linguistic, fiction here is thus that the English in which Tolkien's fictional books are written actually represents Westron, which at the time of the story of the War of the Ring (i.e. *The Lord of the Rings*) was the common tongue for all inter-lingual meetings between the peoples of Middle-earth, such as Elves, Dwarves, Men, Hobbits, Orcs, and Ents, and others, all of which do also speak their own tongues. These are all details to be kept in mind while rendering the book into another language.

The above may give the reader at least an idea of how full of pitfalls *Lord* is for the unsuspecting translator: as in a magic mirror, nothing is what it seems in Middle-earth; everything points to something deeper, or darker, or higher. Yet after all, we are in *Faerie*, and as a translator, we should treat this enthralling fantasy world with due respect, and with the very same attention to detail that Tolkien employed in its creation.

## Second Part: The Mythological Setup: *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*

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and then reforged for Aragorn. Indeed, virtually *everything* is interconnected in Tolkien's world.

As demonstrated in the previous section, *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings* should be considered in exactly this order, both in terms of the chronology of their creation, and in terms of the sequence of events related. For a translator of any of these three works of fantasy literature, it would be highly advisable to read all three works, or at least gain a general understanding of all of them, before he sets out on the arduous tasks of rendering them in Chinese. In doing so, the translator may acquire a deeper understanding for the author's motivation and intent, and for the tone, style, atmosphere, and interlaced mythological background of the works that together create a coherent picture of the history of Middle-earth.

To facilitate the discussion, I will now give short synopses of the contents of the three books, and give an outline of the stories which I will relate to very often in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

### ***The Silmarillion***

*The Silmarillion* provides the myth of the creation of Tolkien's world, but it is mainly an account of the Elder Days, or the First Age of Tolkien's World. It is the ancient drama to which the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* look back, and in whose events some of them, such as Elrond and Galadriel, took part.

The first part of the book is the "Ainulindale," or "Music of the Ainur." It relates how "Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Iluvatar . . . first made the Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought, and [who] were with him before aught else was made." It is a genuine "Genesis" of Arda (roughly corresponding to Middle-earth), telling how Eru makes the Ainur sing themes of music<sup>26</sup> for him. Yet the mightiest of the Ainur, Melkor, soon starts to "interweave matters of his own imagining that were not in accord with the theme of Iluvatar," and this marks the first "fall" in the history of Middle-earth. Like Milton's Archangel Lucifer, he rebels against the designs of the creator. In Tolkien's universe, *superbia* is the original sin per se.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Note that all sub-creation in Tolkien's world begins with music (not the Word as in the Bible). For Tolkien, prose was "debased" poetry, and poetry "debased" music.

<sup>27</sup> A theme that is continued in the figures of Sauron, Melkor's servant, but also in Feanor, Noldor-elf

The story continues to tell how Melkor persists in his opposition to Eru, and how Iluvatar then shows the Ainur a vision of Arda. Many of the Ainur were fascinated with that vision, and they desired to bring it into being. Iluvatar, the God of Tolkien's universe, consented, saying "Eä! Let these things Be!" Now many of the Ainur entered Eä, later known as Arda, and these were thereafter known as the Valar (Powers) who shaped the World. Their head is Manwe, Lord of the Airs and Winds, and closest to Iluvatar.

The Valar soon set out to fashion Middle-earth to Iluvatar's liking, and thus prepare it for the arrival of the "Firstborn," the immortal Elves, and the "late comers," Men, who are both called "Children of Iluvatar." Note that the Dwarves are an "unauthorized" creation by one of the Valar, Aule, who is the master of crafts and of the knowledge of substances, closely associated with metal and the earth. He is the smith of Middle-earth, creator of the Two Lamps of the Valar, the vessels of the Sun and Moon. His spouse is Yavanna, creator of the Trees of Valinor. Other important Valar include Varda, Manwe's spouse and Queen of light and stars (the "Elbereth" of *Lord*),<sup>28</sup> Ulmo, Lord of the Waters, and Orome, the Hunter who led the Elves on their Great Journey towards the West. In their undertakings, the Valar are constantly hampered by Melkor, who tries to thwart their every effort to model Arda into a "perfect domain" for the Children of Iluvatar. Tolkien's basic concept is that the Earth was "marred" from the beginning, and is thus, in a way, a "fallen" place,<sup>29</sup> that will only be restored according to Eru's original intent at the end of time.

After this creation myth follows the second part *The Silmarillion*, the "Valaquenta," or "Account of the Valar and Maiar According to the Lore of the Eldar," in which Tolkien gives an account of the Valar, and their servants, the Maiar, "other spirits whose being also began before the World, of the same order as the Valar, but of less degree" (*The Silmarillion* 33). Sauron is also a Maiar, and in the beginning is in the service of Aule, but later corrupted by Melkor and turned into a servant of evil.

The main part of *The Silmarillion* is the "Quenta Silmarillion," or "The History

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and creator of the Silmarilli, and in Saruman in *Lord*, Wizard of the same order as Gandalf, but selfish traitor to the cause of the Free Peoples.

<sup>28</sup> "Varda" is Quenya, while "Elbereth" is Sindarin.

<sup>29</sup> And yet: only where there is a fall, there is a story to tell. The biblical stories really begin with Adam

of the Simarils.” It tells of the creations of the Valar, e.g. the Two Trees of Valinor, and Morgoth’s (Melkor was given that name by Feanor when the Elf learnt of the theft of the Silmarils) persistent efforts to spoil the labors of the Valar. The Elves appear, and are led into the West, the Undying Lands, by Orome, to stay and live there with the Valar. The Vanyar, Noldor, and Teleri follow the call (and are thus known as the High-elves), but many Elves also stay in Beleriand (the part of Middle-earth, east of Belegaer, that was largely destroyed in the great battle at the end of the First Age).

Feanor, the most gifted of the Noldor (the craftsmen among the Elves) creates the three Silmarils, in which he captures the light of the Two Trees of Valinor. Later the Trees are destroyed by Melkor, and the three jewels are stolen by him. He flees the Undying Lands, and entrenches himself in Angband, his great underground fortress in the north of Beleriand, then the westernmost part of Middle-earth and location of many Elven realms.<sup>30</sup> He sets the three jewels in an iron crown he wears at all times. Against the will of the Valar, and thus becoming exiles, the Noldor return to Middle-earth, swearing to make war on Morgoth (Melkor) until they recover the Silmarils. This war becomes the central theme of the “Quenta Silmarillion.”

Many heroic deeds, often in the style of medieval romances, are recounted. Men later join the Elves in their fight against Morgoth (though some tribes are corrupted by the dark foe), and there are even a few marriages between Men and Elves. Of these unions come the Half-elves, one of them being Elrond in *Ring*. Elrond is the son of Earendil, the mariner. Earendil was an Edain, a member of one of the Three Houses of the Elf-friends helping the Elves in their war against Morgoth. Earendil married Elwing, a princess descended of Beren (a Man) and Luthien (an Elven-princess). The story of Beren and Luthien, and their temporary recovery of one of the Silmarils from Morgoth’s Iron Crown is one of the best-elaborated in the book, and part of it is given in verse.

In the end, the Valar intervene on behalf of the Elves and their friends among Men, who fight a losing battle, losing many of their bravest and most gifted in the war. The Valar do so because Earendil is sent as a messenger to the Undying Lands, sailing across the Seas to plead for help. In the War of Wrath, Morgoth is finally overthrown,

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and Eve’s expulsion from Paradise.

<sup>30</sup> The Undying Lands (Aman) lay west of Belegaer, the great sea separating Aman from Middle-earth. Beleriand was in the First Age the westernmost part of Middle-earth.



and banned into the Void. Most of Beleriand is destroyed, and sinks to the bottom of the Sea. Two of the Silmarils are lost, but one is recovered, and bound to Earendil's brow. His ship is set in the sky as a sign of hope to those oppressed by evil, and he becomes the Evening Star (corresponding to Venus).

Of his union with Elwing came Elrond and Elros. Given the choice between Elvenhood and Menhood, Elrond decides to become immortal, and thus appears both in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, two ages later. Elros, on the other hand, chooses to be mortal, and becomes the first King of the Dunedain in Numenor. Aragorn in *Lord* is a remote descendant of these Kings of Men, a fact that legitimizes his triumphant return as King of Arnor and Gondor (the reunited Dunedain Kingdom) after the defeat of Sauron.

The fourth part of the book is the "Akallabeth," or "The Downfall of Numenor." The Edain, the Houses of Men that had supported the Elves in their doomed war against Morgoth, were rewarded by the Valar for their valiance and loyalty with the large island of Numenor, situated halfway between Valinor and Middle-earth in Belegaer, the Great Sea of the West.

Here the Dunedain, as the Men of Numenor were called in Sindarin, prospered, and from here they ruled much of the lands of Middle-earth in the east, where they soon encountered opposition from Sauron. Yet Sauron was cunning enough to avoid direct confrontation with the Numenoreans at the height of their power, and instead assumed a fair disguise to win the trust of their kings, and turn them to evil. Again, the "original sin" of the Dunedain is pride, as they finally succumb to Sauron's ceaseless instigation and sail to the West to reach the Undying Lands, at that time still accessible via the Sea of a flat World. Their goal was to attain immortality, for which they had come to envy the Valar and the Elves.

Yet in doing so, they violated the Ban of the Valar, which forbade them to ever set foot on Valinor. When King Ar-Pharazon comes to the shores of the Undying Lands, the Valar laid down their government of Arda, and called on Iluvatar to deal with the matter. Iluvatar then changed the fashion of Arda, removed the Undying Lands beyond the reach of Men forever, and made Arda the spherical world as we know it today. The island of Numenor, like Atlantis, sank in what can well be compared to the biblical expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Yet a few faithful who had not participated in Ar-Pharazon's treachery escaped judgment day, and reached Middle-earth to found the Kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor, reunited at the end

of *The Lord of the Rings*.

The fifth part of *The Silmarillion*, “Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age,” is a succinct account of the events in Middle Earth in the Second and Third Age, mainly of the making of the Great Rings of Power, and the events leading up to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

### ***The Hobbit***

*The Hobbit* is a children’s book that does also appeal to adults with a taste for fantasy. As has been shown above, it introduces some of the characters and places that also appear in *Ring*, but these still lack the depth and significance they assume in the epic. The most important link to *Lord*, though, is the magic ring “won” by Bilbo from Gollum in a riddle game.<sup>31</sup>

The Hobbit Bilbo Baggins, a respectable member of his race which is known to be rather comfort-loving, provincial, and distrustful of the outside world, is talked into an adventure by the Wizard Gandalf and thirteen dwarves (led by their King-in-exile Thorin Oakenshield) trying to recover a hoard of riches which they claim as their own. The hoard is guarded by the dragon Smaug in a huge cave (built by the dwarves) in the mountain of Erebor.

The company of fifteen, with Bilbo as their reluctant companion, set out on their adventure, heading east to the Lonely Mountain. On their road, they encounter trolls, goblins, wargs, and many other perils; but they are also aided, and often rescued, by friendly creatures like Eagles, or Beorn. Help also comes from Elrond, the Half-elf residing in Rivendell.

There is one crucial episode, both in the initiation process of Bilbo, the designated “burglar” of the company, and also with regard to the book’s “sequel,” *The Lord of the Rings*: it is Bilbo’s picking up of the One Ring in the labyrinth of tunnels under the Misty Mountains, a magic ring that makes its bearer invisible. The Ring contributes much to Bilbo’s growing stature, as (in the absence of Gandalf) he slowly

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<sup>31</sup> This episode was actually largely rewritten between the first edition of *The Hobbit* in 1937 and the second edition in the 1950s, mainly to upgrade the importance of Gollum and the Ring, and thus make the story more compatible with *The Lord of the Rings*. See Christensen, “Gollum’s Character Transformation in *The Hobbit*.”

assumes the role of a leader of the company of dwarves. He rescues the dwarves from the prison of the Wood-elves, and almost single-handedly deals with Smaug once they reach the Lonely Mountain.

He manages to infuriate the dragon so much that the latter decides to leave his lair and descend on Lake-town, a settling of Men whom he suspects of being after his hoard. He gets shot by Bard, a great warrior of Men. The news of the dragon's death and the now unguarded treasure in the Lonely Mountain soon attracts the armies of the Wood-elves and the Men of Lake-town, who demand their share of the treasure from the Dwarves. Soon, though, they all find themselves pitted against the armies of Orcs and Wargs, also drawn by the dragon hoard.

In the end, Bilbo helps not only to achieve the original goal of the quest, to recover—at least a part of—the dragon hoard for the Dwarves, but also achieves heroic stature by giving away the Arkenstone, the greatest treasure of the Dwarf-kings of Erebor, and most valuable item in the whole hoard. He does so without the knowledge of Thorin Oakenshield, who would never have consented to giving away this gem handed down by his forefathers. Yet Bilbo's brave deed prevents strife and possible war between the Dwarves, Elves, and Men, and helps to forge their alliance against the approaching armies of Orcs and Wargs.

The common enemy is defeated, not the least because the Eagles come to the rescue. Bilbo returns to his Hobbit-hole with a fair share of the dragon-hoard, and lives on to become a living legend among his fellow-hobbits.

### ***The Lord of the Rings***

Although much grander in style and scope, *The Lord of the Rings* is basically a sequel to *The Hobbit*. In *The Hobbit*, the Hobbit Bilbo by chance finds the One Ring into which Sauron, the Dark Lord of Mordor, had put much of his magic power. The One Ring makes its bearer invisible, but it will also slowly corrupt him and turn him to evil if his mind is not strong enough to resist temptation. Before Bilbo finds the Ring in *The Hobbit*, it had long been in the possession of Gollum, also a Hobbit. (Gollum becomes a central figure; and he is certainly one of the most interesting, because ambivalent, characters in *The Lord of the Rings*.) Gollum is a wretched creature, already completely controlled by the Ring, lusting it forever. After Bilbo finds it in Gollum's mountain hole and takes it away, Gollum soon sets out to recover

his “precious.”<sup>32</sup>

Sauron had lost the Ring in a decisive battle at the end of the Second Age of Middle-Earth, in which he suffered defeat at the hands of Gil-galad, the Elven-king, and Elendil, the Half-elf. Yet the winners soon lost the Ring in the River Anduin, and there it was discovered centuries later by Gollum (a Hobbit turned into a creature of the night after centuries of possessing, or rather being possessed, by the Ring), who after another hundreds of years lost it to Bilbo. Bilbo met Gollum in the caves under the Misty Mountains (Middle-earth’s central mountain range) while he was temporarily separated from his companions, and by chance he also discovered the Ring (which Gollum had lost shortly before)—and kept it, not knowing then what a dangerous thing it was (see also the *Hobbit* synopsis).

By losing the one Ring, Sauron had also lost much of his magic power, for he had transferred a great part of his force into the Ring as a way of controlling the other Rings of Power (those mentioned in the Ring-poem, see *Poem 1* in the Third Part of Chapter Three of this thesis).

At the time when the story of *The Lord of the Rings* begins, though, Sauron has managed to grow again in strength, and he has bent his mind on recovering the Ring and reestablishing his dark rule over Middle-earth. Should he manage to regain the One Ring, his powers would increase manifold, and all resistance by the free peoples of Middle-earth would finally break down. Yet if the One Ring is destroyed, Sauron will be destroyed forever, since too much of his personal power has gone into that Ring. There are other magic rings, like the Three Rings of the Elves, hidden from Sauron and unsullied by him. There also are Seven Dwarf-rings, and there are Nine Rings for mortal men, which Sauron had used to enslave nine lords of mankind and turn them into his most powerful servants, the Ringwraiths, or Nazgul. These Nine are

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<sup>32</sup> Gollum in fact came into possession of the Ring by killing one of his fellow Hobbits. Later he rationalized his deed, and told everybody (and in particular *himself*) that the Ring was given to him as a birthday present. He soon started to call it “precious.” Since the wearing of the Ring made him odd and evil, he soon comes to loathe society and retreated into a mountain hole (in the Misty Mountains). There he lived for hundreds of years, as the One Ring made him immortal, fearing the light of the sun, and living on a diet of Orcs and wild animals he caught with the help of the Ring. *The Hobbit* recounts how he and Bilbo engage in a riddle-guessing game. In the end, Bilbo gets away with the One Ring in his pocket. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Bilbo gives the Ring to his nephew Frodo—and he has a hard time giving it up, because the bad influence of the Ring has worked on him, too.

sent out to look for the One Ring when the story sets out.

The only way to destroy the One Ring is to throw it into the clefts of Orodruin, or Mount Doom, in Sauron's Kingdom Mordor, where Sauron forged the Ring back in the Second Age. If that is achieved, the power of the other magic rings, mainly the Elven-rings, will also vanish, marking the conclusion of Elvish decline in Middle-earth.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo, Bilbo's nephew, is selected as the "Ring-bearer," and he sets out from his home, the Shire, first to take the Ring to the House of Elrond, the Half-elf. He arrives there with his Hobbit-friends after numerous adventures, and a council is held. It is decided that Frodo shall undertake the task of destroying the One Ring. He is supported by a mixed company, the "Fellowship of the Ring" (this is also the title of the first volume of the trilogy), made up of three other Hobbits (Sam, Merry, and Pippin), two Men (Boromir, who is the son of Denethor, the Steward of Gondor,<sup>33</sup> and Aragorn, who is the rightful, but not yet recognized king of Gondor [and the northern kingdoms of men]), one Dwarf, Gimli, one Elf, Legolas, and Gandalf, the Wizard, who is acknowledged as the leader of the Fellowship.

Near Parth Galen, a place already close to Mordor, Frodo and Sam are separated from the rest of the company, and the two of them continue on their quest to destroy the Ring. They find unlikely support from Gollum, who had been on their trail for a while, attracted by the One Ring, his "precious." Gollum promises them to lead them into Mordor on secret ways.

Meanwhile, the other members of the Fellowship are busy overthrowing Saruman, a Wizard of the same order as Gandalf, but corrupted by his lust for power and ensnared by Sauron. With the help of the Ents,<sup>34</sup> and the Riders of Rohan (an ally of Gondor), they manage to sack Saruman's stronghold Isengard. After that, they move on to support Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor, in its war against the troops of Sauron, which are led by the Lord of the Nazgul (Ringwraiths). In the battle on the Pelennor Fields just east of Minas Tirith, they claim an important victory. After that,

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<sup>33</sup> Gondor is the huge southern kingdom of men that is the main force opposed to Sauron, whose land Mordor is just east of Gondor.

<sup>34</sup> The Ents are one of Tolkien's most interesting inventions. They are a folk of tree-herds—they *are* trees, except that they have the ability to walk, think, and speak (they even have their own language). They are one of the oldest races of Middle-earth, and their task is to protect trees. (Tolkien was known

the Army of the West (the free races of Middle-earth, now led by Aragorn) marches to the Battle of Cormallen, just outside the main gate of Mordor. Their hope is to distract Sauron's attention from Frodo and Sam, who are hopefully on their way to Mount Doom to destroy the One Ring.

With the help of Gollum<sup>35</sup>, Frodo and Sam have managed to enter Mordor, and are nearing Orodruin where they are to undo the One Ring. In a dramatic finale, they accomplish their task, just when the Battle of Cormallen outside Mordor is taking an unfavorable turn for the West. In the end, it is Gollum who really "achieves" the goal of destroying the ring: at Mount Doom, the heart of Mordor and the place where the Ring was forged, he can no longer resist the temptation of the One Ring he has worn for so long. He finally gives up all pretense, bites off Frodo's finger with the Ring, and then, delirious with the "joy" of regaining his "precious," he tumbles and falls into the fiery clefts of Mount Doom, and there both he and the Ring perish.

With the undoing of the Ring, Sauron's power also crumbles, and his armies are handed a complete defeat. Aragorn is reinstalled as the King of Gondor and Arnor. Frodo and his hobbit-friends return to the Shire. They drive out Saruman, who had fled to the Shire after the sacking of Isengard to set up a dictatorial regime amongst the hobbits. A few years after he and his friends have restored peace and order in the Shire, Frodo leaves Middle-earth on a ship to the Undying Lands, together with Gandalf (the mastermind behind the West's strategy in defeating Sauron) and the remaining Elves (or Eldar) of Middle-earth.<sup>36</sup> With this, the epic, and the Third Age of Middle-earth, come to an end. The stage is set for the Fourth Age, the age of man—in a sense, our own times.

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for his love for nature, and trees in particular.)

<sup>35</sup> In fact, Gollum lusts the One Ring, carried by Frodo (and in between, by Sam), and so the wretched creature is holding a constant inner debate whether to obey Frodo (who treats him nicely), or to just kill the hobbits and grab the Ring. This inner struggle, reflected in monologues (that are really dialogues between his greedy and his more temperate self) are fascinating to the reader. He tries to get Frodo and Sam killed by leading them into the lair of Shelob, a giant spider living a labyrinth in the mountains that encircle Mordor.

<sup>36</sup> Frodo is one of the few mortals ever to be granted this privilege, normally reserved for the immortal Elves.

# Chapter Three

## Analysis of Existing Translations

### Suggestions for More Adequate Ways of Translation

#### First Part: Categories of Mistakes. Abbreviations Used

This thesis is not linguistically motivated, but grew out of a strong interest in the literary works of Professor Tolkien. My objective in writing this treatise was to show where the Chinese translations of the works have gone amiss, in the hope that a better translation can be produced at some point in the future. The ultimate goal is thus to give Chinese readers a genuine opportunity to enjoy the Middle-earth saga the way millions of other readers in many languages around the world have already done, and continue to do. In the following, I intend to show why the existing Chinese translations hardly provide such an opportunity to Taiwan readers.

My general procedure in examining the two Chinese translations of *The Lord of the Rings* was to do a thorough reading of Part One of the English original (i.e. *The Fellowship of the Ring*) in the Mandarin renderings published by 萬象 and 聯經; and a faster reading focussing on passages likely to prove problematic in the case of Parts Two and Three of the trilogy.

Since many of the most “interesting” (that is, problematic) passages in the translations tend to contain more than one kind of mistake, or inadequate expression, I have intentionally abstained from creating too many artificial categories of mistakes. I found this would destroy the natural flow of my analysis, since awkward passages are often the result of a number of correlated mistranslations and misunderstandings. Taking every single problem in a passage and treating it under a very small subcategory would often require to rip apart the original text, and destroy the larger context. Repetition would also have been a problem.

I have thus concentrated on four basic types of translation (*not* linguistic!) problems.

First, there is sheer sloppiness, a very common problem in the translations

examined here.

Second, there are the translations of proper nouns, i.e. names of persons, places, things.

Third, there are mistranslations rooted in insufficient sensitivity to the source language, i.e. misunderstanding of sentence structures, idiomatic expressions, conjunctions, parts of speech, and all other kinds of mistakes on a semantic or grammatical level. This category also includes inadequate rendering of Tolkien's use of archaic language, his use of brackets (the use of brackets has only recently become acceptable in modern Chinese), and his puns and humor.

Fourth, and of particular importance for the purposes of this thesis, are those mistakes and inconsistencies caused by a lack of understanding of the larger mythological setup behind Tolkien's whole Middle-earth saga.

These four categories are to be examined in the second part of this chapter. As I have stated above, I will examine the problematic passages largely in order of their appearance in the book, and have thus *not* given subsections in accordance with the four rough categories mentioned above. The passages examined are given "serial numbers" (in Arabic numerals) to facilitate cross-references.

Note that not all mistakes listed can or have to be examined with the same thoroughness, especially where similar problems are treated at length elsewhere, or where it is rather obvious why the translation is awkward or wrong.

I have reserved a special section to have a look at the translation of some of the poems in the trilogy, since many of them have a pivotal function within the whole plot.

Where I quote from examples, I have mostly used abbreviations for the three volumes that make up *The Lord of the Rings*. These are the references used:

L = *Lord of the Rings*

LF = *Part 1: The Fellowship of the Ring*

LT = *Part 2: The Two Towers*

LR = *Part 3 The Return of the King*

For easier reference, sometimes the book and the chapter are mentioned, too, thus "LT 20/III, 1" would mean "page 20 of *The Two Towers*/Book Three, Chapter 1."



## Second Part: Analysis of Problematic Passages in Order of Appearance in the Narration

### 1

Let us begin with the English title page of the 聯經 edition: all six volumes of this edition have as English title *The Lord of the Ring* instead of the correct version *The Lord of the Rings*. Only one “s” missing, one may argue, but it is not utterly unimportant, and was certainly intentional, that Tolkien had described Sauron, the head of the evil forces in his epic, as the Lord of the Rings, i.e. the 20 Rings of power, and not just the Lord of the One Ring that Sauron created in the fires of Mount Doom for the purpose of subduing the other major peoples. Sauron’s goal was to conquer all the free races of Middle-earth. In plain words, the *Lord of the Rings*, a history of the War of the Ring, describes how Sauron attempts to recover the One Ring of his, because he had put much of his own power into that ring, and if he could find it, and recover it, he would be strong enough again to control the other Rings, and dominate the free peoples of Middle-earth.

At the time when *Lord* sets in, Sauron had already partly succeeded in this goal, as he had used the Nine Rings to subjugate part of mankind via the Nazguls (Ringwraiths). He had also tried to ensnare the dwarves, though with less success.

The editor of the 聯經 edition was perhaps unaware of all these details, and was simply sloppy in rendering the title of the English original wrongly. Still, on the title page of the book, it certainly does not throw a good light on the publisher’s professionalism.

### 2

Another example for sloppiness (from the “Prologue” to *Lord*):

Even in ancient days, they [Hobbits] were, *as a rule*, shy of the “Big Folk,” as they call us . . . . (LF 17)

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第8頁】

在古代，他們 [Hobbits] 如同法律規定一般，害怕見到『大種人』——他們

這樣稱呼我們。

In fact, I'm not sure whether to ascribe the above mistake to simple carelessness, or maybe a lack of understanding of the idiomatic expression “as a rule,” which simply means “usually,” and in Chinese should thus be rendered as 通常 or 經常. The translator may have been slightly confused by the fact that “rule” can also mean “law,” and he was very likely not familiar with the expression “as a rule,” or he would hardly have committed such a blunder. For the Chinese reader, this passage must look awkward.

### 3

Another example (also from the “Prologue”), this time surely a mistake due to carelessness<sup>37</sup>:

Those days, The Third Age of Middle-earth, are now long past, and the shape of all lands has been changed; but *the regions in which Hobbits then lived* were doubtless the same as those in which they still linger: the North-West of the Old World, east of the Sea. (LF 19)

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 10 頁】

中原第三紀的日子已經過去很久了，所有陸地的形狀也都有所改變，但是霍比特人信仰的宗教卻無疑地一如往昔，信仰崇拜者舊世界的西北方，

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<sup>37</sup> The examples quoted are by no means “isolated events”: keep reading, and you’ll find more “along the way,” e.g. 聯盟 for “league” where it is clearly used as a measure of length (a mistake that partly occurred because the translator failed to notice that this sentence takes up the subject of the preceding paragraph): “Forty *leagues* it [the land described in the preceding paragraph, i.e. the Shire] stretched from the Far Downs to the Brandywine Bridge, and fifty from the northern moors to the marshes in the south” (LF 22). 萬象 renders this as 從狐丘原[a strange rendering for Far Downs]到白蘭地河大橋共有四十個聯盟，而自四方(for “northern”?)荒野到南方沼澤共有五十個聯盟【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 8 頁】。This reflects the general level of virtually the whole translation, and things are pretty much the same with the 聯經 version, though the problems often come in different passages. Still, examples will also be given of parts where both translations erred—though usually each in their own way.

海之東。

A reading mistake, no doubt. Yet why did the translator not hesitate when (in his translation) the topic of the sentence suddenly changes from geographical matters to religion (something of virtually no importance throughout the book)? A look at one of the maps Tolkien himself drew for the book, and which are given at the end of each English volume, could also have told him this.

聯經 has a largely correct rendering of this passage:

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第7頁】

中土地帶第三時期的那些歲月，已成了遙遠的過去，各處的地形也已改變。但是，當時霍比特族居住的那片地區，在東半球的西北部，在大海的東面，肯定就是他們至今仍逗留居住的地方。

Interesting the expression 東半球 used in the 聯經 edition: the English has only “Old World”, rendered quite faithfully by 萬象 as 舊世界. I can take a wild guess, though, how the 聯經 translators came up with 東半球. Maybe the translators actually went to the trouble of going through some secondary literature on Tolkien, specifically Karen Wynn Fonstad’s *The Atlas of Middle-earth* (I sincerely doubt that the translators read Tolkien’s *The Silmarillion*, which describes the geography of the earlier ages of Arda, Tolkien’s secondary world, though they might have had a look at the map of *The Silmarillion*). In *The Atlas of Middle-earth* there is a map that shows the state of Arda before the world was changed by Eru, the One, at the end of the second age, when men’s disobedience called for some punishment by the supreme powers.

(The background here is that mankind [here always referred to as one of the many intelligent races of Middle-earth] at the beginning of the Second Age had been given the Island Numenor as a reward for supporting the Elves in the War of the Jewels [or Silmarilli: precious stones shining with the light of two trees of Valinor, the Undying Lands where the Valar and the High Elves dwelt. The Silmarilli were made by Feanor, an outstandingly gifted Elf, and stolen by Melkor, or Morgoth, the dark foe of the Valar, and also Master of Sauron, the Dark Lord of *The Lord of the Rings*.])

against Morgoth.

Numenor was a huge island in the middle of Belegaer, the sea that separated the two main continents of Arda before the world was changed to become the spherical globe we know today. The Western Continent were the Undying Lands, or Aman [Valinor], and the Eastern Continent was Middle-earth. The important thing to note here is that by that time, Arda [which thus originally contained both the Undying Lands and Middle-earth, and only later became a synonym of sorts for Middle-earth] was conceived as *flat*, as in the medieval view of our world. There was a direct seaway from Middle-earth [and Numenor, lying west of it in the Great Ocean called Belagear] that led straight to the undying lands.

Now at the end of the Second Age, the Dunedain [i.e. the men who dwelt in Numenor, and from there ruled much of the lands of lesser men who had remained in the lands of Middle-earth east of the ocean], became proud and fearful of death<sup>38</sup>, and began to aspire to intrude into the Undying Lands, which they could see in its beauty from their ships sailing the wide seas. They were, though, not allowed to do so, since they were mortal. This was called the “Ban of the Valar”, meaning mankind, unlike the Elves, was forbidden to ever set foot on Valinor [in Tolkien’s world, man was not driven out of Paradise, but was never even allowed in]. In the end it was Sauron who instigated the Numenorans to disobey the ban and set sail to Valinor. The moment the men of Numenor set foot on the Undying lands, the Valar called on Eru to decide their fate.

Thus it happened that Eru decided to change the world, remove Aman [The Undying Lands] from Arda, and make Arda the spherical world [globe] in which we now dwell. Only Elves still could reach Aman by the direct seaway after that, for other creatures it was out of reach. Numenor sank in a turmoil of seaquakes [Atlantis-motif], and all that was left were the lands to the east of Belagear, that is Middle-earth as it still was at the time of the *Lord of the Rings*.)

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<sup>38</sup> Both the Elves and men were called Children of Iluvatar (i.e. Eru, the One), as they were created by Eru to inhabit Middle-earth. While their outward appearance and “size” was similar (which is why the translation of Elves as 小精靈 in both the 萬象 and the 聯經 edition is, to say the least, awkward. Tolkien’s elves were no Victorian flower-fairies buzzing through the air, the size of insects!), the Elves had keener senses than men and were in many ways more gifted. They did need no sleep, and, most importantly, they were immortal. While they might be killed in battle, they never aged or died of

After this long, but necessary digression, let's return to our problem, the expression 東半球 used in the 聯經 translation for "Old World". To put it simply, there never was a 東半球, because before the change of the world, Arda was flat, not a globe, so one could only speak of an "eastern continent" or maybe an "eastern half", not of an "eastern globe". And *after* the change of Arda, the Undying Lands, the huge "western continent," was removed from the "physical world," so the old east-west symmetry did no longer exist. Within the historic background of Tolkien's secondary world, the term 東半球 is thus anachronistic, even though it is probably a sign that the translators went to the trouble of sifting through the pages of at least one secondary work on the geography/history of Middle-earth.

#### 4

As the reader will notice quickly, this is one of the more painful passages in that both translations managed to cover the whole range of possible mistranslations: outright mistakes, mingled with minor inaccuracies, bad or inadequate style, confusing sentence structures, and so on.

(This passage is taken from the "Prologue" of *Lord*; it gives a short description of the land of the Hobbits, the Shire.)

*Forty leagues* it [the Shire] stretched from the *Far Downs* to the Brandywine Bridge, and *fifty* from the *northern moors* to the marshes in the south. The Hobbits named it the Shire, *as the region of authority of their Thain, and a district of well-ordered business*; and there in that pleasant corner of the world they plied their well-ordered business of living, and *they heeded less and less the outside world where dark things moved, until they came to think that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk*. They forgot *or ignored* what little they had ever known of the *Guardians*, and the labors of *those that made possible the long peace of the Shire*. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to *remember it*. (LF 22-23)

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disease. Men, on the other hand, were mortal. Death was called a "gift" from Iluvatar to mankind.

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 11 頁】

這片土地從遠丘地帶算起，到白蘭地橋為止，總共有一百二十英里；而從北部的泥炭地到南部的沼澤地，則有一百五十英里。這就是霍比特族所謂的夏爾，也就是他們的大首領行使權力的地區。在這個世界上邊緣的角落裡，他們也因應生活所需而衍生出各行各業，而他們在各行各業裡也幹得盡心盡力，久而久之，他們對於經常會出現不幸事件的外界就變得越來越漠不關心，以至於他們竟認為安寧與富足是中土地區的特殊權力，但霍比特族卻忽視了這樣一個事實：他們對自己的各位保護神了解得太少；對造就了長期安樂局面的祖先貢獻也了解得太少。事實上，他們一點也不了解，自己根本是在享受前人的餘蔭。

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 15 頁】

從狐丘原到白蘭地河大橋共有四十個聯盟，而自四方荒野到南方沼澤共有五十個聯盟。霍比特人叫它做夏爾國，具有權力的領土，及組織良好的商業區域；在世界這個令人愉悅的角落，他們有完滿的生存規則，但在他們越來越不注意這個世界之外的地方的同時，黑暗的事物正在移動著，直到他們開始注意到和平和豐富是中原規則及所有明智理性部族的權利。他們忘記了實際上對守衛這件事的所知是多麼少，同時亦忽略了那些維持夏爾國長期和平的功臣。霍比特人實際上是被保護的，但他們已經不再記得它。

Let us state first that in this paragraph, 聯經 did, all in all, a better job than 萬象. The first sentence, describing the geographic boundaries of the Shire, is clear in diction and content. It is interesting, though, that the translators bothered to convert “leagues” into (English) miles. The translators had correctly identified “league” as a measure of length, but were faced with the problem of finding a *Chinese expression* that could be understood as a measure of length immediately (i.e., without further explanations or footnotes) by the Chinese reader, while at the same time conveying how long a league really is. A look at several Chinese-English dictionaries showed that 里格 seems the most common expression used for “league,” but a few quick “interviews” with Mandarin native speakers also showed that 里格 is by no means a

commonly understood word, not to mention that nobody could say how long a league is, even approximately.

In light of these circumstances, 聯經 was probably not wrong in converting “40 leagues” correctly into 120 miles, and “50 leagues” into 150 miles. Still, “league” is the older measure of length, out of use now in England, which gives it an archaic flavor. This archaic effect was clearly what the author intended, and it is thus still a pity that it seemed impossible for 聯經 to preserve that effect better in their rendering. Even so, they wisely abstained from converting “leagues” into kilometers—that would have been completely out of line, and given the whole sequence a much too modern flavor. “Miles” are for the Chinese reader probably roughly as “exotic” as “leagues” for the English reader, since China directly adopted the metric system after abandoning its own traditional measures of length. So, let us give 聯經 credit for choosing 英里 instead of 公里: 英里 should be “exotic” enough in this context.<sup>39</sup>

As for 萬象, the rendering of “leagues” as 聯盟 is of course totally wrong (and strangely unmotivated in this context, where the author clearly talks of geographic distances), and since I have also commented on this elsewhere, no more of it here.

I have to point out, though, that 萬象’s 狐丘原 for “Far Downs” and its 四方荒野 for “northern moors” are somewhat mysterious to me—聯經 has 遠丘（地帶） for “Far Downs,” which is acceptable, though its 北部的泥炭地 for “northern” moors seems off the mark. Why not use 荒野 for “moors,” as 萬象 did? (Yet 萬象 spoiled its rendering of that term by using 四方 for “northern.” This could, of course, also be a typographical error.)

The next major problem is the translation of “Thain.” From the original it is clear that the “Thain” is some kind of leader of the Hobbits. (He is, in fact, the nominal ruler of the Shire since the end of the North-kingdom of the Dunedain,<sup>40</sup> the master of the shire-moot and captain of the Hobbitry-in-arms.) The 聯經 translation is thus correct, though one might have wanted the word “Thain” to be given in a phonetic rendering: in the translation as it is now, we only have a 大首領, which

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<sup>39</sup> The translators could have considered to use the Chinese 華里 (about 500m), which would have the advantage of retaining some of the original’s archaic flavor. One league would (roughly) correspond to between nine and ten 里, since one league is about three miles, and one mile about 1.6km.

<sup>40</sup> See the background information given under *Poem 2* in the Third Part of this chapter.

sounds rather unspecific, and fails to convey the special charm that Tolkien's invented names (many of them actually borrowed from Old English, or Nordic and Celtic languages) work on the English reader.

Now a look at 萬象. Sentence structure! If 霍比特人叫它做夏爾國 sounds weird already, especially on the heels of the appalling 聯盟, then the translators really have to be reprimanded for simply slipping the “Thain,” and creating a false impression of smoothness by giving 具有權力的領土 as a nearer description of 夏爾國.<sup>41</sup> Yet the English does *not* say “a region with authority” (note that it is “*the*” region in English, and “of [the] authority,” both indications that a nearer description *must* follow: the authority of what or who?), nor does it say “a region where authority is held”—what on earth would that mean anyway? And what is 具有權力的領土 supposed to mean to the Chinese reader? All this could have been avoided by simply translating the “Thain,” instead of omitting him completely.

Things get worse from here. 組織良好的商業區域 in the 萬象 translations is meant as translation of “a district of well-ordered business,” and that strikes me as too “modern” in tone for the pre-industrial Shire described by Tolkien. Note that 萬象 tried to retain the structure of the long English sentence that begins with “The Hobbits named it the Shire,” and ends with “the right of all sensible folk,” but the translators obviously had great problems in getting the sentence structure right, and also in correctly identifying parts of speech, with the result that the meaning is completely distorted.

Similarly, look at “...they heeded less and less the world outside where dark things moved, until *they came to think* that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk.” 萬象 renders this as 在他們越來越不注意這個世界之外的地方的同時，黑暗的事物正在移動著，直到他們開始注意到和平和豐富是中原規則及所有明智理性部族的權利。

The biggest blunder here is probably the translation of the expression “come to think” as 開始注意到: while the English phrase implies that “somebody starts to *erroneously* believe something (to be true),” the Chinese (開始) 注意到 does not have

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<sup>41</sup> By the way, I prefer 夏爾國 to 聯經's 夏爾, because it makes identification of “*The Shire*” as a *country* easier for the reader, who, more likely than not, has a hard time keeping track of Tolkien's many



such a connotation, but rather means *exactly the opposite*: that somebody (finally) starts to recognize something as a fact (likely a condition that has existed for quite some time). Thus, while the English clearly states that “peace and plenty” were *not* “the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk,”<sup>42</sup> and were only *wrongly perceived* as such by the Hobbits, the Chinese says that the Hobbits after a long period of time at last *correctly perceived* “peace and plenty” as “the rule in Middle-earth,” and so on.

This long sentence posed further problems for 萬象. First, “the world outside” means 夏爾國以外的世界, or simply 外界, as 聯經 has it, not 這個世界之外!

Then, “dark things” actually means the Ringwraiths, and others of Sauron’s servants, and should thus not be literally translated as 事物. 東西 also does not seem to be a good solution, while 聯經’s 經常會出現不幸事件的外界 for “the world outside where dark things moved” is a somewhat *too* free rendering. Maybe 惡魔 or 敵人, in connection with an expression like 蠢蠢欲動 would do a better job here.

I cannot say that I particularly like 完滿的生存規則 for “plied their well-ordered business of living” very much—and this brings us to another important problem in this sentence: Tolkien uses a parallel construction here, or rather, he intentionally repeats the a phrase: “The Hobbits named it the Shire, as the region of authority of their Thain, and a district of *well-ordered business*; and there in that pleasant corner of the world they plied their *well-ordered business* of living . . . .” I think, this repetition should be preserved in the translation, since it stresses the Hobbits preference for a predictable, organized way of living, and emphasizes one of their basic traits, i.e. they are “creatures of habit” who do not like surprises. They are quite “bourgeois,” if you like.

Yet 萬象 utterly failed to retain this repetition, i.e. the translator rendered the phrase differently in the subsequent clauses quoted above. We have 組織良好的商業區域 and 完滿的生存規則 (whatever that is), and both expressions are not only unsatisfactory *in themselves*, they also do not sufficiently reflect the original’s emphasis on the Hobbit’s well-organized, “bourgeois” lifestyle.

聯經 *did* attempt to convey the original’s effect, giving 各行各業 twice for

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invented names, anyway.

“well-ordered business,” yet the translation of the two clauses on the whole looks rather wordy, and smacks of over-translation: 他們也因應生活所需而衍生出各行各業，而他們在各行各業裡也幹得盡心盡力。 Still, I would prefer this to the 萬象 rendering.

Both Chinese translations are guilty of under-translation a little further down in the paragraph, as both failed to render “or ignored” in the sentence “They forgot *or ignored* what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire.” Or rather, 萬象 *does have* the “ignored” in the sentence 同時亦忽略了那些維持夏爾國長期和平的功臣, but this is different from the original structure where both “forgot” and “ignored” refer to *both* the “Guardians” *and* “the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire.”

Then, both translators had problems with “(They forgot or ignored) what little they had ever known of” (which of course also refers to both the “Guardians” and “the labours...”). This means roughly: 霍比特人對這兩件事情本來就了解的很少，後來他們漸漸地連這些很有限的知識都遺忘掉了，或是忽略了。 Both translations fail to get this meaning across: 萬象’s 忘記了實際上對守衛這件事的所知是多麼少<sup>42</sup> is very different from “forgot (or ignored) what little they had ever known of,” and so is 聯經’s 霍比特族卻忽視了這樣一個事實：他們對自己的各位保護神了解得太少；對造就了長期安樂局面的祖先貢獻也了解得太少。 The latter completely rips apart the original sentence structure. This in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, and sometimes unavoidable in translation, *if* it serves to produce a clearer rendering of the original’s meaning and style. Here it does not have that effect. For all its wordiness, the 聯經 version gives a distorted impression of what the original conveys.

By the way, the above problems very likely arise in part from the fact that the translators failed to appreciate the tense of “had (ever) known”: this is past perfect, not present tense, as both the 聯經 and the 萬象 translations suggest.

Yet these are not the only problems in this sentence. Who are the “Guardians”

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<sup>42</sup> Note that 聯經 for no apparent reason completely omitted the phrase “of all sensible folk.”

<sup>43</sup> Retranslated into English, this would be something like: “They forgot *how* little they knew of...,” and this is subtly, yet decisively, distinct from “They forgot *what* little they knew of...” It’s the seemingly “small” things that cause problems, here the difference between “what” and “how.”

and who are those “that made possible the long peace of the Shire”? The awkward translations here fall again in the category of mistakes caused by an apparent lack of background information.

Mark first that “Guardians” is spelled with a capital “G,” a clear indication that this term refers to a specific group of people. In fact, both “Guardians” and “those that made possible the long peace of the Shire” in all likelihood refer to the Dunedain of the North, in particular the Rangers who hunted down Sauron’s creatures in the wild lands surrounding the Shire after the fall of the North-kingdom. (For detailed information on this subject, see the Third Part of this chapter, and there in particular the section *Poem 2*.) I think some awareness of this background knowledge could well have helped to avoid clumsy renderings like 守衛這件事（萬象），or 自己的各位保護神（聯經）.

聯經, while recognizing “Guardians” as a noun with a specific meaning, takes rather great liberties in describing them as 保護神. Who says they are some kind of gods? And why 自己的各位（保護神）? All this looks very much like an attempt to Sinicize this passage by using concepts familiar to the average Taiwan reader, but at what cost? As explained, the “Guardians” are definitely no gods, but humans of flesh and blood. 聯經 makes them look like idols revered in some temple, or at home in some 靈位. This impression is deepened when 聯經 describes “those that made possible the long peace of the Shire” as 祖先, this also being clearly a thoroughly Chinese concept.

The 聯經 version says that the Hobbits knew too little about 祖先貢獻 (an awkward phrase that would at least require a 的 to link the two nouns, but since there is already one 的 ahead of the whole phrase, the translators probably felt that adding another one would look even more “maladroit”), and it concludes the whole paragraph with the expression 他們一點也不了解，自己根本是在享受前人的餘蔭, emphasizing again that whatever the “Guardians” and others did happened in the past, while it becomes very clear later in the book that the efforts of these “protectors” continue throughout the whole story, i.e. the “presence.” Also, the whole sentence is a very free rendering for “They were, in fact, sheltered, but had ceased to remember it.”

In the last sentence, 萬象 sticks very close to the sentence structure of the original, which is basically not a bad thing here, but for the very last word, 它. Is it

really necessary to point out that the “it” in “ceased to remember it” is a function word(虛詞), necessitated solely by the English grammar? Of course, it refers back to “being sheltered,” but I think anybody would agree that there are few situations where in Chinese it deserves to be rendered at all—and if it cannot be avoided, then certainly 它 is often not the best solution. Certainly, 不再記得這件事 would be much better here.

## 5

This is an example from the first chapter of Book One of *Lord*. This chapter is given fully in my own translation in the Appendix of this thesis.

(The scene is in *The Ivy Bush*, a small inn near Bilbo’s home, where the Gaffer, father of Sam Gamgee [Frodo’s servant and faithful companion later in the story] and authority on local gossip, is sharing his knowledge about old Bilbo and his nephew Frodo with a curious audience. Bilbo and Frodo are soon to celebrate their birthdays [both on September 22] with a grand party.)

“A very *nice well-spoken gentlehobbit* is Mr. Bilbo, as I’ve always said,” the Gaffer *declared*. With perfect truth: for Bilbo was very polite to him, calling him ‘Master Hamfast’, and consulting him constantly upon the growing of vegetables—in the matter of ‘*roots*’, especially potatoes, the Gaffer was *recognized* as the leading authority by all in the neighborhood (*including himself*). (LF 41)

### 【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 35 頁】

阿鄉老頭一本正經地宣佈：「我一向都說，畢爾波先生是位霍比特族紳士，他溫文有禮，談吐風雅。」這點說得一點都沒錯，因為畢爾波對他是客客氣氣的，稱他為「漢姆法斯特師傅」，而且常在種植蔬菜方面請教他——問的主要是有關「根」的問題，特別是土豆的「根」。因為包括阿鄉老頭在內，附近一帶的霍比特族都以為他是這方面的權威。

### 【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 43—44 頁】

「比爾波先生是一位說話和氣的紳士，我總是這樣講。」老爺子說。這話可是千真萬確——因為比爾博對他總是非常有禮貌，稱他為「哈姆法斯特先生」，而且經常向他請教蔬菜栽培的問題——關於「塊根類」作物，特別是關於馬鈴薯，他是這方面最高的權威：這是鄰近一帶街坊一致公認的。

The above passage illustrates very nicely how the 聯經 version tends to show a worrisome degree of insensitivity to the semantic subtleties (though mostly by no means overwhelmingly difficult or complicated) of the original, and thus ends up with a text that, besides containing numerous big blunders, also suffers considerably from a series of small inaccuracies and inconsistencies, adding up to thoroughly distort the literary effect of the original.

It all begins with an over-translation: where does 聯經 get its 一本正經 from? There is nothing in the original to suggest such a rendering. The term 宣佈 also sounds slightly “official.” 宣稱 may be better, or, like 萬象, just 說. On the whole, 萬象’s translation of the first sentence is much smoother, mostly because the translator abstained from adding anything. 萬象, though by no means giving a perfect rendering, gains many points by this “no frills”-approach. Let us keep in mind that *Lord* is a classic of *popular* fiction, not exactly what you would call a work of high literature—nothing in the line of a James Joyce or a William Faulkner, for example. With 聯經, one often gets the uncomfortable feeling that the translators felt obliged to “rev up” Tolkien’s work by employing what they felt to be a “high style” enriched with Chinese proverbs (成語) and other linguistic gimmicks. A closer reading of the original would have been more beneficial, and would have spared the reader many unnecessary over-translations.

Another example for over-translation can, by the way, be found in the above 聯經 passage: The 溫文有禮, 談吐風雅 is too much in my opinion for the simple “nice, well-spoken” of the original. I prefer 萬象’s 說話和氣.

Where 聯經 does too much, 萬象 sometimes does *too little*. A closer look at the translation reveals that 萬象 completely skipped the remark “including himself” that comes in brackets at the end of the paragraph. Either the translator missed that sentence, or he forgot to translate it—or he did not know how to accommodate it in

his translation, and thus left it out on purpose. Or maybe he deemed it unimportant? Whatever the reason, there is no excuse for this kind of omission.

The fact of the matter is that Tolkien often uses brackets to provide additional information, often in a humorous tone. So on the first page where he tells us about Bilbo: “. . . it seemed unfair that anyone should possess (apparently) perpetual youth as well as (reputedly) inexhaustible wealth” (LF 39). Many more passages could be quoted, and the reader may look at my own translation of the first two *Lord* chapters to get an idea how I would deal with Tolkien’s extensive use of brackets. For our purposes here it is enough to state that in the original, the addition of “including himself” in brackets at the end of the sentence has definitely a humorous undertone, suggesting that the Gaffer is quite proud of his own expertise, and does not mind everybody knowing about it. By leaving out this humorous addition, the translator significantly alters the effect of the text on the reader, robbing him of a chance to enjoy Tolkien’s little puns and japes.

聯經 *did* translate the remark in brackets, leaving the brackets out and integrating the “including himself” into the sentence. While this makes for a correct translation on a strictly semantic level, it entirely fails to convey the humorous connotations of the original, with the tone of the sentence becoming very matter-of-fact. I would have preferred to keep the brackets (see Appendix).

Another problem in the 聯經 version is the rendering of “was recognized as” as 以爲. The Chinese 以爲 usually indicates a subjective opinion, something one is not completely sure about. It is often used after one discovers that one’s original assumption was wrong, e.g. 我以爲他不來了, uttered *after* the person one did not expect to turn up has arrived. For the sensitive reader, 聯經 makes it sound as if the Hobbits in the neighborhood are with some likelihood *wrong* in considering the Gaffer as an authority.

This meaning is very different from the implications of “being recognized as,” which indicates a firm, well-grounded reputation. I would suggest 認為 as less confusing, or 公認, as 萬象 has it.

A grammar mistake should not go unnoticed. 聯經 has 特別是土豆的「根」 as roughly corresponding to “in the matter of ‘roots’, especially potatoes.” The English indicates that potatoes are *one type of* roots (about which the Gaffer knows the most). The Chinese wrongly suggests it are *the roots of potatoes* about which the Gaffer

knows so much: the English would have to be “especially *of* potatoes” for 聯經 to be correct. As it is, “roots” and “potatoes” are appositives, and should be translated as such.

By the way, 聯經 has remodeled the structure of that whole sentence in a rather unsatisfactory way, while 萬象 decided to stick closer to the English original. It is true that Tolkien’s sometimes lengthy sentences, often held together by generous use of colons, semicolons, and dashes, are a tough challenge for the Chinese translator. After all, these punctuation marks (like the use of brackets) are a relatively new addition to Chinese literary usage—not to mention that the use of *any* punctuation marks was unknown in classical Chinese literature up to the Ching dynasty. (In my translation I have decided to use them, though, as many modern Chinese writers do with great liberty.)

Then there is the issue of 漢姆法斯特師傅 (聯經) versus 哈姆法斯特先生 (萬象) for “Master Hamfast”. Here I would prefer the 聯經 rendering, since the “Master” in the original is more than just a common form of addressing somebody (that would be “Mister”): Bilbo uses it to indicate his respect for, and acknowledgement of, the Gaffer’s expertise as a gardener/farmer, and the Chinese 師傅 is also often used as a title for a professional in a certain field.

Last, but not least, let us have a look at 聯經’s translation of “gentlehobbit,” obviously created by Tolkien as an adaptation of “gentleman.” My feeling is that, since both the person speaking and his audience are Hobbits, the subject of their talk also being Hobbits, there is really no specific need to come up with the slightly awkward 霍比特族紳士, since it is clear from the context that Bilbo is a Hobbit. I think 紳士, or 萬象’s 好紳士 are sufficient here. (聯經 even carries on in that line and has 附近一帶的霍比特族都以為他是這方面的權威 at the end of the paragraph: here the term Hobbit is not even mentioned in the original, and strictly speaking this is another case of over-translation.)

## 6

This is an example where, among a number of other problems, 聯經 had trouble with italics in the original text (or were it really the italics?):

(The scene is still *The Ivy Bush*, and some of the Gaffer's audience bring up the fact that Frodo, though a Baggins on his father's side, also has Brandybuck blood from his mother, Primula Brandybuck. Now the Brandybucks live on the very eastern edge of the Shire, in Buckland, which is a relatively small stretch of land east of the River Baranduin [jokingly called "Brandywine" by the Hobbits] and west of the Old Forest. Buckland is separated from the Old Forest by "the Hedge," an old fence forming the eastern border of the Shire.

The Brandybucks, though one of the most important families in the Shire, are generally considered a queer breed by other Hobbits [Old Noakes voices this opinion], and another of the Gaffer's audience, Daddy Twofoot, declares that's because they live so close to the Old Forest. The Gaffer only half agrees.

We enter the conversation as Old Noakes has the word.)

"... It beats me why *any Baggins of Hobbiton* should go looking for a wife away there in Buckland, where folks are so queer."

"And no wonder they're queer," put in *Daddy Twofoot* (the Gaffer's next-door neighbor), "if they live on the wrong side of the Brandywine River, and right agin the Old Forest. That's a dark bad place, if half the tales be true."

"You're right, Dad!" said the Gaffer. "Not that the Brandybucks of Buckland live *in* the Old Forest; but they're a queer breed, seemingly. . . ." (LF 41)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第36頁】

「... 我真是百思不解，住在霍比頓的貝金斯家族，為什麼竟要去勃克蘭找老婆——住在那裡的都是些怪傢伙吧？！」

「他們是怪，但這本就不足為怪，」*兩尺老頭*（他是阿鄉老頭的鄰居）插嘴說道：「因為他們住錯了地方，竟住在白蘭地河的另一側，而且和老林又挨得太緊。只要傳說有一半是真的，那可是個風水不好的地方。」

「你說得對，老頭！」阿鄉老頭應道：「生活在勃克蘭一帶的白蘭地勃克家，還不單是住在老林裡，看來他們這族人本身就夠奇怪的。」

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第44頁】

「... 我真弄不懂，為什麼霍比屯這裡的巴金斯家的男人一個個都要到巴克



蘭那兒去找老婆？那邊的人脾氣都怪怪的。」

「他們脾氣當然怪了，」*兩腳爹爹*插嘴說（他是老爺子的隔居鄰居）：「誰叫他們住在白蘭地河的那一邊呢！這條河的兩岸一邊好一邊壞，正對著大老林子的那邊是壞的一邊。那是個黑魑魑的鬼地方，如果傳說的故事有一半是真的話。」

「你說的對，爹爹！」老爺子說：「不是說他們住在大老林裡面；而是他們這一族似乎生來都有點怪。」

To start with the last sentence, and the “italics-problem”: here, as rather often, 聯經 manages to convey the opposite of what is being said. What the Gaffer is stressing is that the Brandybucks *do not* live *in* the Old Forest (only very close to it), but *are still* “a queer breed, seemingly” Yet 聯經’s 還不單是住在老林裡 means that the Brandybucks *not only do live in* the Old Forest, but *also* seem to be a queer breed.

萬象 has quite a nice rendering of the Gaffer’s statement, interpreting the italics (and actually the whole sentence structure) correctly: 不是說他們住在大老林裡面.

Now to some lighter matters, for example “Daddy Twofoot.” In his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*,” Tolkien under the relevant entry states laconically “translate by sense.” This sounds easier than it is. The question is, is “Twofoot” to be interpreted as a measure of length, as 聯經 did, or as a simple statement that the old Hobbit had two feet?<sup>44</sup> Like 聯經, I tend to believe the first: after all, tallness varies, and may deserve a some special comment, whereas there is nothing worth mentioning about the fact that someone has two feet, be he Man or Hobbit—two feet is the *normal* thing, and only less (or more feet) would deserve any particular attention.

聯經 even has a footnote for its 兩尺老頭, which reads: 不知與我國的九斤老太是否相識，但命名方式卻是一致的，其區別恐怕只在於：「兩尺」是實指，因為霍比特族的身材平均本就在兩至四尺之間. While the intention may be nice here (as with some other of 聯經’s footnotes added by the translator), I doubt whether the

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<sup>44</sup> Note that many Germanic languages do not need to make a decision between two different forms of translation by sense here, as they may preserve the original ambiguity (this would be the case with the German “Zweifüß,” for example).

character of Daddy Twofoot, which is not of great importance for the story as a whole, really warrants such a lengthy explanation, which does nothing to improve the reader's understanding of the plot. If 聯經 deemed footnotes necessary, why not use them where some extra background information would have helped the reader to gain a better insight into the story? As this analysis shows, there would have been numerous occasions on which such footnotes would have been a real aid to the reader's appreciation of Tolkien's complex mythological setup as relevant to the intricate story line.

Both translations have committed a mistake in the first sentence of our example. The English goes "It beats me why *any* Baggins of Hobbiton should go looking for a wife away there in Buckland, where folks are so queer." For some reason, 萬象 seems to have read "*any* Baggins of Hobbiton" as "*every* Baggins of Hobbiton," thus rendering it as 巴金斯家的男人一個個都要(到巴克蘭那兒去找老婆)。

聯經 has a largely correct translation of the sentence, yet the 吧 at the very end is unfortunate, for it indicates that the person speaking is not completely sure about his own statement. Yet in the tone of the original there are no signs of "guessing" or uncertainty, as Old Noakes simply states "... in Buckland, where folks are so queer."

Let us round up our discussion of this passage with remarks on two minor problems. As we have seen in Example 4, 聯經 likes to use expressions that have a certain "Chinese" flavor to them, and here we have another example. Daddy Twofoot describes the Old Forest as "dark bad place," and 聯經 renders this as 風水不好的地方. While this reads quite smoothly, the feeling of familiarity it probably gives the Chinese reader is treacherous: I doubt that 風水不好 is the same as "bad and dark," however vague the original may be.

Finally, 萬象's 誰叫他們住在白蘭地河的那一邊呢! 這條河的兩岸一邊好一邊壞, 正對著大老林子的那邊是壞的一邊 is rather wordy for the simple "...they live on the wrong side of the river." Maybe the translator felt some kind of explanation was necessary here, but I think the first sentence, 誰叫他們住在白蘭地河的那一邊呢, would have been sufficient.

## 7

One page further down, we have this passage (there are more problems in

between—see my own translation at the end of my thesis, and special attention may be paid there to the interesting description of the degree of kinship between Frodo and his uncle Bilbo):

(The Gaffer has just related how both Frodo's parents drowned one night when they went boating on the Brandywine River, and the Hobbiton miller, Sandyman, suggests that Primula, Frodo's mother, pushed Drogo, his father, into the water, and that "he pulled her after him." The Gaffer, of course, gruffly refutes this rumor, saying there "isn't no call to go talking of pushing and pulling" as boats are "tricky enough for those that sit still without looking for further cause of trouble," and tells us how Frodo fared after losing his parents.)

"... Anyway: there was this Mr Frodo left an orphan and stranded, *as you might say*, among those queer Bucklanders, being brought up anyhow in Brandy Hall. *A regular warren, by all accounts*. Old Master Gorbodoc never had fewer than a couple of hundred relations in the place." (LF 42)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 37—38 頁】

「反正是那件不幸事件發生後，只留下弗羅多這個孤兒，他雖在白蘭地莊園被撫養長大，但據說那只是個擁擠不堪的地方，所以，在那些古怪的勃克蘭居民中間，他的處境可以說是極端不妙的。在當地，高爾巴多克老爺的親戚一向有兩百名以上，……。」

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 46 頁】

「不管怎麼說，這位弗羅多先生就這樣成了孤兒，也許你會說，被撇在那些古怪的巴克蘭人中間，好歹總算在白蘭地堂被養大了。老首領戈巴多克在當地少說也有兩、三百個親戚。」

The most appalling thing here is 萬象's clean skip of an entire sentence, probably because the translator did not know what to make of the expression "a regular warren."

"Warren" has two meanings. The original one is something like "a place with

many burrows where you breed rabbits”（養兔場），but here it is obviously used in a figurative sense, meaning an “overpopulated building or place with many passages,” a place that is very crowded, and where you can easily get lost. 聯經 has 擁擠不堪的地方, which is not bad. I have opted for 不折不扣的大雜院 in my own translation.

Both translators seem to have had problems with the short clause “as you might say.” With 萬象 this is very obvious, as the translator failed to recognize that this short phrase connects with the *preceding* sentence (“there was this Mr Frodo left an orphan and stranded”), and instead linked it with the *following* sentence (which completely goes against the original’s sentence structure): 也許你會說，被撇在那些古怪的巴克蘭人中間，好歹總算在白蘭地堂被養大了（and wouldn’t it have been necessary in this [wrong] version to insert a 他 [for Frodo], in front of the 好歹, for example? Otherwise, the reader might lose track of what the subject is here）.

The 萬象 translator did not realize is that in the original, “among those queer Bucklanders” grammatically directly links up with “there was this Mr Frodo left an orphan and stranded.” The whole sentence could indeed read “there was this Mr Frodo left an orphan and stranded among those queer Bucklanders, being brought up anyhow in Brandy Hall.” The phrase “as you might say” is really nothing but an empty phrase, inserted by the Gaffer as a quasi-“apology” for what he probably considers a daring metaphor (describing Mr Frodo as “stranded” among the Bucklanders).

This, I am afraid, is only one example of numerous cases where the translators failed to establish the correct connections between sentence parts. In this example, 聯經 has sort of dodged the problem by skipping the “as you might say.” Yet 聯經 created new problems by inserting a 雖 in 他雖在白蘭地莊園被撫養長大，但據說那只是個擁擠不堪的地方. Where does the 雖 come from? One can only guess that the translator felt it necessary to add this conjunction, because unlike the English original, he directly connects “...being brought up anyhow in Brandy Hall” and “A regular warren, by all accounts” (which are two separate sentences), thus needing a 雖(然)…但(是) construction to make the transition smooth.

(Staying with the above sentence, why say Brandyhall 只是個擁擠不堪的地方? How is the 只 motivated?)

There is more to be said here. Not only does 聯經 grammatically connect “A regular warren, by all accounts” with the preceding sentence, the translators also go on to *add* an entire sentence that simply does not exist in the original: 所以，在那些古怪的勃克蘭居民中間，他的處境可以說是極端不妙的。 Only then does 聯經 give 在當地，高爾巴多克老爺的親戚一向有兩百名以上 for “Old Master Gorbadoc never had fewer than a couple of hundred relations in the place,” which in the original follows immediately after “A regular warren, by all accounts.” The inversion of this lengthy, unnecessary “explanation” interferes with the logic of the original.

There are numerous examples where 聯經 is too wordy, or adding whole sentences, in a desperate attempt to make the “translation” clearer—but I am afraid this entirely fails to make up for the many shortcomings of this translation as a whole. Concise, but correct, renderings would have done the reader a much better service.

## 8

This passage is another glaring example of the 聯經 (and, though in this passage to a lesser extent, the 萬象) translators’ unprofessional attitude in dealing with passages they obviously failed to grasp upon first reading. Instead of trying to figure out the correct meaning, or *at least* trying to come up with something that would read smooth in the Chinese (something 萬象 does at times, though this is—of course—not a responsible approach, either), they patch together phrases or whole sentences that utterly fail to fit into the context and leave the reader at a complete loss as to “what is happening.” There is also one interesting example for semantic versus phonetic translation contained in the passage below.

(The scene is still in *The Ivy Bush*. The Gaffer is refuting persistent rumors about Bilbo’s immeasurable wealth, and continues to say that his son Sam is better informed about these things.)

But my lad Sam will know more about that. He’s in and out of *Bag End*. Crazy about *stories of the old days* he is, and *he listens to all Mr Bilbo’s tales*. *Mr Bilbo has learned him his letters*—meaning no harm, *mark you*, and I hope no harm will come of it. (LF 43)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 39 頁】

不過我兒子山姆會瞭解詳情的，他常常在貝金兜底進進出出。他對於以前在那裡的事情好奇得要命，不管畢爾波先生說什麼，他都不肯漏掉，畢爾波先生得知他那些信件的事——要記住，這沒惡意，而我也不希望會招來什麼壞事。

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 48 頁】

不過我兒子薩姆對這事會比我清楚些，他常在巴根出入，他對過去時代的故事喜歡得入迷，關於比爾博先生的故事他全都愛聽。比爾博先生給他傳授過自己的學問——他沒有惡意，你知道的，而我希望這件事不要落個壞結果。

Let us start with the translations for “Bag End” in the above two versions. 萬象 has 巴根, clearly a phonetic rendering, while 聯經 opted for 兜底, 兜 for Bag, 底 for End, thus a semantic rendering. I prefer the latter, for as I have pointed out elsewhere, proper nouns given in English should be translated by meaning, since in Tolkien’s original they were also supposed to be translations: from Westron (the Common Speech) into English, that is. They are meaningful and immediately understandable to the English reader, and this effect should be preserved in the Chinese translation.

Let us also see what Tolkien himself had to say on the subject. The following is an entry from his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*”:

*Bag End*. The local name for Bilbo’s house, and meant to be associated (by hobbits) with the end of a ‘bag’ or ‘pudding bag’ = cul-de-sac. Translate by sense. See Baggins; the same element in the language of translation should appear both in *Baggins* and in *Bag End*. (Lobdell 190)

Obviously, Tolkien also preferred translation by sense for perfectly intelligible English (Westron) expressions in his book. Thus in my translation I have decided to use 袋底洞, the 洞 added to indicate the Hobbit-hole. I am aware there is not one *perfect* solution for “Bag End” in Chinese, and that it is rather difficult to meet to Tolkien’s requirement that “the same element in the language of translation should

appear both in *Baggins* and in *Bag End*.”

In other languages, especially Germanic (and generally, Indo-European) languages this may be done with more ease, for example the German has “Beutlin” for “Baggins,” and “Beutelsend” for Bag End. The crux lies with “Baggins”: while “Bag” is a meaningful component, “-gins” is a meaningless suffix as they are quite common in European languages. The German “Beutlin” and “Beutelsend” consequently both contain “Beutel” in some form, a word that means “bag”: In “Beutlin” it is reduced to “Beut-,” but is still recognizable as derived from “Beutel,” even with the (meaningless) suffix “-lin”<sup>45</sup> added. (The removed “-el” and the added “-lin” sound also vaguely similar.)

In Chinese, things aren’t quite as “easy”: as I have mentioned elsewhere, Tolkien’s “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*” was certainly not written with much thought given to Chinese, a language not familiar to Tolkien. Thus, although 聯經 has both the elements “bag” and “end” in its 貝金兜底, it had to add 貝金 (part of its translation for Baggins, 貝金斯) in front to establish a connection between “Baggins” and “Bag End”—in other words, where the English and German have only *two* world elements, 聯經’s Chinese version needs *three* (the phonetic 貝金 [斯]), the semantic 兜, and the semantic 底) to achieve a similar effect. Of course, this was necessitated by the fact that 聯經 has rendered “Baggins” completely phonetic. This again was done because—as mentioned above—it is very difficult, if not impossible, in Chinese to come up with a satisfying equivalent for the suffix “-gins.” Or would something like 袋金斯 or 兜金斯 be a possible solution?<sup>46</sup>

The above is meant to serve as an illustration for the difficulties involved in translating Tolkien’s invented names.

Let us now move on to what I have called a glaring example for lack of

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<sup>45</sup> It may be added that, though meaningless, the suffix “-lin” does in German appear in surnames, thus assisting the reader’s natural acceptance of “Beutlin” as somebody’s family name.

<sup>46</sup> There are numerous other Westron names posing similar problems (combination of meaningful elements with “meaningless” affixes), e.g. “Westernisse,” or “Crickhollow.” Tolkien does explain that “-esse” in Westernesse “is an ending used in partly francized names of ‘romantic’ lands, as Lyonesse, or Logres (England in Arthurian Romance)” (“Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*”). Yet, while interesting, this helps little with what Tolkien would have considered an adequate rendering into Chinese.

professionalism: 聯經's rendering of "Crazy about *stories of the old days* he is, and *he listens to all Mr Bilbo's tales. Mr Bilbo has learned him his letters . . .*" First of all, 不管畢爾波先生說什麼，他都不肯漏掉 for "he listens to all Mr Bilbo's tales" is awkward, to say the least. (說什麼 does not exactly give the impression of somebody "telling tales," and 不肯漏掉 is also a "misfit.") What is meant here is 畢爾波 (所講) 的故事，山姆都會去聽. This is why 萬象's 關於比爾博先生的故事他全都愛聽 is also wrong: it is not stories *about* Bilbo that Sam listens to and is crazy about; it is the stories (of the old days, as mentioned in the preceding clause!) that Bilbo *tells*, which Sam devours with great curiosity.

While this should be evident from the above paragraph itself, extra evidence may be found in other parts of the book, for example in the paragraph following the one discussed here, where the Gaffer continues "Elves and Dragons! I says to him. Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you" (LF 43). The "Elves and Dragons" here, and the "stories of the old days" and "all Mr Bilbo's tales" of the preceding paragraph basically all mean the same thing. Both 聯經 and 萬象 completely fail to convey this, and give the impression the it is stories *about* Bilbo which Sam likes to hear.

聯經 even has 他對於以前在那裡的事情好奇得要命 for "Crazy about stories of the old days he is," with 在那裡 in the translation clearly referring to Bag End, as it follows on the heels of 他常常在貝金兜底進進出出. Why would "stories of the old days" mean "stories about what happened formerly in Bag End"?

Unsurprisingly, with so many misinterpretations preceding it, 聯經 continues to commit a "deadly" blunder in the last sentence. "Mr Bilbo has learned him his letters" is rendered as 畢爾波先生得知他那些信件的事. Now this is truly baffling. Where does 得知 come from? Obviously meant as a translation of "learn," just as (那些) 信件 is meant to stand for "letters." Still, if we would retranslate the 聯經 sentence into English, we would get something like "Mr Bilbo learned *about* (or *of*) those letters of his."

To make it short, "learn someone one's letters" means "teach someone what one knows"; not a common English expression maybe, and certainly not modern usage, yet obviously not too difficult to understand with a little sensitivity for language, as the 萬象 edition proves. Here, a correct rendering is given with 比爾博先生給他傳授



過自己的學問。

All in all, here the 聯經 translation will leave the reader totally dumbfounded, because the mentioning of “letters” of which Bilbo “learned” is as unmotivated in the context as, say, the installation of an air-cooler in an igloo. No explanation is given (*can* be given), either, as to what exactly this whole letter-business is supposed to refer to. It is this kind of irresponsible patchwork which will give even a not-so-sensitive reader the creeps, and have him discontinue the reading of the book after one chapter (if he can persevere that long).

A better rendering of the last sentence of the passage discussed here could be 比寶 (I chose this as translation for Bilbo; see also my translation in the Appendix) 先生還教他不少學問，他沒有惡意，這點我要提醒你們 (I deem this better than 萬象’s 你知道的, especially since the Gaffer’s audience consists of many people), 我也希望這不會給山姆帶來什麼厄運。

## 9

Here we have another example of how both the 聯經 and the 萬象 translators often fail to establish the right connections between sentences and statements, even over the very short distance of one or two paragraphs—no wonder that they often seem *completely* lost when it comes to keeping track of the indefinite number of characters, events, themes, and story lines over the distance of three thick volumes.

(We are still in *The Ivy Bush*. Sandyman, the miller, calls Bilbo a queer fellow, and meets with strong opposition from the Gaffer.)

“He’s often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk that visit him: dwarves come at night, and that old wandering conjuror, Gandalf, and all. You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End’s a queer place, and its folk are queerer.”

“And you can say what you like, about what you know no more of than you do of boating, Mr. Sandyman,” retorted that Gaffer, disliking the miller even more than usual. “*If that’s being queer, then we could do with a bit more queerness in these parts. There’s some not far away that wouldn’t offer a pint of*

*beer to a friend, if they lived in a hole with golden walls. But they do things proper at Bag End. Our Sam says that everyone's going to be invited to the party, and there's going to be presents, mark you, presents for all—this very month as is.”* (LF 43-44)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 39—40 頁】

「他常離家外出。再看看那些來拜訪他的外鄉人吧！其中有夜間來訪的小矮人，有雲遊四方的老巫師甘達爾夫等等。你愛怎麼說都隨你便，阿鄉老頭，但依我看，貝金兜底不僅地方怪，而且那兒的居民更怪。」

「沙底曼先生，儘管你對這事兒並不比你對划船的事兒知道得更多些，但你也可以愛怎麼說就怎麼說。」阿鄉老頭嘴裡反駁著，心裡越來越討厭這位磨坊主人。「如果那就算怪，那麼我們這地方做的事還要更怪一點呢！我們附近就有這樣的例子：哪怕自己住在金碧輝煌的洞府中，卻不肯招待朋友喝上小小一瓶啤酒。看人家貝金兜底，事情幹得漂亮啊！我家山姆說，在那次做壽時，人人都將受到邀請，而且還有禮物，請注意啦，禮物也個個有份——這件事兒本月就要見分曉囉！」

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 48—49 頁】

「他常常出門。還有你瞧那些來找他的外邦打扮的人物——那些總在晚上來的侏儒們啦，還有那個跑江湖變戲法的老頭甘達爾夫啦等等。你愛怎麼說都行，老爺子，但是巴根可是個怪地方，那兒的人又比那地方更怪。」

「你也是，愛怎麼說都行，還可以講那些你根本不知道的東西，就像你剛才講的划船的事那樣，桑迪曼先生。」老爺子回敬道。他覺得比以前更討厭這磨坊主了。「如果那樣就叫做『怪』的話，我們這裡還有人行事更怪一點呢。我們眼前不就有這麼些人，一口啤酒都捨不得給朋友，哪怕他們自己住的洞穴連牆壁都是金的。可是巴根那兩叔侄為人都不錯。我們薩姆說了，生日聚會的時候，所有人都會被邀請去參加，而且還有禮物，你要知道，所有人都有禮物——就是這個月內的事。」

For convenience's sake, let us designate the miller's statement "*He's often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk that visit him: dwarves come at night, and*

*that old wandering conjuror, Gandalf, and all. You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End's a queer place, and its folk are queerer*" as **A**.

As **B** let us denominate the Gaffer's sentence "*If that's being queer, then we could do with a bit more queerness in these parts*"; and let us use **C** to indicate the immediately following sentence, also by the Gaffer, "*There's some not far away that wouldn't offer a pint of beer to a friend, if they lived in a hole with golden walls.*"

Now both 萬象 and 聯經 committed basically the same blunder, that is to connect **B** with **C**, instead of linking up **B** with **A**, as would be correct.

When the Gaffer says, "if *that's* being queer, we *could* do with a bit more *queerness* in these parts," he is clearly *referring back* to the miller's mentioning dwarfs and Gandalf, the wizard, visiting Bag End late at night: what else could "that's" refer too, logically? It does not make sense here to link up "that's" with something that is only to follow in the next sentence, particularly since the next sentence (**C**) is clearly giving a *negative* example (of stingy behavior): now why would the Gaffer say that "we could do with a bit more" of *that*?

Also, he clearly says "a bit more *queerness*" (**B**), and the word "queer" before that occurs only in the miller's "Bag End is a queer place, and its folks are queerer" (**A**) another indication that the only meaningful connection here is between **A** and **B**!

The Gaffer is clearly defending Bilbo and Frodo, saying that if going abroad a lot, and having guests from foreign parts, is enough to make you look queer in some people's eyes—well, then a little more of that "queerness" would actually be a good thing for the whole neighborhood. The *next* sentence (**C**) serves only to drive home his point that the Bagginses are a respectable, generous people (in spite of what some may conceive as queerness) by giving an (unspecific) example of how some people in the neighborhood would be to stingy to offer "a pint of beer to a friend," even if they were very rich (remember that Bilbo is also considered to be very rich—but generous—ever since he came back with his share of a dragon's hoard, as is related in *The Hobbit*). This interpretation is also confirmed in the next sentence "But they do things proper at Bag End," and the added assurance that *everybody* will be invited to the upcoming birthday party, and that *everybody* will get a present—all proofs of Bilbo's generosity.

The primal cause for both the 聯經 and the 萬象 mistranslation is, in my opinion, that the translators failed to grasp the correct meaning of the English expression "can

do with a bit more of something,” which means “more of something would not be bad at all”—it does *not* mean “to *have* more [and worse] of something (here),” as both 聯經’s 那麼我們這地方做的事還要更怪一點呢 and 萬象’s 那麼我們這地方做的事還要更怪一點呢 would suggest. The positive meaning of the English expression is converted into an introduction for a (negative) example for “more queerness”—the opposite of what the original is conveying.<sup>47</sup>

Note also that because of their false interpretation, both translators feel forced to add some extra phrases to smoothen the transition from **B** to **C**, and “make plausible” their wrong connection of the two: 聯經 has 我們附近就有這樣的例子, and 萬象 has 我們眼前不就有這麼些人. Without the 就有這樣的例子 (聯經), or the 不就 (有) 這麼 (萬象), these sentences may be viewed as simple renderings of the original’s “there’s some not far away” (聯經 would have to add something like 有些人, though), but with these added phrases, both translators are trying to “justify” their misinterpretation of the grammatical and semantic connection between **A**, **B**, and **C**.

## 10

This is a short passage with two very distinct problems from Chapter One of Book One.

(As the preparations for Bilbo’s and Frodo’s birthday party get under way, a cart is coming into Hobbiton one evening, driven by Gandalf, the old wizard. He is bringing loads of firework for the party. At Bilbo’s front door, he unloads the bundles of all sorts and shapes. On each bundle, there is a large red “G”-rune, and also a corresponding elf-rune.<sup>48</sup>

The wizard is soon surrounded by many Hobbit-children, who are excited about the upcoming fireworks.)

“G is for Grand!” they shouted, and the old man smiled. They knew him by sight, though he only appeared in Hobbiton occasionally and never stopped

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<sup>47</sup> For both the 萬象 and the 聯經 version to be correct, the English would have to be something like: “If that’s being queer, then even queerer things happen in these parts.”

<sup>48</sup> 萬象 simply has 大大的紅色的G字樣 and 小精靈古文字, while 聯經 took the trouble to reproduce both the runes as they are given in the original. For our purposes here, it is not necessary to do so.

long . . . . (LF 44)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 41 頁】

「那個 G 代表格蘭德！」他們叫道；老漢們聽了一笑置之。他們熟悉他的外貌，儘管他只偶爾在霍比頓露面，而且每次逗留的時間都不長 . . . 。

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 50 頁】

「G 的意思就是『幹得棒』（Grand）！」他們喊道。老頭兒聽了笑笑。他們認得他的樣子，雖然他只是偶爾到霍比屯，而從不長住 . . . 。

The first question that comes to mind looking at the 聯經 translation is: what is 格蘭德 supposed to mean? In the original, the children declare that “G” stands for “Grand,” because they love fireworks and anticipate a great (grand!) show from the old wizard on Bilbo’s birthday. It is not entirely clear, and completely unimportant for the purposes of translation, whether or not the children are aware that the “G” actually stand’s for the wizard’s name, Gandalf (though it is likely they *did* know).

What does matter is: did the *translator* know? Did he know (or care about) what he was doing here by giving the *completely meaningless* 格蘭德 for “grand”? There is no way the average Chinese reader (or even one that is proficient in English) could possibly establish a connection between 格蘭德 and the “Grand” of the original.

Why? Because “grand” is, of course, a meaningful word, an adjective meaning “magnificent,” or “majestic,” or “great.” Yet the 聯經 version gives the distinct impression of a phonetically translated name (or proper noun)—was that what the translator really believed? Did he not recognize “grand” as an adjective, a meaningful word? (And if so, did he not wonder who or what that “Grand,” not mentioned before or afterwards, was supposed to represent?)

Whatever the reasons, 聯經 is pretty much as far off the mark as you can get here.

Though 萬象’s solution to this obviously problematic sentence may not be aesthetically satisfying to some (i.e. those who do not fancy for English words to appear in Chinese translations), it does a fairly good job of getting the children’s little pun across.

Some may rightfully argue that many Chinese readers won't be sensitive enough to establish a connection between the "G" and the 幹 (starting with the same "g"-sound the English "G" represents in "Grand": 幹, or "gan" in Pinyin) any more than between 格蘭德 and "grand." Yet even if this little "alliterative game" should be lost on most readers, 幹得棒 still gives the reader a reasonably good idea of what the original is basically conveying—that the children are praising the old wizard's skill at fireworks, and expect it to be nothing less than magnificent.

The other problem I would like to draw the reader's attention to in this passage is the sentence "and the old man smiled." 萬象 renders this as 老頭兒聽了笑笑, a rendering that may look slightly ambiguous, or vague, but is basically a faithful translation of the original. The old man is of course Gandalf.

Not so the 聯經 version: 老漢們聽了一笑置之. The obnoxious 們 is not a style problem here, but a grammatical one: where does the plural come from? The English has "old *man*," not "men." This is another example for extreme carelessness, also because 老漢們 in the plural can obviously *not* refer to Gandalf. The fact that there is no mentioning of any "old *men*" anywhere before or after that short sentence should have made the translator stop short, reread the passage, and the relevant sentence in particular, and then he should have discovered his misreading—and avoided another very avoidable mistake.

The last thing I would like to comment on here is that 一笑置之 does not seem a good translation for "smiled" in this context. If I am not utterly mistaken, the Chinese expression tends to have a slightly derogatory, or derisive meaning, something like "dismiss with a smile/laugh," "chuckle at." This would be very inadequate here for what is surely meant to be a *friendly* smile by the old wizard (but then again, 聯經 obviously was not aware that it is the old wizard who is smiling).

Some may argue that 一笑置之 can also have the rather neutral meaning of "smile at something," and I admit that every reader will have his own, very subjective interpretation of this phrase. Still, to avoid any ambiguity, I would still prefer something like 微笑, or 萬象's (聽了) 笑笑.

## II

Here another randomly picked example that includes one mistake made because

of a clear lack of understanding of Tolkien's mythological setup, and one misunderstanding of an English expression. The original passage goes:

(Frodo has left his home in the Shire with the ring to try and reach Imladris. On his way, he and his friends encounter Elves, and they exchange words, and later Frodo asks the Elves for advice. Gildor is the leader of the Elves.)

“I thank you indeed, Gildor Inglorion,” said Frodo bowing. “*Elen sila lumenn’ omentielvo*, a star shines on the hour of our meeting,” he added in the *high-elven speech*.

“Be careful, friends!” cried Gildor laughing. “Speak no secrets! Here is a scholar in the Ancient Tongue. *Bilbo was a good master. Hail, Elf-friend!*” (LF 116)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 142 頁】

「非常感激你們，吉爾多爾·英格洛林，」弗羅多邊說，邊鞠了一個躬。  
「與你們相遇，真是我三生修來的福氣啊！」後面這句話，弗羅多故意用高種小精靈語說的。

「朋友們當心啦！」吉爾多爾笑著對同伴們大聲說道：「別再談甚麼秘密！這一位先生對我們的古老語言可是研究有素。當初，比爾波也是這方面的的大師。這足以證明你們是小精靈的朋友，在此向你致敬！」

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 187 頁】

「我真的非常感謝你吉爾多·英格洛里安。」弗羅多鞠了一躬說：「*Elen sila lumenn omentilmo*，一顆星在我們相會時閃耀。」他加上一句高山小精靈的語言。

「朋友們，小心點！」吉爾多笑著喊道：「可不要講秘密的事情啊！這裡有一位古代語言專家呢！比爾博以前也是一位大師。嘿，小精靈的朋友們。」

Let us begin with the last two sentences, for its translations contain a simple misunderstanding, or lack of sensitivity, for an English expression. “Bilbo was a good

master” just means that Bilbo (Frodo’s uncle, who Frodo lived with and learned from ever since coming of age) had been a good teacher in the past when the two of them were still living under one roof. In short terms, “master” here means teacher and should thus be rendered as 老師 or 良師. One could also consider translating the whole sentence as 比爾波 (or 比爾博) 把你教得很好. Strangely, both translations here are very similar, and both fail to get the meaning right.

萬象 has 嘿 for “hail” in “Hail, Elf-friend!,” which strikes me as inappropriate. This touches upon the problems of how to translate Tolkien’s deliberate use of archaic language.<sup>49</sup> “Hail” is simply a form of greeting, something like 歡迎 or 萬歲 in Chinese, depending on the context and the status of the speaker. Now the Chinese 嘿 is also a form of greeting, but on a very different level of language, used usually to translate the English/American “hey” or “hi,” or similar expressions. Thus, it neither conveys the high level of language, nor the show of respect this language level represents in the original. Basically, the translator here used a slang, or at least colloquial expression, to render an archaic term conveying respect of the speaker for the person he addresses. In mild terms, 萬象 picked the wrong style on this one.

聯經’s translation of “Hail, Elf-friend” is somewhat lengthy, yet it contains neither semantic errors nor stylistic flaws. 在此向你致敬 does a much better job in communicating Gildor’s respect for Frodo. Was it really necessary to render “Elf-friend” by a whole sentence, though? Could one not try 精靈的朋友 or some similar, shorter expression? This would, by means of ambiguity, also solve another problem in both the 萬象 and the 聯經 translations. Both translations use plural terms for “elf-friend”, 萬象 rendering it as 小精靈的朋友們, and 聯經 having 你們是小精靈的朋友 (and then, inconsistently, switching to singular in the succeeding 在此向你致敬), but the English original clearly has a singular with “Hail, Elf-friend.” My suggested 精靈的朋友 would have the advantage that it can be read as a singular form.

In between, I would like to give two examples of sloppiness in the above

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<sup>49</sup> There are many more examples of such usage throughout the book, including inverted sentences of the type “Go you must” for “You must go”, and we find that both translations have great difficulties coping with these type of syntax, especially where long sentences are involved.



translations: 1. 聯經 has 吉爾多爾·英格洛林 for the Elf's name. Between the first name and the family name there should be a “·”, as 萬象 has, according to widely accepted custom for translating foreign names into Chinese. This is probably not the translator's fault, though, but the proofreader's or editor's. 2. While the 聯經 translators chose the easy way out by simply leaving out the sentence that is in Elvish, 萬象 decided to give it in its original form, that is, in English letters. A pity that a few mistakes occurred, though, like the missing “'” after “lumenn”; the last word “omientielvo” is completely misspelled as “omentilmo”. Small, maybe unimportant, problems, one might argue—but if they occur again and again, as they do throughout the two translations, they are still disturbing.

Now to some other problems in this passage.

First, the translation of names, or proper nouns in general, that are given in one of Tolkien's languages, here an Elven-tongue. And how are whole sentences to be translated? Not an irrelevant question, since parts of poems are given in Elvish at many points throughout the story. Basically, translations of names into Chinese, no matter in English (representing Westron within Tolkien's fantasy works) or in Elvish, or any other of Tolkien's languages, are problematic. Translators of Tolkien's works into other European languages, or basically into any other language that uses the English (or a similar, Roman-based) alphabet can simply leave the names unchanged, like for example the German and Dutch translations do in most, though not all cases (for example, the German translation has “Kankra” for “Shelob,” the huge spider-monster which Frodo and Sam encounter on their way into Mordor).

For translations of foreign proper names into Chinese, the current custom is to prefer a translation by sense wherever possible (i.e. where the original word does have a distinct meaning), as in the case of 白宮 for “White House.” In other cases, a translation by sound is the obvious option.

Both 聯經 and 萬象 used translation by sound for virtually all Elvish (or Dwarvish, or Orc, or Ent, etc.) expressions, which has the advantage of setting these proper nouns off clearly as “foreign terms,” as something distinctly strange and unfamiliar to the reader—an effect that these names also have in the English text. It is interesting that in the English original many persons or places are denoted by different names depending on who is speaking. So the House of Elrond, for example, is sometimes referred to in English as “Last Homely House,” but the same location is

also referred to in Westron as “Rivendell” (note that not *all* Westron expressions are “translated” by Tolkien into English proper), or, in Sindarin (Elvish), as “Imladris.” Many more examples could be given. To maintain this sense of a multi-lingual background in his translation, a translator should find different Chinese renderings for all these terms, and not just settle for one translation and just stick with it.

As for whole passages that are given in Elvish, I think 萬象’s solution is not so bad, since by directly giving the original version in English letters, the translator ensures that the Chinese reader is very aware that this is a very distinct tongue being used here, very different not only from Chinese, but also from English.

Tolkien also gives the English translation of the Elvish passage, “a star shines on the hour of our meeting.” This is not an English, but an Elvish, idiomatic expression. Here I personally think both translations have their merits. The 聯經 translation gives 與你們相遇，真是我三生修來的福氣啊。 Since the original is an Elvish expression not explained in any detail by Tolkien, every translator has a certain leeway here as to how to interpret it, and I think 聯經 has done a fairly good job, using a Chinese idiom that in my opinion communicates pretty well what Frodo was trying to say. (Still, did “our” mean only Gildor and Frodo, or all the Elves and Frodo [and his companions]?)

On the other hand, I would not blame 萬象 too much for sticking close to the original in writing 一顆星在我們相會時閃耀： again, since this is an Elvish expression with a rather vague meaning, meant to express Frodo’s gladness to meet Gildor the Elf, why not preserve the strangeness the sentence has in the English original, by using a Chinese sentence that is equally strange? From the context, a sensitive reader should be able to get the gist of what Frodo is saying here.

A short comment on the frequent use of 們 by both 萬象 and 聯經: Surely there are better ways of conveying the plural in Chinese—if it is at all necessary. Is frequent ambiguity in this matter not a characteristic of the Chinese language, especially where the context provides enough information for the listener/reader to make an educated guess? In many cases, one can simply delete it, in others use a different expression. To avoid the 們 after 朋友 and 同伴 in the 聯經 translation, I would suggest the following changes: 「大家當心啦！」吉爾多爾笑著對他的同伴大聲說道。 Substitute 大家 for 朋友們, erase the 們 after 同伴 and, maybe, add a 他的 in front of it, and the sentence is much smoother.

Finally, one of the biggest problems of this passage is—again—due to a lack of “background information” on the side of the translators. There is no way around the fact that in translating a work of such complexity, and such imaginative power, the translators *must* at least try to enter the secondary world created by the author, immerse themselves in its atmosphere, and soak up its “lore,” if they want to convey any of the original’s atmosphere in their rendering.

So, let us now have a look at “high-elven (speech),” rendered by 萬象 as 高山小精靈(的語言), and by 聯經 as 高種小精靈(語). The term High Elves (or Eldar) has a very specific meaning in Tolkien’s universe, and it does not have anything to do with ‘Elves living high up in the mountains,’ as 萬象 would suggest with 高山.

Another short look at the mythology as narrated in *The Silmarillion* is necessary here. When the Elves, the Firstborn of Iluvatar (Eru), first appeared in the far east of Middle-earth (long before Men entered the stage of history), they soon started to migrate to the West, following a call by the Valar who asked them to come and live with them in the Undying Lands. Not all the Elves heeded the call, some tarried on the way, and many were never to reach the Undying Lands, staying in Middle-earth, enchanted by its beauty. Yet there were Three Kindreds (the Vanyar, Noldor, and the Teleri) who persisted and finally reached the Undying Lands. There they saw the light of the Two Trees of Valinor, one of the greatest creations of the Valar. They shone with a bright light and inspired wonder and reverence in the Elves. The term High Elves (or Eldar) refers to these three Kindreds of Elves who had seen the light of the Two Trees of Valinor before they were destroyed by Morgoth.

From the above it is clear that the 萬象 translation is entirely off the track here, while 聯經 with its 高種小精靈 is aiming at the right goal: trying to convey that High Elves are a special kind of Elves,<sup>50</sup> a nobler kind (that has actually set foot on the Undying Lands when Middle-earth was still young), and a kind that speaks the oldest of the Elven-tongues, Quenya. This is why Gildor also refers to high-elven speech as “Ancient Tongue.” Tolkien uses capital letters here on purpose (as on many other occasions) to indicate that “Ancient Tongue” is not just any old language (as both 聯經

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<sup>50</sup> Still, the 高種 with its biological implications is, of course, far from the perfect solution here. Neither would 高等精靈 or 高級精靈 be adequate. Maybe 高尚 or 高貴 would be better adjectives to describe the noblest of the Elves.

and萬象would suggest with their古老語言and古代語言), but is in fact Quenya, the language of the Elves of Valinor, oldest tongue in Middle-earth. Maybe we should not be too hard on the translators here, though, since it is very hard without capital letters or definite articles (the Chinese lacks both) to express these subtleties.

## 12

In this passage we have a number of interesting examples for the translation of place names, as well as a rather baffling rendering (of the first sentence) by 萬象.

(This is the opening paragraph of Chapter 9 of Book One, “At the Sign of *The Prancing Pony*.” Tolkien gives a description of the geographical setup of the area around Bree, a village in the wilderness where Frodo and his friends are to stay overnight at the inn *The Prancing Pony*.)

Bree was the chief village of the Bree-land, a small inhabited region, like an island in the empty lands round about. Besides Bree itself, there was Staddle on the other side of the hill, Combe in a deep valley a little further eastward, and Archet on the edge of the Chetwood. Lying round Bree-hill and the villages was a small country of fields and tamed woodland only a few miles broad. (LF 203)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 263 頁】

布雷蘭是個有人煙的小小區域，在周圍的廣漠荒原中就像個孤島，而布雷村是它的一個主要居民點。除了布雷村，還有山那邊的斯塔德爾村，東面深谷裡的科姆村，以及靠近特伍德邊緣的阿切特村。在布雷山和這些村子的周圍，是一片寬僅數英里田野和林地。

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第二冊，第 71 頁】

布理河谷是布理國境內的主要河谷，是個小小的居民區，處在周圍無人居住的荒野裡就像一個孤島。除了布理村之外，小山的另一面還有斯塔德爾村，東邊稍遠處一個深谷裡有康比村，切特伍德森林邊上有一個阿切特村。在布理山和各村莊周圍，是一片只有幾哩寬的土地，包括農田和經過開發的林地。

Let us begin with the first sentence of the 萬象 translation: where does 布理河谷 come from? What, indeed, is the whole “river” and “river valley” business in the opening sentence supposed to stand for? All the English has is “Bree was the chief village of the Bree-land”—something meaning roughly 布理村是布理區最主要的村莊. I am hard put to come up with *any* explanation why 萬象 would come up with 布理河谷是布理國境內的主要河谷, especially since the rest of the sentence is rendered in a reasonable fashion.

As for “Bree-land,” I would purposely choose 布理區 (or 布雷區) rather than 布理國 (萬象) or 布雷國 (聯經). These are my reasons: “Bree-land,” the way Tolkien describes it throughout the whole chapter, is not really a “country” in the proper sense of the word—its borders, though roughly outlined, are not defined all that clearly (like those of the Shire, or Gondor, or Mordor, are), and it also lacks the kind of administrative and political organization, or a ruling authority/government, which all are *sine qua nons* for a “country.”

As far as 聯經’s 布雷蘭 is concerned, I have mentioned elsewhere that recognizable, i.e. meaningful, parts in Tolkien’s invented compound words should be translated by sense, with the unrecognizable (or “meaningless”) parts given in phonetic translation. This is also what Tolkien says in his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*.” Under the entry “Bree-hill, Bree-land” he states: “Retain the first element, and translate [by sense, that is] ‘hill’ and ‘land.’” “Retain” in Chinese can of course only mean a phonetic translation—unless you would want to have Latin letters in your Chinese text. I am thus sure that something along the line of 布雷區 or 布理區 would have met with Tolkien’s approval.

Both translations have 阿切特村 for Archet. I’m sure Tolkien would have liked that: the adding of 村 is a good move in Chinese to indicate that this is another village, just like Bree. In his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*” Tolkien writes:

*Archet*. This is actually an English place-name of Celtic origin. It is used in the nomenclature of Bree to represent a stratum of names older than those in the Common Speech or Hobbit language. So also *Bree*, an English place-name from a Celtic word for “hill.” Therefore retain *Archet* and *Bree* unaltered, since these

names no longer have a recognized meaning in English. Chetwood is a compound of Celtic and English, both elements meaning “wood”; compare *Brill*, in Oxfordshire, derived from *bree* + *hill*. Therefore in *Chetwood* retain *Chet* and translate *wood*. (190)

There is not much to add to this. Just that “retaining” “Archet” and “Bree” again means a phonetic translation in Chinese.

As for “Chetwood,” both translation failed to meet Tolkien’s standards for a satisfactory translation. 聯經’s特伍德 (which, by the way, is not very good even as a phonetic translation<sup>51</sup>) fails to give a semantic rendering of wood. 萬象’s切特伍德森林 has, in accordance with Tolkien’s guidelines, 切特 for “Chet,” but then, rather strangely, translates “wood” twice: once phonetically (伍德), and once semantically (森林). 萬象 has a tendency to say the same thing twice over.<sup>52</sup>

As for “Staddle,” both translations have the acceptable 斯塔德爾村. Tolkien in his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*” writes under the entry “Staddle”:

*Staddle*. A village name in Bree. *Staddle* is now dialectal, but occurs in place-names with the meaning “foundation,” of buildings, sheds, ricks, and so forth; from Old English *staðol*. Use a related equivalent in the language of translation (if any), such as German *Stadel*, or assimilate it to the spelling of the language.

Again, the obvious option in Chinese is “assimilation” via translation by sound, which was done in both translations.

So much for our analysis of this passage. I would like to point out that in the following paragraphs Tolkien gives a short outline of the history of the Bree-land, and in doing so often refers back to the “Elder Days” of Middle-earth—and that once more proves to be a topic full of pitfalls for the translators. Here only one small example.

Tolkien talks about the Men of Bree, who themselves claim to belong to one of

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<sup>51</sup> Looks almost as if the translator copied this from 萬象, but forgot the 切 at the beginning.

<sup>52</sup> See also the example 格雷黑文斯港 for “Grey Havens” in the Third Part of this chapter (Translation of Poems).

the oldest races of Men in Middle-earth. Tolkien says that few of these “had survived the turmoils of the Elder Days [the stories related in *The Silmarillion*]; but when the Kings returned again over the Great Sea [Belegaer] they had found the Bree-men still there . . . .”

I have related the background information necessary for the understanding of this passage elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> Let it suffice here to say that “when the Kings returned again over the Great Sea” refers to the return of the Numenoreans to Middle-earth after the fall of Numenor, their island-state in the Great Sea.

The 萬象 translation is thus fairly correct in translating this passage as follows: 在往昔時代的大動亂中倖存下來的人很少，但是當諸王渡海回歸時，他們發現布理人依然存在. This may be slightly vague, but so is the original—it is indeed part of the problem of translating these passages that Tolkien rarely names people, places and events from the Elder Days by their specific names, but rather uses general expressions (for example here “Kings” [for the Dunedain rulers of Numenor], “Great Sea” [for Belegaer], or “turmoils” [for the War of the Jewels, in which the Elves tried to recapture the Silmarils from Morgoth]). While vague, 萬象 here avoids to give an account that is *wrong* in terms of cause and result, or the general gist of the events being related.

Not so 聯經. Their translation reads: 在遠古時代大動亂後，倖存者可說少之又少；但當君王們遠渡重洋，到外地避難，又再度回來後，卻發現布雷人還在這裡. The facts are that the Dunedain (basically the Men who had supported the Elves in their war against Morgoth) had received the island Numenor as a gift from the Valar (“Gods of Middle-earth”) in the beginning of the Second Age as a reward for their valor and faithfulness in the War of the Jewels. So, naturally, they went to live there gladly, out of their own will (compare this to 到外地避難 !). It was when they *came back* to the eastern parts of Middle-earth that they were fleeing disaster (i.e. the downfall of Numenor). Thus, 聯經 has it all turned upside down, all because for some (quite unfathomable) reason the translator(s) felt compelled to add 到外地避難, which is nowhere to be found in the original text.

I would assume that the 萬象 translator probably was not any more aware of the

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<sup>53</sup> Most of it can be found in *The Silmarillion*, some also in *Lord*, see mainly my synopsis of *The Silmarillion* in the Second Part of Chapter Two, and my discourse on the Dunedain in the Third Part of

actual events related here in vague terms, but at least he avoided a confusing translation *simply by following the original text*. I have found in many parts of the books that the 聯經 translator(s), on the other hand, had a strong tendency to add things, or over-translate expressions, sentences or even whole paragraphs, without making it any clearer what was being said.

### 13

This passage serves to show how translators are at times “slaves” of the original sentence structure, though to varying degrees.

(Frodo, Sam, Pippin, and Merry are fleeing from the Black Riders [the Nazgul, or Ringwraiths], trying to make their way to Imladris. They are led by Strider [who is really Aragorn]. One night, they camp on Weathertop, a mountain halfway between Bree and Imladris. Suddenly, as Aragorn is telling them stories of the Elder Days and reciting old Elven poems, the company of five is attacked by five of the Nazgul who have found their little camp.

Frodo, under the influence of the Ringwraiths, suddenly feels the irresistible desire to put the One Ring [which he carries] on his finger, even though he is vaguely aware that this will reveal the Ring to his enemies. Finally he cannot resist any longer, and slips the ring on the forefinger of his left hand.)

Immediately, though everything else remained as before, dim and dark, the shapes became terribly clear. (LF 262)

【聯經《魔戒團（上）》，第 346 頁】

這時，儘管四周的一切和先前一樣幽暗，但在他看來，那些黑影立刻顯得清晰而可怕。

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第二冊，第 182 頁】

立即，儘管別的一切都照舊是陰陰暗暗，那幾個影子卻變的驚人的清晰。



(“The shapes” of the original are of course the Ringwraiths, rendered as 黑影 and 影子 respectively.)

I would like to draw the reader’s attention to the structure of the 萬象 sentence, which for my personal taste sticks a little *too* close to the original. In fact, when I was reading this sentence, the image of an English sentence beginning with “Immediately, though . . .” floated through my mind—immediately!

Though 聯經 employed a rather similar syntax, I think the 這時 instead of 立即 makes a significant difference. I feel it “sounds more Chinese,” maybe because I have read Chinese sentences starting with 這時 before. In other words, I think it is not bad style, or looking particularly strange, to begin a sentence with 這時.

But 立即 at the beginning of a sentence? And immediately followed by a comma, and a subordinate clause starting with 儘管? The main problem here is that 立即 is also too far away from the sentence it is heading. The principal clause here is 立即那幾個影子(卻)變的驚人的清晰, and this sentence is torn apart by the insertion of the sub-clause starting with 儘管. What is completely acceptable in English (for the original does the very same thing, and 萬象 just copied the syntax) or German, can be rather bad style in Chinese.

Note that 萬象’s 別的一切 is also very “English” (“everything else”), I like 四周(的)一切 better. As for “remained as before, dim and dark,” I personally prefer 萬象’s 都照舊是陰陰暗暗 to 和先前一樣幽暗.

## 14

This example is taken from Chapter Two of Book Two, “Elrond’s Council.” (See also my discussion of *Poem 1* and *Poem 2*, which are both quoted on Elrond’s Council.)

At the Council of Elrond, a crucial discussion is held regarding matters of the One Ring, and its significance for Sauron and Middle-earth. Many of the participants relate latest news on the situation in their parts of Middle-earth, others (especially Gandalf and Elrond) also reveal much of their knowledge of the history of the Rings, and of Sauron. At the very beginning of the council, the dwarf Gloin tells how, about one year ago, Sauron had sent a messenger to Dain, King of Dwarves, and made a request.

Sauron at that time had already found out that the One Ring was now in the possession of a Hobbit (Bilbo), and he also knew that Dain was acquainted with a Hobbit back when a company of dwarves had undertaken an expedition to Mount Erebor to recover a hoard of their treasures from the Dragon Smaug (this whole story being related in *The Hobbit*). Sauron now guessed that this acquaintance was in some likelihood the one Hobbit who had found the One Ring—a correct guess, as it turned out, since Bilbo had indeed gained the Ring from Gollum after a riddle-game in the dark caves of the Misty Mountains (see also my synopsis of *The Hobbit* and of *Lord*). Sauron now figured that via the Dwarves, he might gain access to the Ring—or at least find out more about its specific location.

Thus Sauron requested of Dain that he “should find this thief [as the messenger described Bilbo], and get from him, willing or no, a little ring, the least of rings, that he once stole. It is but a trifle that Sauron fancies, and an earnest of your good will” (LF 316). Of course this is only a sham, for that ring is the One Ring Sauron desires above all. Gloin tells how the messenger said Sauron would give back to Dain three of the seven Dwarf-rings of old in return for that “little ring” he wanted (also an indication that that ring was indeed more than a trifle). The messenger left with a veiled threat of violence should Dain refuse to cooperate.

Dain, who only partly understood what the messenger was talking about, would only say that he could not give an immediate answer, and needed to “consider this message, and what it meant under its fair cloak” (LF 316).

After Gloin has finished his account, it is clear to the knowing among the council’s participants that this is another supporting proof to show that the ring Frodo is bearing is indeed the One Ring Sauron lusts.

Other proof was Frodo’s pursuit by the Black Riders (the Nazgul, or Ringwraiths, Sauron’s most trusted servants) on his entire journey from the Shire to Rivendell (the account of this journey taking up the larger part of Book 1 of *Lord*).

Now we know *almost* enough to go on with. One other thing that is important in this passage is the history of the Ring. I have in short related it elsewhere, but for matters of convenience the gist of it may here be repeated: Sauron had lost the Ring in a decisive battle at the end of the Second Age of Middle-Earth, in which he suffered defeat at the hands of Gil-galad, the Elven-king, and Elendil, the Half-elf. Yet the winners (i.e. Isildur) soon lost the Ring in the River Anduin, and there it was discovered centuries later by Gollum (a Hobbit turned into a creature of the night after

centuries of possessing, or rather being possessed, by the Ring), who after another hundreds of years lost it to Bilbo.

Bilbo met Gollum in the caves under the Misty Mountains (Middle-earth's central mountain range) while he was temporarily separated from his companions, and by chance he also discovered the Ring (which Gollum had lost shortly before)—and kept it, not knowing then what a dangerous thing it was (see also the *Hobbit* synopsis). Gandalf the Wizard later urged Bilbo to pass on the Ring to his nephew Frodo.

By losing the One Ring, Sauron had also lost much of his magic power, for he had transferred a great part of his force into the Ring as a way of controlling the other Rings of Power (those mentioned in the Ring-poem, see *Poem 1* in the Third Part of Chapter Three of this thesis). He managed only to control the Dwarf-rings and the Ring of Men, though, for the Elven-rings had been hidden, and by the time of *Lord* were in the possession of Cirdan (an Elf from the Grey Havens), Galadriel (the Elven-queen of Lothlorien), and Gandalf the Wizard, the mastermind behind the campaign against Sauron (and actually a messenger sent by the Valar).

Now we can look at our example with a reasonable degree of understanding.

(Galdor, one of Cirdan's Elves present at the meeting, is not satisfied with the indirect evidence presented so far [see above] that Frodo's Ring is indeed the One Ring Sauron desires. He asks for more proof, and this is the beginning of Gandalf's long reply, and his account of the history of the Ring.)

"Some, Galdor," said Gandalf, "*would think the tidings of Gloin, and the pursuit of Frodo, proof enough that the halfling's trove is a thing of great worth to the Enemy. Yet it is a ring. What then? The Nine the Nazgul keep. The Seven are taken or destroyed.*" At this Gloin stirred, but did not speak. "The three we know of. What then is this one that he desires so much?"

*There is indeed a wide waste of time between the River and the Mountain, between the loss and the finding. But the gap in the knowledge of the Wise has been filled at last. Yet too slowly. For the Enemy has been close behind, closer even than I feared. And well is it that not until this year, this very summer, as it seems, did he learn the full truth.*" (LF 327)

【聯經《魔戒團（下）》，第 57 頁】

「蓋爾多，」甘達爾夫說，「有人想知道格勞因的消息，想對弗羅多加以追蹤，這足以證明哈夫林人的收藏品對薩烏隆的確很有價值。這是一枚戒指。那又怎麼樣呢？納芝戈爾保存的九枚戒指，不是七枚都被奪走或摧毀了嗎？」這時格勞因動了一下，但沒有說話。「有三枚我們是知道的。那麼他這麼想要的這枚又會怎麼樣呢？」

「在山水之間，在得與失之間，確實會虛擲太多的時光。但是至少讓智者得到可知的滿足，只是速度太慢了。因為薩烏隆就在後面，甚至比我所擔心的還要接近。如在在 [sic] 這個夏天之前他還不可能知道全部的真相。」

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第三冊，第 79—80 頁】

「有些人，加爾多，」甘達爾夫說，「會認為格羅因的消息，敵人對弗羅多的追蹤，已經證明了霍比特人所得的便是敵人的無價之寶。但這只是一枚戒指。怎樣的戒指呢？『九枚』保存在納茲烏手裡。『七枚』已被取走或摧毀。」聽到這裡格羅因抖了一下，但沒有說話。「還有那『三枚』我們也知道下落。那麼他如此渴望得到的這枚，是怎樣的一件的東西呢？」

「在大河與大山之間，在失落與找到之間的確存在著時間上的一巨大真空，但智者的知識最後填了這一溝壑。可是太慢了。因為公敵已經緊追而至，比我原先預料的追的更緊。還好只是今年，也就是今年這個夏天，他似乎才了解到全部的真相。」

This example is particularly interesting, because 萬象 managed to come up with what is (at least in terms of *correctness*, which is our foremost concern here) basically a flawless version of the entire passage. Without going into too much detail (as I have implied already that you may always look at the relevant phrases and sentences in the 萬象 translation for a more faithful rendering into the Chinese), I will now point out where and how 聯經 departed from the original's meaning.

Gandalf's first sentence is catastrophically misrendered. The translator obviously thoroughly misunderstood the structure of the English sentence. "Some . . . would think" means, as 萬象 has given correctly, 有的人會認為 (or 覺得), and 聯

經's 會想知道 is another glaring example for how the translator showed complete disregard for the original's phrases and entire sentence structures (not to mention that the 聯經 rendering simply does *not make any sense* context-wise). First, we are left wondering where the 知道 came from. But the root problem is something else, and the 知道 is probably an addition necessitated by the translator's misreading of the connection between the *parts of the sentence*.

How so? In the original, “would think” is followed by two object phrases “the tidings of Gloom” and “the pursuit of Frodo,” and the main sentence continues with “proof enough that . . .” I would guess the translator was confused, maybe, by this slightly less common usage of “think” in the same way “deem” is often used (as in “I deem these tidings evil”), i.e. “think + object phrase” (“think” with an object phrase directly added), without a conjunctive “that.” In other words, maybe the translator would have understood the sentence correctly, if the original would have read “Some . . . would think *that* that tidings of Gloom, and the pursuit of Frodo *are* proof enough that. . .”<sup>54</sup>

Grammatical problems aside, it should be clear from the entire context that Gandalf is summing up several of the *facts* already related at the council, and the “some” is nothing but an unspecific phrase. Gandalf is merely hinting here that Galdor is a rather doubting spirit, since for many other people that facts presented so far would be satisfactory evidence, with no need to ask for further proof (as Galdor does).

Finally, by reducing the original sentence and the 聯經 rendering to their *basic patterns*, we may also get a snappy glance at the profound difference between the two, caused (as stated above) in all likelihood by a misunderstanding of the “think + object phrase.” Let us designate “Gloom’s tidings” as *A* and “the pursuit of Frodo” as *B*, and “the halfling’s trove is a thing of great worth to the Enemy” as *C*.

For convenience’s sake, *both* syntax pattern are given in English.

Original: “Some would *think* (*A* + *B*) proof enough that *C*.”

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<sup>54</sup> Of course the “that” would necessitate an “are” (a verb), because the addition of a conjunction turns the original construction with mere object *phrases* into an object *clause*—and no clause without a verb. Tolkien’s original sentence, by the way, is much more elegant, since the subordinate clause “the halfling’s trove is a thing of great worth to the enemy” also starts with the conjunction “that,” so that yet another “that”-construction in the main sentence would have looked rather repetitive.

聯經: “Some *want to (know) A*, and *want to (do) B*, and that is proof enough (or: and that proves sufficiently) that *C*.”

If you have a look at the 萬象 translation of this sentence, you will see that its basic syntax pattern resembles the original’s pattern remarkably—indeed, it probably gets as close to the English structure as a Chinese sentence can get without sounding thoroughly “un-Chinese.”

The remaining problems are not so much about syntax, but—once more—lack of background knowledge, as well as tone and style. First, let us turn to “The Nine the Nazgul keep. The Seven are taken or destroyed.” Gandalf is talking about the Magic Rings, as they are also mentioned in the Ring-poem (see *Poem 1* in the Third Part of this chapter), as well as throughout “The Council of Elrond”—and, indeed, throughout the entire *Lord*. With so much information readily available *in the work itself*, how could 聯經 still commit the blunder of rendering these two sentences as 納芝戈爾保存的九枚戒指，不是七枚都被奪走或摧毀了嗎? What made the translator think he could simply *ignore* the period, simply brush aside the fact that these are two distinct sentences, with a distinct (not interrelated) message?

Compare the 聯經 rendering to 萬象’s: 『九枚』保存在納茲烏手裡。『七枚』已被取走或摧毀 (I like the use of Chinese quotation marks to indicate that the talk is of very specific objects). This is exactly what the original says, clear and simple (and recognizable even without much background knowledge, one would think). Why would the 聯經 translator try to establish an arbitrary connection between “The Nine” and “The Seven”?

A number of explanations is possible (and probably each of them contains part of the answer). First, unlike 萬象, the 聯經 translator ignored the significance of both “The Nine” and “The Seven” being given in capitals, which stresses beyond doubt that these are distinct entities, and should be treated as such. There is simply no way “The Seven” could be a “subset” of “The Nine,” as the 聯經 rendering suggests.

Secondly, the translator was probably not, or only vaguely, aware that “The Nine” are the “Nine (Rings) for Mortal Men doomed to die,” and the “The Seven” are the “Seven (Rings) for the Dwarf Lords in their halls of stone”—this would fall in the category of “insufficient awareness of the story’s background.” Let me add that “are taken or destroyed” clearly refers only too “The Seven,” so that on a syntactical level,

the 聯經 translation is also impossible. Retranslated into the source language, we would get something like “Of the nine (rings) the Nazgul keep, (comma, no period!) have not seven (no capitals!) been taken or destroyed?”

Let me also point out that the 聯經 translation ignores another important fact: if seven of the Nine were really destroyed (or “taken”), that would imply there were only two Ringwraiths left, for only the rings allow these ghastly creatures continue to exist. Remember that they (unlike Sauron, originally an “angelic” spirit) were originally human beings, and only through the power of the Nine Rings bestowed upon them by Sauron is their existence prolonged beyond any human measure.

To conclude our analysis of this mistake, “taken” (referring to the Seven Dwarf-rings) means “taken by *Sauron*”—please recall that at the very beginning of this Example **14** we related the gist of Gloin’s tidings, and there it was said that Sauron would give back to Dain three of the seven Dwarf-rings of old in return for the “little ring” (The One) he (Sauron) wanted so much. These “three” are indeed the very three Sauron has taken. All these facts were given only some ten pages earlier in the text, yet the 聯經 translation does not reflect any awareness of them.

Let us now look at the second paragraph of our passage.

Gandalf talks about a “wide waste of time between the River and Mountain [mark the capitals again, denoting a *specific* river and a *specific* mountain!], between the loss and the finding.”

From our introduction at the beginning of this Example we can easily deduce that the “River” is the Anduin, into which Isildur fell (while he was fleeing from a horde of Orcs), and where he lost the One Ring (it slipped off his finger, whereupon he became visible, and was shot by the Orcs). There it lay for many centuries before, by chance, it was found by Gollum, who soon retreated into caves under the Misty Mountains—“the Mountain” Gandalf is referring to here. It is these “many centuries” that Gandalf refers to as a “wide waste of time”—meaning “a very long period of time.

What waste does *not* mean here is 浪費, or anything of the like, as 聯經’s 虛擲太多的時光 would suggest. Why say that “too much time was wasted,” which is what the 聯經 phrase roughly says? Too much time for *what*? Gandalf at this point is simply stating facts, not making any comments or judgments. Those come two sentences later. Again, it is also doubtful that the translator realized that Gandalf is referring to

Anduin (and Isildur's loss of the Ring there) when he says "River," and to the Misty Mountains (and Gollum's hiding there with the Ring) when he says "Mountain."

Of course, by mentioning the "Mountain," Gandalf also alludes to the fact that it was there that Bilbo found the Ring, some seventy years before the Council of Elrond.

As for the rest of this paragraph, one cannot help but shake one's head looking at the awkward Chinese. What on earth is the reader to make of 至少讓智者得到可知的滿足? What is 可知的滿足?

Compare this to 萬象's 智者的知識最後填了這一溝壑. The Chinese surely looks better. Yet this is also incorrect, since it turns the passive voice of the original sentence ("the gap in the knowledge of the wise *has been filled* at last") into an active voice (roughly retranslated, the 萬象 sentence would become "the wise *have filled* the/that gap of knowledge at last"). Also, and of course these problems are connected, the 萬象 rendering makes "the wise" the subject of the sentence, and turns "the gap" into an object. The consequences are rather serious: in the original, it is being said that a very *specific* "gap" (i.e. the one "in the knowledge of the wise") has "been filled"—it is not said how, or by whom! In the 萬象 rendering, it is *the knowledge of the wise*<sup>55</sup> which has filled a "gap" that is also *specific*, but in a different way: the 這 of course refers back to what has been said immediately before—which is *not incorrect*, since Gandalf's "gap in the knowledge of the wise" also referred to the events mentioned in the preceding sentence (i.e. the loss and finding of the Ring).

Basically, 萬象 was *compelled* to identify a "gap-filler" the moment it decided to render the sentence in an active voice. Indeed, Tolkien in all likelihood uses the passive here because he *did not wish to be specific* at this point how the knowledge in the gap was filled. 萬象 neglected this, and once confronted with the "need" for a new subject, it picked the "most convenient" one, taking "the knowledge of the wise" out of the phrase "the gap in the knowledge of the wise." This also had "the advantage" that "gap" was now "free" to become the object of the sentence.

All this being said, even here (and this is the *only* spot where 萬象 made a clear mistake in the two paragraphs of this passage), in terms of readability and "relative correctness," 萬象's rendering is certainly preferable. Looking at the two paragraphs as a whole, the reader of 萬象 gets a reasonably good idea of what is being said.



As for 聯經's 至少讓智者得到可知的滿足, it can best be described with the Chinese phrase 不知所云. Note also that the 至少 looks strangely unmotivated: where does that come from in the original? The likeliest explanation, I am afraid, is that the translator's read "at *last*" as "at *least*." This heightens the sad impression that quite a few of the numerous mistakes in this paragraph have to be attributed to a rather incredible degree of *carelessness*.

In terms of style, here are two more examples that 萬象 in this paragraph did a relatively good job: compare 緊迫而至 to 就在後面 (聯經), and 比我原先預料的追得更緊 to 甚至比我所擔心的還要接近 (聯經).

Instead of going into too much detail with regard to the rest of the paragraph, let me just point out what looks like a typesetting mistake in the last sentence: 如~~在在~~在這個夏天之前他還不可能知道全部的真相, though it is actually quite hard to imagine what the sentence's beginning was to look like originally. One also wonders why 聯經 had to rearrange the sentence structure to such a big degree. And where is the original's "And well is it (that)," for which 萬象 has, short and handy, 還好? And where is "as it seems" (似乎 [萬象])?

We will leave the debate at Elrond's Council here, even though this chapter alone would provide numerous other passages with similar mistakes in both Chinese translations.

## 15

(The nine members of the Fellowship are resting from the hardships of their journey in the Elven-country of Lothlorien. One of the local Elves named Haldir has a chat with Merry, one of the Hobbit-members of the Fellowship. Haldir speaks of his desire to leave Middle-earth, and sail to the Undying Lands via the old sea route. Haldir says he has heard that there is an Elven-port in the far north-west of Middle-earth, beyond the land of the Halflings [the Shire]. He is speaking about the Grey Havens [from which Frodo also departs to Valinor at the end of the book], though he admits that he and most of his fellow-elves have

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<sup>55</sup> Clear identification here of the "gap-filler."

forgotten the exact location of that place. Merry confirms Haldor's words.)

"...There are Elf-havens west of my land, the Shire, where Hobbits live." (LF 452)

【聯經《魔戒團（下）》，第 223 頁】

「...，從我的土地往西去有小精靈安全的居所，那就是霍比特人居住的夏爾地區。」

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第三冊，第 67 頁】

「在我家鄉的西邊有一處小精靈天堂，我們霍比特人居住的地方叫夏爾國。」

We can keep this analysis short. The problem is obvious: the 聯經 translation interprets "Elf-havens" and "the Shire" as nouns in apposition, and treats "my land" as a phrase that is not nearer defined. The fact is, though, that "my land" and "the Shire, where Hobbits live" are the two phrases that are truly in apposition, while it is the "Elf-havens" that are not nearer described (except by the fact that they are west of the Shire). While it is true that the original sentence structure is ambiguous, it seems to be "more natural" to connect "the Shire, where Hobbits live" with the immediately preceding "my land," rather than with the "Elf-havens" earlier on. I also have to point out that here, as so often, a little more research into the geography of Middle-earth, and a closer look at Tolkien's maps, would have been very helpful for the translator. Additional background information could have helped him to arrive at a correct interpretation of this ambiguous passage.

萬象 has a rendering which is correct, though it does not exactly read smoothly: the transition from 在我家鄉的西邊有一處小精靈天堂 to 我們霍比特人居住的地方叫夏爾國 is rather abrupt.

Let me also mention that both 安全的居所 and 小精靈天堂 are quite unsatisfactory renderings for "Elf-havens": while it is true that "haven" can also have the figurative meaning of "shelter; refuge," and while it is also true that Grey Havens (which is what Merry and Haldir are talking about) have some qualities of a refuge, it

must still be stressed that first and foremost the Grey Havens are a *real* port, a place from which Elven-ships sail into the West, to the Undying Lands (this gives them the *quality* of a refuge: from here, the Elves can escape the disasters and hardships of Middle-earth).

## 16

This is an interesting passage from the sixth chapter of the fifth book of *The Lord of the Rings* (LR/IV, 6). While the 萬象 rendering contains only two minor problems, one probably a typeset/print mistake, the 聯經 edition contains a gross mistake, due either to carelessness and/or a misunderstanding of a simple sentence structure.

(Tolkien is writing about one of the vast winged creatures that serve as transport for the Nazguls, or Ringwraiths. The Lord of the Ringwraiths is riding one of them in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields.)

And the Dark Lord took it, and nursed it with *fell meats*, until it grew beyond the measure of all other things that fly; and *he gave it to his servant to be his steed*. (LR 135)

【聯經《國王歸來（上）》，第 157 頁】

薩烏隆捉住它，用死人肉餵養它，直至它長得超過其他一切飛禽，他使它成為他的腳力，為他效勞。

【萬象《國王歸來》，第一冊，第 215 頁】

而黑暗之君收留了牠，用腐肉養大牠們，使牠體烈超過所有會飛的動物，並將牠交給部下作為坐騎。

Throughout the entire work, 聯經 has the annoying tendency to confuse subjects and objects in sentences, or failing to grasp the connection between parts of sentences. The sentence quoted above is no exception.

It is actually quite difficult to explain *how* exactly the translator got confused in

this passage, for from the English it should be quite obvious that Sauron (here called “the Dark Lord”) caught and fed the huge monster-bird to give it to his servant (here referring to the Lord of the Nazgul, as is clear from the context), so that *his servant* may use it as his “steed,” his means of “air transport,” so to speak. Yet the 聯經 translation is bound to thoroughly confuse the reader by saying 他使它成爲他的腳力，爲他效勞. This rendering allows only one conclusion, i.e. that Sauron *himself* used the winged monster as his means of transport. This is not only wrong, and very puzzling in the immediate context, it also is bewildering against the background of the entire work, where Sauron *never* appears in person, not in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, nor elsewhere. Maybe our previous guess was right that the translator of *The Return of the King*, from which this passage is taken, did not even read the *whole* work before starting his translation (we have explained in Chapter One of this thesis that 聯經 hired different translators for each of the three English volumes).

Even if we forget about the larger context, and look only at the structure of the sentence itself, the 聯經 translator should not have made this blatant mistake: where, for example, is the “gave it to his (servant)” of the original? Completely dropped, it seems.

No matter how we look at it, or try to explain this mistake, one thing is for sure: the translator managed not only to confuse the would-be reader of his Chinese version, he in all likelihood also confused himself. This becomes apparent a couple of pages further on, where the Lord of the Nazgul, the owner of the winged beast, is mentioned again as “Ringwraith”(!): “The winged creature screamed at her [Eowyn], but *the Ringwraith* made no answer,...” (LR 137). The 聯經 translation renders this as 大翅膀怪物對著她尖聲怪叫，但是薩烏隆沒有回答. 薩烏隆 is 聯經’s rendering for Sauron, the Dark Lord. Again, Sauron does *not* appear in person in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields (or elsewhere in the trilogy), and from the whole context it is quite obvious that the King of the Nazgul is being referred to—the sentence clearly has “Ringwraith,” i.e. a servant of Sauron, not Sauron himself. One can only presume that the translator was confused by his own mix-ups earlier in the text, and thus not sure who or what “Ringwraith” was referring to, even though it is quite plain and obvious in the original.

A look at the correct 萬象 translation also shows that this sentence on page 137

of LR should not have posed many difficulties: 那隻長翅膀的怪物衝她尖叫，但魔戒陰魂卻沒有回答。

By the way, I like 萬象's 魔戒陰魂 for "Ringwraith": A semantic translation that conveys all the implications of the English original, i.e. the Ringwraiths are ghosts, a kind of "undead" creatures. They are, in fact, humans who have lived hundreds of years beyond the life span of mortals, driven on and sustained by the power of the Nine Rings given to them by Sauron, and dependent on the power of their Rings (and of the One Ring wielded by Sauron, "who rules them all") for their very existence as ghosts.

This is not to say that the Ringwraiths should *always* be referred to as 魔戒陰魂. Where they are referred to under different names, e.g. "Nazgul" (in the Dark Speech of Mordor), or "Black Riders," or "Nine Riders," or simply as "The Nine," adequate translations should be found for each of these different expressions. If this is done consistently, the intelligent reader of the work will surely be able to maintain a clear idea of the set of characters and their different denominations, just as the attentive reader of the 紅樓夢 or the 三國演義 is well capable of keeping in mind the many characters and their complicated relations in these Chinese classics.

I suggest semantic translations for all English expressions, as 萬象 did for Ringwraith, and phonetic translations for Elvish or Dark Speech names, like "Nazgul". Here 聯經's 納芝戈爾 is as good a rendering as any.<sup>56</sup> Where the Lord of the Nazgul is referred to as "Black Captain" (LR 137), I would have preferred something like 黑將軍 instead of 聯經's 黑大王, since this might—again—easily lead to confusion with Sauron. (Note that "Captain" is not meant here the way it is in modern military, as a clearly defined rank [上尉 or 上校], but to indicate Lord of the Nazgul's leadership over Sauron's armies.) For more on the rendering of different names for the same persons, peoples, places, or things, see also the discussion in Example *II*.

(Here it may only be added that 小魔影, as 聯經 at times has for The Nine, is a

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<sup>56</sup> No good rendering is 萬象's 納茲烏王 on page 215 (and *passim* in Book 5) of 《國王歸來》，第一冊 for the Lord of the Ringwraiths as he appears in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields: it mixes up the Ringwraith and his transport, and gives the faulty impression that the Nazgul riding on a winged beast is in some way distinct from (the same) Nazgul riding a black horse earlier in the novel. Anyway, the fell leader of The Nine is anything but a "king of birds."

quite unacceptable: as in 小精靈, or 小矮人, the 小 robs the Nazgul of all their stature. As the Elves are noble creatures of light, and the Dwarves a stout-hearted, respectable race, so the Ringwraiths are terrible enemies, fierce creatures of the dark. The term 小魔影 does not convey that, and gives rather the impression of mischievous, but pretty harmless, little devils.)

Let us now return to the main focus of our current Example **16**. In the 萬象 translation, there are two minor problems I would like to point out.

First, there is the obvious inconsistency of 黑暗之軍收留了牠, 用腐肉養大牠們. Why the switch from the (correct) singular to the plural? The original has “it” in both sentences. Either this is just another example of pure sloppiness, or maybe the translator in fact “thought too much,” for the fact is that *all* of the Nine Ringwraiths do ride a winged beast in the latter part of the War of the Ring, so that it would of course be a right conclusion that Sauron bred nine, and not just one winged monster. Thus the plural would no longer look so unmotivated. Still, adhering to the original text, the translator should have avoided this incongruity.

Another small problem is the word (is it a Chinese word?) 體烈 in the 萬象 version. I think it is quite likely that what is meant here is 體格, and that this is a misprint.

## **17**

This passage deserves special attention in as far as both translations contain serious mistranslations, in the case of 聯經 aggravated by some very bad Chinese.

(The scene is the battle on the Pelennor Fields, just east of Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor. The King of the Rohirrim, Theoden, has been struck down by the Lord of the Nazgul, the leader of the Nine Ringwraiths. When the head of the Nine, riding a winged beast, ventures to apply a final blow, Eowyn, niece of King Theoden [who managed to join Rohan’s army in the disguise of a man, and under the name of Dernhelm] steps between the Lord of the Nazgul and his victim. Merry the Hobbit [not aware that Dernhelm is actually Eowyn] is nearby and witnesses the scene. Eowyn draws her sword and challenges the leader of the Ringwraiths.)

A sword rang as it was drawn. "Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may."

"Hinder me? *Thou fool*. No living man can hinder me!"

Then Merry heard *of all sounds in that hour the strangest*. It seemed that Dernhelm laughed, and the clear voice was like the ring of steel. "But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Eowyn I am, Eomund's daughter. You stand between me and my lord and kin. Begone, if you be not deathless. *For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him.*"

The winged creature screamed at her, but *the Ringwraith* made no answer, and was silent, as if in sudden doubt. (LR 136-137)

【聯經《國王歸來（上）》，第 158—159 頁】

長劍噌地一聲拔出劍鞘。「隨你的便吧；可是只要可能我就要阻止你。」

「阻止我？你這傻瓜。沒有哪個活著的男人能阻止得了我！」

這時梅里聽到一種非常奇怪的聲音，似乎是德恩海爾姆的笑聲，笑得如同銀玲般清脆響亮。「但我不是活著的男人。你面對的可是個女人。我是伊奧溫，伊奧蒙德的女兒。你站到我和我的陛下及親屬之間了。如果你也是會死的人，那就滾開吧！只要你碰他一下，爲了生者和隱蔽的不死者，我會殺了你。」

大翅膀怪物對著她尖聲怪叫，但是薩烏隆沒有回答，他雖不作聲，似乎突然猶豫不決。

【萬象《國王歸來》，第一冊，第 216—217 頁】

「匡啷」一聲，是劍出鞘的聲音。「隨你的便吧，我就是要阻止你。」

「阻止我？你這個笨蛋。這世界上活著的男人，還沒有誰可以阻止我！」

接著，梅里在這一剎聽到了所有聲音中最奇怪的聲音。好像是德恩海爾姆在大笑，那清脆的聲音就像金屬鈴聲一般。「可是我不是活著的男人！在你面前的是個女人。我是伊奧文，伊奧蒙德之女。你擋在我和我的陛下與親人之間，如果你並非打不死，那就快滾吧！要是你碰他一碰，我就殺死你，不管他是活著還是昏死過去。」

那隻長翅膀的怪物衝她尖叫，但魔戒陰魂卻沒有回答，他在沈默，似乎突然有些遲疑。

The crucial sentence, where both translations erred, is “For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him.”

We will begin our analysis with 聯經. The translator failed to realize that the word “for” here means *not* 爲了, but 不管 (你是). A very literal, but correct, rendering of the sentence would thus be 不管 (or: 無論) 你是活的人，或是黑暗的鬼怪，如果你敢碰他，我就要殺了你！ It is hard to understand how the translator could have interpreted “for” as 爲了, because his rendering could only be (grammatically, not contextually!) correct if the English sentence was “For living *and* dark undead, I will smite you!” Since “or” and “and” denote two very different notions in the English language, this mistake is rather serious.

Looking at the whole context, the 聯經 translation simply *would not make any sense*, even if it was grammatically correct. The 爲了生者和隱蔽的不死者 is completely unmotivated and pointless in the given situation. And if that was not bad enough, shouldn't the translator have stopped short when looking at the quality of his Chinese here? What is 隱蔽的死者 supposed to *mean*?

Interestingly, 萬象 correctly reads “for” as 不管, but unfortunately the translator failed to grasp that “living or dark undead” does *not* refer to King Theoden, whom the Lord of the Nazgul wants to finish off with a final blow (which he would not really need to do, since Theoden dies shortly afterward, anyway), but to the Lord of the Nazgul *himself*, for Eowyn is directly addressing her opponent. This is very obvious from the context, and from the sentence itself, as she adds “I will smite *you*, if you touch him.”

Also, for the 萬象 translation to be correct, we would have to accept 昏死過去 as an adequate translation for “dark undead”—and this would be a farfetched interpretation, to put it mildly. If anything, Theoden is either still alive (though dying), or already dead. There is nothing in the text to motivate a description of the King of the Rohirrim as a “dark undead.”

Finally, looking at the sentence preceding “for living or dark undead,” we can also see that this phrase must be addressed at to the Nazgul. Eowyn says: “Begone, if



you be not deathless!” After this, “living or dark undead” naturally also refers to the Nazgul, as Eowyn continues to talk to her fierce fiend.<sup>57</sup>

Another small problem in the 聯經 translation: is 滾開 really adequate for “begone,” one of Tolkien’s many intentional uses of archaic language. 萬象 has 快滾吧, which is basically on the same language level, something like “get lost.” One might try the slightly more formal 走開 here instead.

A similar problem is posed by the Nazgul’s uttering “Thou fool.” Here I feel 聯經’s 傻瓜 is more satisfactory than 萬象’s 笨蛋.

Under Example 16, we have already discussed the incorrect the use of 薩烏隆 in the sentence 大翅膀怪物對著她尖聲怪叫，但是薩烏隆沒有回答，他雖不作聲，似乎突然猶豫不決。 Here it may be added that the 雖 in 他雖不作聲 is an over-translation, since there is no such conjunction in the original text.

Finally, 萬象’s translation of “Then Merry heard of all sounds in that hour the strangest” is problematic. Here, “in that hour” is given as 在這一刻, but strictly speaking, it is in the wrong position. To conform with the original, it should not be just placed an adverb ahead of 所有聲音, but should be a modifier of that phrase. The whole sentence structure would literally have to be rendered as something like 接著，梅里聽到這一刻所有聲音中最奇怪的一個。 Not exactly the perfect translation, and maybe 聯經 was not entirely wrong in “skipping” the whole problem with its freer translation, running 這時梅里聽到一種非常奇怪的聲音。

### Third Part: Translation of Poems

While there are many poems (many of which are actually songs) in the trilogy that are what one could describe as “fillers,” or comic relief (many of the Hobbit-songs fall in this category, e.g. Pippin’s “bath-song” on page 142 of LF), others come at crucial moments in the story, even though their content in itself is not

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<sup>57</sup> In the end, the Lord of the Nazgul is slain by Eowyn, the woman, and Merry, the Hobbit, in fulfillment of an ancient prophesy according to which the leader of The Nine could not be harmed by a

directly related to the plot (Frodo's song "There is an inn, a merry old inn," recited at The Prancing Pony in Bree, would belong in this category).

Then there are the poems, riddles, songs, spells, and prophecies, that are of vital importance for an understanding of the whole story, as they contain valuable information on what is going on—for the characters in the book as well as for the reader. Obviously, mistakes here must have a devastating effect on the reader's ability to follow the plot. In this section, we will have a look at three of these plot-relevant poems, as I call them.

While it might be a rewarding topic for another thesis to discuss the poetic quality (or lack of such, if that is how one feels) of Tolkien's verse, I have decided that such aesthetic considerations of style, rhyme, metrics, and use of language, would inflate this paper beyond proportion. Also, I felt that where basic requirements such as giving a correct rendering of the *content* of the poem, i.e. a purely semantic translation with no regard whatsoever to poetic form, were not met as in the case of 萬象 and 聯經, a discussion of subtle aesthetic problems would be out of place.

Note that both 萬象 and 聯經 at times attempted to reflect essentially poetic features such as rhyme and metrics. Virtually all of Tolkien's poems are rhymed, and all show metric patterns. In the Chinese translations these elements have at times disappeared, while at other times the translators sacrificed the correct meaning in their attempt to create rhymes.<sup>58</sup> Choosing priorities, it would have been desirable for the translators to restrict their efforts to conveying the meaning, and only that, of the poems. As shall be shown in the below examples, they made a very disappointing job of that basic task.

### **Poem 1**

An issue that comes up at the very beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, is the translation of the important poem that in the English edition is given ahead of the text of each of the three volumes and goes:

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living *man*—a woman and a Hobbit were a different matter.

<sup>58</sup> There also are successful attempts at giving rhymed Chinese versions of some poems, sometimes

Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,  
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,  
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,  
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne,  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.  
One Ring to rule them, One Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

聯經 renders this as:

三枚戒指給天底下的小精靈國君，  
七枚戒指給石廳中的小矮人之王，  
九枚戒指給注定免不了一死的人，  
一枚戒指給黑暗中的黑大王——  
那麼多地方由一片魔影籠罩著。  
這枚戒指發現了它們，並且掌管著它們，  
這枚戒指帶回了它們，並將它們禁錮黑暗之中。  
是呀！那麼多地方由一片魔影籠罩著……。

聯經, like the English original, gives this poem ahead of the text, though only in the first volume. 萬象 does not do this, but of course the poem is given in Chapter 2, *The Shadow of the Past* (過去的陰影), because in this chapter Gandalf, the Wizard, and Frodo, the Hobbit-hero of the book, talk about the magic ring, upon which two lines of the poem are inscribed (the sixth and seventh line, expressing Sauron's intent to rule Middle-earth). To explain the background of the story, and demonstrate Frodo's need to go on his quest to destroy the one magic ring, Gandalf goes on to recite the whole poem to the astonished Hobbit. The 萬象 translation goes:

天下魔戒有三枚屬於小精靈國王

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with a different rhyme pattern, e.g. *Poem 3*.

七枚在侏儒王爺那石頭的殿堂  
九枚屬於壽命不長的世間凡人  
還有一枚屬於黑暗之君，在黑暗寶座上  
在摩爾多國那陰影居住的地方  
這一枚魔戒統轄著全部戒指  
持有它就在冥冥中牽動各方  
持有它就能找到所有魔戒  
在摩爾多國那陰影居住的地方

Very obviously, both translations have their weaknesses and strong points, but all in all, they quite fail to capture both meaning and spirit of the original.

(I have used no italics to indicate problematic passages here, since there is something to comment on in virtually every line.)

First, both translations use 小精靈 for “Elves” (Elven-kings, as it is here). The term 精靈, especially with a 小 in front of it, evokes—as I found out from speaking to Chinese people about the term—images of little creatures, maybe good in nature, maybe a little mischievous and up to pranks (Gremlins-sort-of-type), rather small, anyway, or even tiny. Apart from size, 小精靈 also does not confer any of the dignity and nobility that Tolkien had conferred upon Elves—or rather given back to them. In traditional Nordic myth, one of Tolkien’s main sources for modeling his stories and figures, both Elves and Dwarves are described as rather awe-inspiring, dignified creatures, great both in stature and spirit, certainly very different from the tiny, domesticated creatures we encounter in Victorian “fairy-tales” or in *Grimm’s Märchen*.<sup>59</sup>

For now, it may be enough to note that, while 精靈 may still be acceptable if the translator through various other means is able to impress upon the reader the right image of these creatures,<sup>60</sup> the term 小精靈 is certainly an unfortunate choice.

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<sup>59</sup> For more on Tolkien’s concept of Elves, and “fairy tales” as a literary genre, see also: J.R.R. Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories,” *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*.

<sup>60</sup> In fact, there are various passage both in *Lord* and in *The Silmarillion* in which Tolkien himself gives hints as to what Elves look like, and what kind of creatures they are: a non-human, intelligent race with magical powers, “the fairest of all earthly creatures, resembling the Ainur in spirit.” They were about

As for the poor Dwarves, I simply suggest 矮人 (without the prefix 小, they are taller than Hobbits, after all [see *The Hobbit*]). Even so, here 聯經 with its 小矮人 provides a slightly more satisfactory rendering than 萬象, since 侏儒 is apt to evoke images of pygmies performing in a circus, or of people suffering from a disease that prevents them from growing tall. The term certainly is inadequate, completely out of line with the author's style and intent.

In its edition of *The Hobbit*, 聯經 also used 侏儒 for “Dwarf”, probably because the translator had already reserved 小矮人 for the Hobbits. In 《魔戒》, 聯經 consistently uses 霍比特人 for Hobbits and 小矮人 for Dwarves. Not a bad strategy, though I would still rather remove the 小 preceding 矮人—and personally, I would translate “Hobbit” rather as 哈比人, but this falls already in the domain of taste.

The above problems are about the translation of proper nouns. More complicated is the analysis of the structure and meaning of the two translations of the poem. As we will see, most of these problems come up in the second part of the poem, or the last four verses.

I will begin with 聯經. for some utterly incomprehensible reason they rendered the repeated verse “In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie” (verse five and eight) as 那麼多地方由一片魔影籠罩著 for line five, and 是呀！那麼多地方由一片魔影籠罩著. Now I am by no means opposed to translating some passages freely, if it is in the spirit of the original, but why does “the Land of Mordor” have to become 那麼多地方? This free rendering does *not* make it easier to understand the poem, rather on the contrary. Mordor is mentioned here on purpose by Tolkien, for it is the Land of the Dark Lord, Sauron, from where he sends out his servants, the Ringwraiths, to look for the one magic ring he lost, and from where he launches his attacks on the free peoples of Middle-earth. Here, the translator surely should have stuck closer to the original, as 萬象 did.

It cannot go unmentioned that this 那麼多地方 is in all likelihood a typographical error, since in Chapter 2 of the First Book (*The Shadow of the Past*),

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six feet tall and somewhat slender, graceful but strong and resistant to the extremes of nature. Their senses, especially of hearing and sight, were much keener than those of men. The Eldar (or High Elves) could talk directly from mind to mind without words.

when Gandalf recites the poem, 聯經 has 在那摩多地方. This would allow to take 摩多 for Mordor (as 聯經 uses it consistently throughout *Lord*), but then this phrase would be rather strange. Would it not be much smoother to say 在摩多那地方? Note also that (apart from the suspected typographical error) 聯經 is inconsistent, for in the version of the poem it gives ahead of the *Prologue*, it says 那麼多地方由一片魔影籠罩著, while in Chapter 2 the word 在 is added at the beginning of the sentence (which renders the structure of the entire sentence very awkward).

Even more importantly: reading the English original, we find that lines five and eight are closely connected to their preceding lines, four and six/seven. By translating lines five and eight the way they did, the 聯經 translators have completely destroyed this connection, a fact that is also reflected in the punctuation marks they virtually are forced to use because of their own, unnecessarily free translations of lines five and eight: they end line four with a long dash, although the English uses only a simple comma. Even more stunning is line seven, where 聯經 uses a full stop! The English does not have *any* punctuation mark at the end of this line; the enjambment shows how close sentence seven and lines eight are connected both syntactically and semantically:

“(One Ring to rule them, One Ring to find them,)

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.”

The translators have failed to see the close connection of “In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie” with the preceding line in both places where this phrase appears in the poem, and have, for no good reason, interrupted the smooth flow of the poem as well as distorted its meaning. In verse five, the phrase is used as a modifier of “the Dark Lord on his dark throne,” giving a closer description of where that Dark Lord dwells. 聯經 rips apart this smoothly connected sentences, again “necessitated” by the unmotivated translation of “Mordor” as 那麼多地方.

Staying with the 聯經 translation for a little longer, I would like to point out at least one other major problem concerning lines six and seven. The English is kept somewhat ambiguous (which is part of its artistic appeal), since it is not entirely clear what “them” refers to. One explanation could be that it means the other nineteen magic rings mentioned in the first three lines of the poem: this is the interpretation of

the 萬象 translators, as is seen from their rendering of the relevant passage. The other, and in my opinion more likely, reading is that them refers to the free races of Middle Earth that are opposed to Sauron. From the translation of “them” as 它們 we have to strongly suspect that 聯經, like 萬象, felt that “them” meant the other rings (of the Elves, Dwarves, and of mankind).

This is a misinterpretation that results from a lack of understanding for Tolkien’s entire mythological setup, more precisely, for the history of the rings as it is given in *The Silmarillion*, but also in *The Lord of the Rings* itself at several points in the story. From chapters like *The Shadow of the Past* (LF, Book 1) or *The Council of Elrond* (LF, Book 2), the translators should have learned enough to avoid the above misreading of “them.”

The facts that the translators should have discovered from Tolkien’s own works are the following: Sauron had no need to “find” and “bring” the other nineteen rings<sup>61</sup> to Mordor, because the three Elven-rings had already lost most of their power, and were well hidden from Sauron, while some of the Dwarf-rings were lost, with the remaining others already in Sauron’s possession. Most interesting is the fate of the nine rings “for mortal men doomed to die”: They had all long ago been recovered by Sauron, and given to men to lure them into his service: these were the nine ringwraiths, or Nazgul, his most powerful servants. They were called ringwraiths, because any mortal possessing one of the Rings would not die, but would continue living in great weariness, and possess magic powers to serve his master.

From the above it should be obvious that “them” in verses six and seven of the poem should refer to the free races, especially Elves, Men and Dwarves, but also others, and *not* to the other magic rings. Another flaw in the 聯經 translation is, in my view, the use of 了 in lines six and seven. The English uses “to” throughout these two

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<sup>61</sup> The Rings of Power, as the twenty rings were called, were in fact a product of the cooperation between Sauron and the Elven smiths of Eregion during the Second Age of Middle-earth. Back then, Sauron was still capable of appearing in a fair shape to the free races of Middle-earth, and he and the Elves exchanged magic craft and knowledge, and together forged Nine rings for Men, Seven for Dwarves, and Three for the Elves. Ten years after forging these rings together with the Elves, Sauron treacherously forged the One Ring (in the fires of Mount Doom in Mordor) to rule the others. He was most successful with the Nine Rings for mortal men, using them to corrupt nine men and force them forever into his service.

verses: “One Ring *to* rule them all, One Ring *to* find them/One Ring *to* bring them all and in the darkness bind them.” This is a clear indication of *intent*, i.e. something planned for the future, meaning the owner of the Ring, even upon forging it (remember these are the two lines of the poem that are actually engraved on the ring!) intended (and, during the time of the story related in *The Lord of the Rings*, still does intend) to subdue the free races of Middle-earth. The 了 used in the 聯經 translation (發現了它們 and 帶回了它們) indicates past tense, and is thus hardly correct in this context.

We have already discussed the first four lines of the 萬象 translation, and will thus now have a short look at the last four verses. As already shown above, 萬象 made the highly disputable decision of interpreting “them” in lines six and seven as ‘the other magic rings’ mentioned in the first three lines of the poem. Also, 萬象 made nine verses out of the original eight, adding 這一枚魔戒統轄著全部戒指, and together with 持有它就在冥冥中牽動各方, 持有它就能找到所有魔戒 this is meant to represent lines six and seven of the English original. This is doubtless a very free translation in two aspects: First, it completely abandons the slight ambiguity of “them” in the original, and decides to translate it as 戒指; second, it also does away with the syntax of lines six and seven of the original, and rearranges it radically. By doing so, the translators mislead the reader with regard to the underlying meaning of the poem.

Finally, while 萬象 managed to preserve the close connection between verses four and five of the poem, it fails to do the same for lines seven and eight. 聯經 failed in the same spot because it translated “Mordor” as 那麼多地方, being too free in its rendering of the eight line. 萬象 destroys the smooth semantic flow because of its overly free rendering of the sixth and seven line of the original. The last line but one in 萬象 reads: 持有它就能夠找到所有魔戒, and after that the last line 在摩爾多國那陰影居住的地方 looks strangely unmotivated: why would the rings be found in Mordor? If they were there, Sauron would hardly have to look for them. And then, again, the passage is not really about the rings, but about the free peoples of Middle-earth.

One other minor problem:

陰影居住的地方 is not overwhelmingly poetic. Here 聯經 did come up with



something more useful.

## ***Poem 2***

The poem below is cited by Boromir on the Council of Elrond in Book 2 of *Lord*, where, together with many of the wise (e.g. Elrond and Galadriel), are gathered Gandalf, Aragorn (Strider), Frodo, Sam, Pippin, Merry, Bilbo, Gimli the Dwarf, Legolas the Elf, and Boromir. After the Council, they become the “Fellowship of the Ring,” the group of nine that is to try and destroy the One Ring and resist Sauron in his attempt to overrun Middle-earth.

Boromir is the son of Denethor, the Steward of Gondor. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, part of the Dunedain, or Numenorans, came to Middle-earth after their huge island (Numenor) in the Western Seas had been sunk by Iluvatar as a punishment for their attempt to attain immortality. Those of the Dunedain who had not participated in the attempt to enter the Undying Lands, the so-called “Faithful,” fled from the downfall of Numenor, and reached the coast of Middle-earth on their ships (they were great mariners). Here they established the kingdoms of Gondor and Arnor.

Meanwhile, Sauron who had triggered the fall of Numenor by inducing its king to seek access to Valinor (The Undying Lands), also returns to Middle-earth, remaining the bitter enemy of the Dunedain. Since his former role as benevolent counselor to the Court of Numenor was exposed after the disastrous downfall of Numenor, he now makes open war against the Dunedain. Thus at the end of the Second Age, the so-called Last Alliance of Elves and Men is formed between Elendil and the Elven High-lord Gil-galad. Their armies win the battle of Dagorlad north of Mordor, and lay siege to Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower where Sauron dwells (as he does again in the Third Age after his return from the shadows).

In a battle on the slopes of Orodruin (or Mount Doom, where the One Ring was forged, and is at the end of the War of the Ring destroyed by Frodo and Gollum) Sauron is overthrown, but both Gil-galad and Elendil are slain. (Anarion had also died before in battle.) Elendil’s sword then was Narsil, which had been forged by the Dwarf Telchar of Nogrod in the First Age. Narsil broke (it is the very “sword that was broken” in the below poem!), but Isildur gathered its shards, and used its hilt to cut the One Ring from Sauron’s finger. Thus Narsil became one of the heirlooms of the Line of Isildur, and like the lines from Boromir’s dream predict, it was reforged for

Aragorn and renamed Anduril. The One Ring also went into Isildur's possession.

After the defeat of Sauron, Isildur ruled Gondor for two years (from the year 3441 in the Second Age to the year 2 of the Third Age), during which time he also planted a seedling of the White Tree<sup>62</sup> in Minas Anor. He then traveled north to assume the rule of Arnor (having installed his nephew Meneldil as ruler of Gondor), of which he had become king on his father's death in the battle against Sauron. On the way, however, his party was ambushed in the Gladden Fields by a host of Orcs. Isildur tried to escape by putting on the Ring and swimming in the River Anduin, but the Ring slipped off and he was slain. Since that day, the One Ring was also called Isildur's Bane (see the below poem). The shards of Narsil were brought back to Arnor by one of Isildur's men, who escaped from the Orcs. It was kept in Imladris (Rivendell), Elrond's place, after the fall of the Dunedain North-kingdom.

After the death of Elendil, the leader of the Faithful, the Dunedain were split in two groups, those of the North and those of Gondor in the south.

The Dunedain of the North were attacked in the year 1300 of the Third Age by the Witch-king of Angmar (who is nobody else but the Lord of the Nazgul of *Lord*), and they slowly lost their territory and dwindled. Soon they became few in numbers, and survived only with the aid of Elrond the Wise. Adversity preserved their hardiness, and most of the male Dunedain became Rangers, who protected the innocent Men and Hobbits of Eriador (the Kingdom of Arnor had long since crumbled). The Dunedain of the North were ruled by the line of Isildur, son of Elendil. This line never failed, and Aragorn (known as Strider, and also a prominent Ranger when Frodo and his companions first meet him in *Lord*) is a descendent of that line through the centuries, and thus true heir to the throne of the Dunedain Kingdoms in Middle-earth, Arnor and Gondor. He was installed after victory in the War of the Ring as the first King of the Reunited Kingdom. Thus the title *The Return of the King* for the third volume.

In Gondor, the Dunedain flourished for many years. Yet many of the southern Dunedain became decadent and over-proud, and over-concerned with their short life-span (like their forebears in Numenor). The line of Anarion (younger son of Elendil, and second King of Gondor) failed five times because of childlessness or the early death of the king. When the line of kings failed, the Stewards of the House of Anarion became rulers of Gondor. (The Steward was the chief official in Gondor,

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<sup>62</sup> See the relevant section in "Pitfalls for the Translator" in Chapter Three of this thesis.

head of the King's Council, and the office soon become hereditary.) From year 2050 to 3019 (3019 being the year when Sauron is finally defeated), all Stewards were ruling Stewards, i.e. they ruled in place of the king whose line had perished.

During these roughly 1,000 years, the Stewards held their office awaiting the return of the king—but few believed in such a return, and the Ruling Stewards did not look with favor on the idea of giving the crown to any heir of Isildur. Still, none of them sat on the throne of Gondor or wore the crown. They bore a white rod of office and used a plain white banner. In all other ways, though, their power and position were the same as that of the kings in whose place they ruled.

Boromir in *Lord* is the eldest son of Denethor, the Ruling Steward during the War of the Ring. During the time when the story sets in, Gondor is feeling increasing pressure from Sauron and his armies. (The lands Gondor in the west and Mordor in the east are facing each other, separated only by the River Anduin running through Ithilien. Gondor is the natural first goal for Sauron's war on the free peoples, especially because if the stronghold of Gondor falls, other lands would quickly subdue to the Dark Lord.) The Nazgul, stationed in Minas Morgul (see the below poem),<sup>63</sup> get involved and manage to drive most of the men of Gondor out of Ithilien (the buffer zone between Gondor and Mordor), and to sack Osgiliath (originally Gondor's first capital), which was built on both sides of the Anduin between Minas Anor (Minas Tirith<sup>64</sup>) and Minas Ithil (Minas Morgul).

At about this time, Faramir, Boromir's younger brother, has a recurrent dream, that once also comes to Boromir himself. Of this he tells the Council of Elrond, saying that "in that dream I thought the eastern sky grew dark and there was a growing thunder, but in the West [the direction of Valinor] a pale light lingered, and out of it I heard a voice, remote but clear, crying:...." (Here follows the poem given

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<sup>63</sup> Formerly Minas Ithil (Tower of the Moon), a fortress-city built in the Second Age by Isildur on a western spur of the Ephel Duath (Shadow Mountains), which form the western border of Mordor. It was taken short afterwards by Sauron, but with the defeat of Sauron at the end of the Second Age, it returned into possession of the Dunedain, but failed to regain its former equal footing with Minas Tirith (formerly Minas Anor[Tower of the Sun]). As Sauron rose again in the Third Age, he recaptured Minas Ithil through the Nazgul, and afterwards it was called Minas Morgul in Gondor (which is Sindarin and means "Tower of Black Magic"). During the War of the Ring, it was the main Fortress of The Nine.

<sup>64</sup> Minas Anor was renamed Minas Tirith (Tower of Guard) after the fall of Minas Ithil in the year 2002 of the Second Age.

below.)<sup>65</sup>

After quoting the poem, Boromir admits that neither he nor his brother, or anyone else in Gondor, understood much of these words. He declares that he has come to Elrond's House to seek advice on how to interpret the dream-prophecy at this pressing hour when Gondor is in danger of being overrun by Sauron's troops. In short, he wants an explanation of his "riddle."

Seek for the Sword that was broken:  
In Imladris it dwells;  
There shall be counsels taken  
Stronger than Morgul-spells.  
There shall be shown a token  
That Doom is near at hand,  
For Isildur's Bane shall waken,  
And the Halfling forth shall stand. (LF 322/II, 2)

【聯經《魔戒團（下）》，第 49—50 頁】

追尋那柄伊西爾都斷劍  
它在裂谷安身，  
那裡將會聽到一些忠言  
能把摹古爾的咒語戰勝  
那裡將有一種象徵出現  
表明厄運將臨劫數難逃  
伊西爾都的災星將醒來，  
哈夫林的大軍就要開到

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第三冊，第 70 頁】

尋覓一把斷劍

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<sup>65</sup> The reader will excuse this long summary, but this (already very condensed!) background information is essential for a true understanding of the poem below—an indication of the daunting task faced by the translator, not just of that poem, but the entire book.

藏匿於伊姆拉德里斯  
而且會找到密令  
強過摹古爾的咒語  
劍中上有一條顯示  
厄運即將臨頭  
伊西爾德毒物轉生  
小矮人義膽救世

With the above summary of essential background information in mind, we can easily see where both translations failed.

Starting with 聯經, it correctly uses 那柄(斷劍) to indicate that a *specific* sword is meant (萬象 use of 一把 fails to convey this: the English clearly states “*the sword that was broken*,” using a definite article and giving a nearer description, so even without background knowledge, just by looking at the grammar, should this mistake have been avoided). Yet the addition of 伊西爾都 is at least awkward. While it is right (see the above summary) that Isildur guarded the shards of Narsil for a short time, it was really his father’s sword. More importantly still, the English simply *does not mention* Isildur in this line. If it would, maybe the poem would be a little less of a riddle to Boromir, after all. We can thus safely call this an unfortunate over-translation.

Line two of the poem: No big problem here semantically, but why 裂谷 instead of a phonetic rendering of the Sindarin word “Imladris”? (I have discussed this issue in Example *II* of the Second Part of this Chapter, and in the section “Pitfalls for the Translator” in Chapter Two, and will thus not dwell on it here. Let’s give 聯經 credit that at least their semantic translation is correct, since “Imladris” indeed means “deep-dale-cleft.”)

Line three: As I said, no comment on the poetic quality of the translation. 忠言 for “counsel” is clumsy, since “counsel” does not so much mean “advice” here (the English does *not* say “There you shall hear/listen to some advice”), but indicates that a discussion is to be held at Elrond’s House to make certain decisions. This also becomes clear from what happens in the rest of the chapter. If that is not convincing enough, note that “take counsel” usually means “deliberate,” something that could be

rendered as 商量. The 聯經 translators probably had “give counsel” in mind when translating the line, since that indeed means something like 給某人忠告.

Line four: No semantic problems here, though the Chinese construction with 把 is rather awkward. Here, 萬象’s 強過摹古爾的咒語 reads much smoother. It is possible, even likely, that the translator of the poem rearranged the sentence structure for the purpose of rhyme, i.e. he needed the 戰勝 at the end of line to rhyme with the 安身 at the end of line 2 (these lines also rhyme in the original).

Line five: Of course, from our background summary we know that what this line refers to is the One Ring, foreboding the escalation of the war with Sauron into a fullscale war. Somehow 象徵 does not sound enough like a concrete object to me, but this may be my subjective feeling. Personally, though, I would not hesitate to consider using something like 東西 here to translate token, and then use 象徵 as a verb in the next sentence to make clear that this “thing” (the Ring) is indicating that “doom is near at hand.” 出現 is not very appropriate, since the English does not have “appear,” but the passive construction “(shall) be shown.”

Line six: While the meaning is correct, the addition of 劫數難逃 smacks of over-translation. In a poem, though, and considering that it is a common, handy expression, I think this is all right.

Line seven: “Waken” is obviously meant in a figurative sense. “Isildur’s Bane” again refers to the One Ring, and while in English the archaic expression “waken” (usually reserved for people) may be used with an object, this usage does not seem so common in Chinese.

Line eight: The translator saved the worst for the last. First, why translate Halfling as 哈夫林? “Halfling” clearly refers to “Hobbits,” for it is now Frodo, the Hobbit, who carries the Ring, and who will “stand forth” (come forward) during Elrond’s Council to show (“there shall be shown a token”) Sauron’s One Ring.

While “Halfling” is no common English expression (it does have some rather rare meanings), “half” here clearly refers to the fact that Hobbits are roughly half the size of Men, and “-ling” is a suffix that can also indicate something “small,” e.g. in “duckling.” (Hobbits certainly looked small in the eyes of the tall Dunedain.) Would thus a rendering by sense, something along the lines of 小個子 or 矮個兒, not have been a better solution?

Another problem lies with 大軍. Again, one is flabbergasted just looking at the expression, wondering where it came from. It is certainly not in the English text.

Let us note that not only is 大軍 nonexistent in the original, the Chinese expression also indicates plural, were in the original text only *one* Halfling (“*the* Halfling”—a specific person, meaning Frodo) is mentioned.

No matter how we look at it, the sudden mention of an army of 哈夫林 (and it is doubtful that 哈夫林 can be identified as meaning Hobbit) sort of “coming to the rescue” is totally unmotivated, grammatically wrong, and does in no way fit in with our background information above (or the rest of the chapter, or the whole trilogy, for that matter).

Let us now turn to the 萬象 translation of the poem.

Line one: I have already commented above on the inaccurate use of 一把 in this line.

Line two: I like the rendering of “Imladris” as 伊姆拉德里斯. I am not so happy with 藏匿 for “dwells”: this line simply means that Narsil (Anduril) *is* in Imladris. It could of course be argued that in a way the sword *was* hidden from the world for centuries, but I would still prefer to avoid the over-translation here.

Line three: Here we confront a bigger problem in the term 密令: Why would “counsel” mean “secret order”? And again, it is “counsels *taken*,” not *found*! Also, the connection between the first three lines, very close in the original, is rather loose here. Especially the “leap” from line two to line three is a little abrupt, because the translator failed (as 聯經 did) to translate “there” at the beginning of the third line, and thus remind the reader that the location has not changed (as it in fact does not throughout the entire poem).

The 找到 used in this line connects awkwardly with the 藏匿 in the second line, because we face an abrupt change of subject: In line two, the sword (Narsil) is clearly the subject (mentioned in the first line), in line three we are not sure *who* it is that is going to find what 萬象 calls a “secret order.” The English connects the two lines smoothly with “there,” which takes up the Imladris of the second line. Instead of any equivalent for the “there” in the 萬象 translation, we have a vacuum that cannot be filled by the 爾且, a meaningless connective.

Line four: Not a bad rendering, if only it was connected with a better third line.

Line five: Here the serious problems start. This is easily the worst line in the translated poem, as it completely misleads the reader. This again happens because of a change of topic. While the first two lines of the poem are about the “Sword that was broken,” and the third and the fourth line about a deliberation to be held in Imladris, the next three lines are clearly about the One Ring. 萬象 has completely dropped the “token” of the original, or rather it has “interpreted” it as “a line on the Sword that was broken.” The translator simply failed to realize that the topic in line five is the One Ring, not the Sword. This is all the more astounding as the Sword already ceased to be the topic in lines three and four.

Line five, in more modern language, tells us that an object will be shown at the counsel in Imladris. In the 萬象 translation, it tells us that a line in a sword shows something. Note that in the original, “show” is in the passive form, while the translation makes it active: whatever it is (the incorrect “line” or the correct “Ring”), it is not *being shown* in the 萬象 version (i.e. held up by Frodo for all participants in the council to see), it itself shows something.

To sum up the mistakes that lead to 萬象’s absurd rendering here: the translator seems to take “there” to be the Sword (not Imladris); he makes the Sword the topic of the sentence (not the Ring) because he interprets “token” as “line (in the Sword)” (not as the Ring); he interprets “shown” as active form; he gives 有 for “shall be” (not 會 [有]/將會). In short, in total neglect of all grammatical rules and all semantic realities, 萬象 patches together a sentence that may read reasonably smooth in the Chinese translation, but when we compare it to the true meaning of the original sentence, we find that 萬象 is totally misleading the reader (with the reader likely not even aware of it, since unlike the “Mr Bilbo learned him his letters” blunder by 聯經 in Example 8, this sentence *seems* to fit in the context).

Line six: Nothing really wrong with the line *per se*, but in its connection with line five, we of course face the problem that 萬象 has made “a line in the sword” the harbinger of “Doom.”

Line seven: Now the 萬象 translator can no longer find a way around the One Ring, though I somewhat doubt he was fully aware what “Isildur’s Bane” is (though it should be clear from the pages following the poem). Be that as it may, the translation of “bane” as 毒物 constitutes a serious stylistic incongruity against the background of



Tolkien's pre-industrial world where concepts like chemical compounds and toxic matter were still unknown. "Bane" is not (a) poison, but a 剋星, or 災星, as 聯經 has it. I leave it to the reader to decide whether this is "only" a stylistic error, or a semantic mistake, though I tend to think the latter. Equally annoying is 轉生 for "waken": what is being said here is simply that the One Ring is once more gaining great importance in the "international" affairs of Middle-earth. 轉生 with its Buddhist connotations of reincarnation or transmigration is certainly out of place here. Maybe the rather plain 再次 (or 重新) 出現 would do a better job?

Line eight: I have discussed the issue 小矮人 for "Hobbit" elsewhere (e.g. in my analysis of the "Ring-poem"), thus here just a reminder that 萬象 uses the (very unsatisfactory) 侏儒 consistently for Dwarves, and generally has 霍比特 for Hobbit. Thus in *this* context (and where else the term "Halfling" is used), 小矮人 may not be a bad idea as an alternative term for Hobbit, as it also roughly corresponds to the meaning of the English "Halfling," for which I have suggested a semantic translation. It can also not be confused with 小矮人 as meaning "Dwarf," since 萬象 is not using the term 小矮人 for any of Tolkien's peoples.

Finally, I consider 義膽救世 an over-translation. All that is meant here is that a Hobbit (i.e. *the* Hobbit Frodo, who is currently in possession of the Ring, and about to be "officially" appointed "Ringbearer" by the Council of Elrond) will come forward, and will show the Ring to those gathered around Elrond's table. Of course, one could also interpret the "forth shall stand" in a broader sense as "will leave his mark on history"—and save the world, as in a way Frodo really does in the end. Looking at it this way, 義膽救世 would still be a free, but correct, translation.

### **Poem 3**

This poem is also quoted on the Council of Elrond, only two pages after the above one.

After Boromir has finished the recital of the dream-prophecy, it is Aragorn who gives an answer to part of the riddle by casting the two pieces of Narsil on the council table. In the ensuing conversation Elrond introduces Aragorn as "Aragorn son Arathorn, . . . descended through many fathers from Isildur Elendil's son of Minas

Ithil” (LF 323). Upon this, Frodo, who has been enlightened by Gandalf about the history of the Ring in Chapter Two of Book 1 of *Lord* (“The Shadow of the Past”), jumps to his feet, explaining “Then it belongs to you [meaning Aragorn], and not to me at all!” Now the riddles are solved, for here is the Halfling, and he carries Isildur’s Bane, Sauron’s One Ring.

Aragorn tells Frodo that the Ring really *belongs* to no one (except Sauron), but that for the time being Frodo is assigned to keep it. Gandalf tells Frodo to hold up the Ring,<sup>66</sup> and the Hobbit, though loathly, complies. The scales fall from Boromir’s eyes, yet in his typical self-centered manner, he concludes that the doom “of Minas Tirith” is near at hand. Aragorn reminds him that the words were not the “doom of *Minas Tirith*.” Boromir begins to feel some antipathy against Aragorn, who, as Boromir is well aware, would put an end to the Ruling Steward’s position of absolute power in Gondor should he return as the High-king of the Dunedain. Both 萬象 and 聯經 have failed to convey the tone of the conversation between the two.

For reasons of space, let me only point out one example for what I mean. When Aragorn says “The words were not the doom of Minas Tirith” (LF 323), he is actually referring back to the poem “Seek for the Sword that was broken,” i.e. Boromir’s dream prophesy, reminding Boromir that Gondor, though important, is not the center of Middle-earth, and that other people are also fighting against Sauron (the Dunedain of the North, for example). It is the doom of the whole world that is “near at hand.”

How do 萬象 and 聯經 translate this sentence? 萬象 has 不能說米納斯蒂里思的滅亡這樣的話. Now this sounds like Aragorn thinks it is bad luck to mention the doom of Minas Tirith, or as if he thinks it is exaggerated to speak of an impending downfall of the city (yet)—what it clearly does *not* convey is the fact that Aragorn is referring back to Boromir’s dream-prophesy. Indeed, the sloppy translation of this sentence has to be traced back to the very fact that the translator was unable to connect between the sentence and the poem, separated by less than two pages in the original. If the translator is unable to keep track of interrelated sentences and topics even within a few passages, how can we expect him to do so over three thick volumes?

Here lies undoubtedly one of the sorest spots of both translations, as we see by

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<sup>66</sup> Which 萬象 translates as 堅持一下! Even in this important chapter, mistakes abound at a rate of

looking at the 聯經 rendering of the sentence:還不能說是米納思梯里斯的劫數. The translators did give 米納思梯里斯的劫數 in a different type of Chinese characters to reflect the italics used in the original (萬象 did not bother to convey this subtlety). Yet it is still highly doubtful whether the translators were aware of the sentence's connection to the prophetic poem, or they should have opted for a clearer translation along the lines of 預言說的不（只）是米納思梯里斯的劫數.

After this short digression, let's now return to our poem. We pick up the story where Aragorn reminds Boromir that it is not only Gondor that is at stake, and he continues to tell Boromir, and the whole Council, that it was spoken of old among the Dunedain that Narsil (the Sword that was broken) "should be made again when the Ring, Isildur's Bane, was found." Aragorn then asks Boromir directly whether he "wishes for the House of Elendil to return to the Land of Gondor?"

This is seen as a challenge to the Ruling Stewards by Boromir, who seems to feel that Aragorn is doubting their ability to deal with Sauron's threat on their own. Yet he admits that Gondor needs help, and says the "Sword of Elendil would be a help beyond our hope—if such a thing could indeed return out of the shadows of the past." He clearly doubts Aragorn's identity, and the truth of his words.

This is when Bilbo, Frodo's uncle, can no longer suppress his anger at the treatment his friend Aragorn receives from the proud Boromir, and he stands up to quote, with indignation in his voice, the following poem:

All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.

From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken:  
The crownless again shall be king. (LF 324)

【聯經《魔戒團（下）》，第 52—53 頁】

發光的不一定是黃金  
漫游者也並不都會迷路；  
霜凍侵襲不了固蒂深根  
枯萎不屬於強壯的大樹。  
死火中能復燃大夥熊熊  
陰影中會跳出光明一片。  
折斷的劍可以重新鑄成，  
國王會再失去他的冠冕。

【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第三冊，第 74 頁】

閃光的東西不一定是黃金，  
到處流浪的未必是迷路者；  
有個人永不枯萎老當益壯，  
像樹根深入土地不畏嚴霜。  
灰燼中新的火苗會被喚醒，  
陰影裡將會湧出新的光明；  
利文德爾有一柄斷刃寶劍，  
無冕的國王重新坐上寶殿。

After reciting this poem, Bilbo sits down again with a rather contemptuous remark towards Boromir. He tells Frodo, who sits next to him, that he actually made this little verse himself, after Aragorn had first told him about his lineage. We have to leave the story here (and do without a more detailed analysis of the entire chapter, which, as always when special attention to details and background knowledge would be required, shows a particularly high number of problematic passages<sup>67</sup>, one or two of which we have discussed earlier).

Our look at the poems starts again with the 聯經 version. First, both translations

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<sup>67</sup> This is, for example, also true of Chapter 2, Book 1, “The Shadow of the Past,” or Chapter 6, Book 2, “Lothlorien.” For more examples in *this* chapter, see (among others) the translation of the excerpt from

did make an effort to render the rhyme and (to some extent) the metrics of the original, although they failed to reflect the fact that the poem comes in two stanzas of four verses. Instead, they give it as one single stanza of eight lines. While this may not have any effect on the content of the poem, this lack of attention for little details in a way epitomizes the ubiquity of carelessness characteristic for both translations.

Both translations had their own ideas about the punctuation marks at the end of each line, turning semicolons and colons into commas or periods at random. 萬象 has “only” altered the colon in line seven of the original into a comma, while 聯經 has made even more far-reaching changes. Though the average reader may overlook such subtleties, it may still be pointed out that for example the colon at the end of line seven (of the original) conveys a sense that in a way the reforging of the Sword Anduril (for that’s what line seven is about) stands for, and inevitably results in, the return of the king.

While there are no major semantic problems in the first four lines of the 聯經 translation, lines three and four are reversed when compared to the original. It is likely that this was done for reasons of rhyme. 霜凍侵襲不了固蒂深根 responds to line *four* of the original, “Deep roots are not reached by the frost.” And vice versa: line four clearly translates the original’s “The old that is strong does not wither.”

At this point it is necessary to say something about the rhyming pattern of the poem. The original has an “a-b-a-b/c-d-c-d” scheme and 聯經 was obviously eager to retain that pattern in its translation. While it was largely successful in doing this, it came at the price of having to exchange lines three and four, so that 金 in the first line would rhyme with 根 in the third, and 路 in the second line with 樹 in the fourth. Surely the translator has a certain leeway in translating poetry, and so I do not consider this switch of verses a problem. Note that 萬象 (which has “smoother” rhymes than 聯經, at least in modern Mandarin pronunciation) has changed the original rhyme pattern into “a-a-b-b/c-c-d-d,” probably for the sake of convenience.

Let us now return to the 聯經 translation. It should not go unnoticed that in line four we are dealing with an over-translation, as 聯經 gives 強壯的大樹 where the English has simply “the old.” Now this is a rather generic term, that may only be specifically linked with “trees” in this context because the next line in the English

original speaks of “deep roots,” in all likelihood belonging to a strong, old tree.

It has to be admitted that a rather vague, general term like “the old” is not rendered without some difficulty in Chinese, and while 堅強又古老的事物 may not be a perfect (and certainly not a very poetic) rendering, it would allow the translator to stick closer to the original text, and maybe help avoid the awkward sentence structure of 枯萎不屬於強壯的大樹. (We will see that 萬象 also had considerable problems with lines three and four, and also came up with a very free solution.)

Line five: Here the main problem is clearly that the original’s “shall” implies a certainty (in the future) that 聯經’s 能 simply does not convey: in the translation the wakening of a fire seems a mere possibility, not an inevitable event.

Line six: The meaning here is correct, and the expression 跳出 (一片光明) for “(a light)...*shall spring*” is probably better than 萬象’s 湧出 (新的光明). The character 湧 (containing the 三點水-radical denoting “water”) may seem slightly less appropriate in this context of fire and light, though this is not a big problem.

Line seven: The same problem as in line five. 可以 is not strong enough to express the firm certainty of the original’s “Renewed *shall* be blade that was broken.”

Line eight: This is *the* blunder committed in this translation. The English “shall” is rendered correctly as 會再, but that’s about all that’s correct here. Indeed one has a hard time believing that the translators actually managed to convey exactly *the opposite* of what the original is saying. Why? It could be that the slightly unusual position of “again” confused them (a more modern sentence structure would be “The crownless shall be king again,” but Tolkien rearranged that, both for rhyme reasons and to achieve an “archaic” effect).

Moreover, I suspect that the translators, failing to grasp the background of the poem, and thus its implications for the future plot (which it clearly anticipates), were not fully aware that this poem is about Aragorn, Isildur’s heir. They almost certainly were not aware that the last line forecasts Aragorn’s reinstallation as the Dunedain High-king of Arnor and Gondor, or they would not have written about “the king losing his crown again.”<sup>68</sup>

I think that the translators, after all, also *were* confused by the sentence structure,

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<sup>68</sup> Not to mention that this translation would imply that Aragorn is *not* “crownless” now—which he, of course, is.

and what part of speech single words belong to here—not only the positioning of “again” probably gave them trouble, but also the fact that “crownless,” originally an adjective, here serves as a noun.<sup>69</sup> (A slightly different usage, e.g. “the crownless one,” or “the crownless *man*” would probably have been less confusing.) While rendering it as a noun, the 聯經 translators turn “the crownless” (a person) into an object (a crown).

Let us now turn our attention to the 萬象 rendering of the poem.

On the whole, I personally feel 萬象 delivered a better translation here, and it would be even better but for one careless (yet quite serious) mistake in line seven. But let us start at the beginning. As in the 聯經 translation, there are no real problems in the first two lines of the poem.

Lines three and four are very interesting. 萬象 did not transpose them as 聯經 did, yet its rendering is by no means less free. The 萬象 translator seems to have been quite aware that the whole poem is about Aragorn, Arathorn’s son: The first four lines allegorically describe his heritage, his descent in a long, yet uninterrupted line from the Numenorean kings who ruled the Dunedain since the Second Age of Middle-earth. These were themselves descended from the “Elf-friends” of the first Age, those Houses of Men who supported the Elves in their long war on Morgoth in an attempt to recover the Silmarils. That is what the poem tries to express by lines three and four: his forefathers being the noblest and most valiant men to ever walk on Middle-earth, Aragorn is a chosen one, and he will be able to stand the test of his time with a strength rooted so deeply in history.

Lines one and two, by the way, are a veiled portrayal of the Aragorn as he is at this point in the story, before Narsil is reforged, and long before he publicly claims the title of king over the lands of the Dunedain. The Aragorn who appears at Elrond’s Council is, and has been for the past decades, a Ranger (see also my summary at the beginning of *Poem 2*) of the North, and thus a man grim in life, appearance, and dress. He wears dark green and gray clothes with little ornament, and he is called “Strider” by most of those he protects, without receiving much thanks for it. In his dialogue with Boromir, he describes himself as a “lonely hunter . . . of the servants of the

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<sup>69</sup> Note that nominalized verbs and adjectives create trouble for the translators on many other occasions, particularly in combination with unusual or archaic sentence structures.

enemy” (LF 325). He admits that Gondor has played an important role as “stalwart tower” against Sauron’s evil force, yet he remembers to stress that but for the unassuming Rangers, the North of Middle-earth might long have fallen under the enemy’s rule. “And yet less thanks we have than you [Gondor]. Travellers scowl at us, and countrymen give us scornful names. ‘Strider’ I am to one fat man [Butterbur, owner of *The Prancing Pony* in Bree] who lives within a day’s march of foes that would freeze his heart, or lay his little town in ruin, if he were not guarded ceaselessly . . .” (LF 325).

Thus, at this point in the story, Aragorn *looks* and *seems* much less than he is—for all but a chosen few who know, and appreciate, his true identity. This is what Bilbo is trying to express with the first two lines, the “gold” hinting at Aragorn’s nobility, though yet concealed (“not glittering”), while the expression “those who wander” is a clear reference to Aragorn’s long years as Ranger, roving through the vast expanses of Middle-earth in a constant mission against Sauron.

Aragorn’s line has lasted over the millennia without faltering, and—we are moving on to lines five to eight—now the time is near when the House of Elendil will rise again, and once more rule over Middle-earth, currently under the shadow of Sauron’s threat (“A light from the shadows shall spring”—lines five and six say pretty much the same). The task before Aragorn is to defeat Sauron with the help of others (the fellowship of the Ring, for example), and with the help of the reforged “Sword that was broken,” Elendil’s Narsil (line seven). Victory in the battle against the Dark Lord will be followed by his reinstallment as king (line eight).

The 萬象 translator must have been aware of much of the above, for he decided in lines three and four to go much further than the English original, i.e. to add 有個人 at the beginning of line three, and using the word 像 at the beginning of line four. He thus turns these two sentences into a *simile*. The English original, except for lines seven and eight, uses only *metaphors* when describing Aragorn (and his descent), and while 萬象 also uses metaphors in lines one, two, five, and six,<sup>70</sup> it decided to directly refer to *a man* in lines three and four, describing him as 永不枯萎老當益壯, and saying that, like deep roots, he is not afraid of the frost.

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<sup>70</sup> Lines one and two, three and four, and five and six, are closely coupled, and each of these three “sets” of two stanzas expresses the same idea, while lines seven and eight contain two different, though



I don't know why the translator decided here to use a direct simile instead of the original metaphor (maybe he, like the 聯經 translators, had problems with the seemingly vague "the old," and thought these lines were easier to render by making their content "more concrete"), but I think in open comparison many things sound odd that are all right in a metaphor. Who would really say a man "is not reached by/not afraid of the frost"? And what is that supposed to stand for? Part of the real problem here, I think, is that lines three and four are not so much about Aragorn *as an individual*, but are more about *his house*, his long line of descent from noble ancestors. It is this house that is being depicted here as lasting throughout the turmoil of thousands of years, its spirit and essence unscathed by the many wars and events in that long period of time, its line unfailing throughout that long stretch of history from the beginning of the Third Age up to the impending War of the Ring.

Lines three and four, we see, are about Aragorn *as part of something greater*, and lines five and six continue very much in that line. Had the 萬象 translator been a little more sensitive to all the information given us by Tolkien throughout the whole trilogy<sup>71</sup>, he could have figured out enough to fully understand the metaphors used here, and then he may not have opted for such a free, and not very adequate, rendering in these two lines.

Lines seven and eight: In line eight, the translator found a correct, and also quite elegant solution for the sentence that created so much trouble for the 聯經 team. Yet line seven destroys, at least partly, what might otherwise have been an acceptable rendering of the last four lines.

A quick comparison with the original shows that the verb "renewed" was *misread*, very much in the same way the 萬象 translator took "region" for "religion" in the "Prologue" of the book (【萬象《魔戒同盟》，第一冊，第 10 頁】，see Example 3) .

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closely connected concepts.

<sup>71</sup> Much can also be learned from the "Appendices" at the end of the third volume of *Lord*. Yet though 萬象 did translate these "Appendices" (often *very* roughly), I wonder how much of the information contained in them was really absorbed by the translator. Also, the "Appendices" were in all likelihood translated *after* the rest of the book, and that means probably that the translator (who almost certainly did no first reading of the entire work before starting to translate) did not even have a chance to utilize this rich resource of information during the translation process.

In the end, 萬象 here fails to transport the important message the Sword that was broken not only *is located* in Rivendell, but is actually about to be *reforged*, to become the powerful weapon Anduril, Aragorn's sword in the upcoming battles.

While 利文德爾有一柄斷刃寶劍 even sort of manages to fit in with the context, it is, of course, not correct. How would the verb “renewed” (i.e. “reforged”) turn into the place name “Rivendell”? Maybe Galadriel's Mirror holds the answer to this question, and to many other miraculous inaccuracies in the two Chinese translations of the *The Lord of the Rings*.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

I am aware that my analysis of the two Chinese translations of *The Lord of the Rings* hardly covers more than a very small tip of an iceberg of problems presented by both the 萬象 and the 聯經 version.

Also, besides the quality of the translations proper, much more could also be said about related issues—the cover illustrations, for example. While this is largely an aesthetic issue, and like all matters of taste rather subjective, one still wonders what the vampires do on the cover of the first volume of the 聯經 edition(《魔戒團(上)》), presented against a backdrop that looks rather suggestive of a whole cluster of Transylvanian Dracula castles. Not that I enjoy the 萬象 cover illustrations much more, kept very much in the style of Japanese comics for young adults—yet they are probably more likely to attract potential readers on the Taiwanese market.

Aesthetic matters aside, my main object was to show that translation of foreign literature in Taiwan is in dire need of improvement. I picked *Lord* as an example, because I am very familiar with the work, and felt I could provide some insight into where the translators of the Chinese versions went wrong.

While no translation, especially of such a long and intricate work, can entirely avoid mistakes, the abundance of crude errors in both the 聯經 and the 萬象 version exceeds the tolerable by far.

In summing up my analysis, I found that both versions make countless sloppy mistakes. On many other occasions they fail to render the original's meaning because the original's language is not understood correctly, or because there is a serious lack of background information (including knowledge of Tolkien's invented languages, and the linguistic map of Middle-earth). The translators also often seem to have difficulties to follow the various lines of the plot, and fail to convey the subtle echoes of past events, and the numerous, important anticipations of future ones.

The translators also on many occasions fail show a keen sensibility to words and language, and in all likelihood did rarely go to the trouble of reading any secondary material. Further, the wrong level of language is sometimes picked, and omissions

occur.

Let us also note that in a novel, especially such a long one with so many different characters (many of which are referred to with a whole set of different names or titles!), careful reading and consistency are of quintessential importance. When translating a novel of such epic dimensions with so many events, persons and plot-lines, one has to go constantly back and forth, reread, compare, make adjustments, unify terminology, rearrange ones thoughts, and—correct mistakes. Here, neither the translators nor the editors seemed to have made much effort at harmonizing the completed translation and making “everything fit” the way Tolkien had done so masterfully in the original. Everything is interwoven in an intricate pattern, and I have to stress that only an intimate “cognoscente,” or a very thorough and professional translator (ideal would be a combination of both) with much time on his hand could possibly live up to the task of translating the entire work.

Such a translator would not only have to first do one careful reading of *Lord* itself, but should ideally read Tolkien’s other major fictional works, and the relevant secondary literature. Indeed, the main point of my thesis is that a lack of understanding for the mythological and philological setup of Tolkien’s work is one major reason for the disappointing quality of both the 萬象 and the 聯經 translation. The ideal would-be translator would have to give special attention to the interlace structure of Tolkien’s work, to his invented languages as far they are relevant to *Lord*, and to the general character of Tolkien’s fictional work, which was meant by the author to be “a Mythology for England.”

The 聯經 translation gives the impression that the translators may have consulted some extra material, like other writings by Tolkien, or secondary literature, but did not always make the right use of it (see the 「東半球」 example). 聯經 also tends to be lengthy in its attempt to be precise, while making omissions on other occasions. We do not find much sensibility for Tolkien’s style and usage, either.

While 萬象 is rarely lengthy, and tends to read a little smoother than 聯經, all in all both versions contain many mistakes throughout the entire work; there is literally no paragraph, on most pages virtually no sentence without at least a minor mistake or incongruity. The same kinds of mistakes appear again and again in both translations, and it is therefore hardly possible to decide which of the two is better (or worse). One is left to wonder how the translators, editor, proofreaders, and anyone else involved in

the translating, editing, and publishing of the book dared to put these translations in print.

The frustrating thing is: on some occasions, the translators of *Lord* show that things could be handled differently,<sup>72</sup> and such passages invariably pose one question: why could not the *whole* translation be on this comparatively high level of readability and comprehensibility?

One can only guess that it was a number of factors contributing to the poor quality of the translations: external factors like time pressure and low pay could have played a role (anybody who has done some translation, particularly of literature, in Taiwan, will be aware that it is usually not a well-paid endeavor!) in addition to a probable lack of ability and/or professionalism.

Often when the translator obviously thoroughly misunderstood the structure of an English sentence, I suspect that he in fact did not give himself (or did not have) enough time to analyze the sentence and get its meaning straight. And the worst part is: he apparently did not care, but proceeded to produce patchwork-sentences that are bound to baffle the reader—and which, by the way, also successfully slipped through the quality control of editing, revising, proofreading, and so on. Sentences and whole passages like that give the distinct impression that all the translator probably cared about was to *get it done quickly*—without the slightest regard to semantic, grammatical, and plot-related irregularities and mistakes. Or maybe he was not even aware of the sloppy, poor quality of his translation?

Either way, whether disregard or unawareness are the root cause for the often shockingly false renderings, both are a sure sign of incompetence, for if a translator is unable to discover problematic parts (i.e. he does not even know *when and where* he is unsure of the original's meaning), then his level of proficiency in the source language is clearly far from sufficient for translating—particularly for translating *literature*.

If, on the other hand, a translator *is* aware of problems, but decides to ignore them (for whatever reason), then we have to seriously question his professional ethics—and reprimand him for completely ignoring his responsibility towards the original's author, and towards the readers of his translation (alas, there won't be many in this case—you cannot blame them). We could add his responsibility towards his

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<sup>72</sup> See for example the 萬象 version's handling of the passage discussed under Example 14.

client, the publishing house, to this list—yet one cannot help but feeling that the client himself *couldn't care less*, otherwise both 聯經 and 萬象 would not have rushed their *Lord* translations into print without much more revision and editing, and other means of quality control—maybe hire other translators, and give them ample time, for example.

I hope this thesis manages to give the reader an inkling of the huge problems involved in translating *Lord* into Chinese. As I have said above, it would seem that for anyone but an intimate expert on Tolkien's fictional works, who is also at home in both the English and the Chinese language, the translation of *Lord* into Mandarin is an insurmountable task.

Finally, I would like to point out that I still have the hope of one day seeing a better translation of *Lord* into Chinese. Thus, not the least of my efforts went into my own translation of *Chapter 1* of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, “A Long-expected Party” (named in obvious allusion to the first chapter of *The Hobbit*, which reads “An Unexpected Party”). More than anything, I hope that in its own small way, my attempt at conveying some of the poetry, the humor, and the overall fascination of *The Lord of the Rings* and its unique secondary world, may point the direction for future translators of *Lord* and Tolkien's other fictional works.

## Appendix

### Chapter 1 of *The Lord of the Rings* in My Own Translation

What mattered most to me in my own attempt at translating the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings* (i.e. *The Fellowship of the Ring*/Book One, Chapter 1) was to produce a readable, and, if possible, enjoyable, rendering of part of my favorite book by Tolkien, a book for all ages with some interesting messages for our technology age.

Ahead of the text of my translation I would like to draw attention to a few of the more interesting problems I encountered in the translating process.

One is a short passage on page 41 of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, in which the Gaffer explains to his audience in the pub *The Ivy Bush* how Bilbo Baggins and his nephew Frodo are related to each other. The Gaffer says:

You see: Mr Drogo, he married poor Miss Primula Brandybuck. She was our Mr. Bilbo's first cousin on the mother's side (her mother being the youngest of the Old Took's daughters); and Mr. Drogo was his second cousin. So Mr. Frodo is his first *and* second cousin, once removed either way, as the saying is, if you follow me.

The difficulty obviously lies in a satisfactory rendering of the rather complicated fact that Frodo is Bilbo's "first *and* second cousin, once removed either way"—if you follow me. (I have reproduced a family tree of the *Baggins* and the *Tooks* at the very end of my thesis to facilitate the reader's understanding of the following short discussion. The two tables are taken from *Appendix C* of *Lord*, as given in *The Return of the King*.)

At the suggestion of a friend, I first worked with the Chinese concept of 房, yet I soon discovered that the 房 notion may be awkward to express the intricate relationship between Bilbo and Frodo, for it is a relative concept. (In the "Baggins"-tree, for example, Mungo Baggins and Laura Grubb and all their children [with their offspring] could be defined as one 房, but Balbo Baggins and Berylla Boffin and all their children [and grandchildren] could also be seen as one 房, though

a much bigger one. To my knowledge, the traditional 房 concept also depended on whether or not the family members were actually *living* together, making it an even less “scientific” concept.

So I decided to abandon the 房 approach in my translation of this passage. I then considered the 幾等親 approach, and found that 等親 is actually a legal concept that is very clearly and narrowly defined. On the family tree, one simply connects the two persons (point A and B) in question by the shortest possible *paternal* line, going *up* the tree (from A) until one arrives at the closest common ancestor, and then going *down* the tree until one arrives at B. As a look at the family trees (Baggins and Took) shows, this makes Bilbo and Frodo 五等親 on the mother’s (i.e. Took) side, and 七等親 on the father’s (i.e. Baggins) side. So, one could translate the relevant passage as 佛羅多是他 [Bilbo] 五等親的親戚，又是他七等親的親戚，且從兩邊算都小他一輩。

In the end, though, I settled for another solution, and I hope it will find your approval. I found that Bilbo and Frodo’s close relation on *both* their maternal and paternal side is, of course, due to the fact that they both have Took- *and* Baggins-blood in them, i.e. via their mothers, they are both related to the Took side (Frodo’s maternal great-grandparents being Bilbo’s maternal grandparents), and via their fathers, they are both related to the Baggins side (Frodo’s paternal great-great-grand parents being Bilbo’s paternal great-grandparents). The whole confusion is caused by the common intermarriage among the prominent Hobbit clans.<sup>73</sup>

[Additional confusion (also for the would-be-translator) is caused by the fact that in the relevant passage Tolkien used the word “cousin” in a broader sense than usual: not strictly as 第一代堂/表兄弟姊妹, as it is most commonly used, but as a rather broad term of relationship (meaning little more than “relative”) that can cover both Bilbo’s relationships to Frodo’s parents (which are *cousin* [in the more common sense]-relationships, though of different degrees), as well as Bilbo’s *uncle-nephew* relationship with Frodo himself.]

Considering all the above, I finally decided to render the relevant passage as the

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<sup>73</sup> To further complicate matters, Frodo is also related to the Brandybuck clan via his maternal grandfather.



following (relevant expressions in italics): 德羅哥先生，他娶了可憐的普麗蜜拉白蘭地巴克小姐。普麗蜜拉是我們比寶先生*共同外祖父母*的表妹（她母親是老圖克最小的女兒），而德羅哥先生則是比寶*共同曾祖父母*的堂弟。所以，佛羅多既是他的外甥，又是他的姪子，懂我的意思嗎？

I think the different level of relationship expressed in *同外祖父母*的表妹 and *同曾祖父母*的堂弟 adequately reflects the English version's "first/second cousin," because it is both clear enough to be comprehensible once you set your brain to work (and have a look at the family trees provided by Tolkien), and yet is *confusing* enough (similarity of the two expressions) to convey some of the tone of the original. For the description of Bilbo and Frodo's relationship, I chose 佛羅多既是他的外甥，又是他的姪子, since there seems no adequate Chinese term for "first/second cousin *once removed either way*," i.e. no way of retaining the same expression (in English: "cousin") that is used to describe Bilbo's relationship with Frodo's parents, and modifying it by something like 小一輩.

Another challenge in the first chapter of *Lord* are the names of the numerous Hobbit families. In general, I have tried to follow Tolkien's own advice, particularly as given in the "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*," i.e. wherever possible I have attempted to translate family names by sense (e.g. Hornblower). In other cases, Tolkien himself admitted that translation by sense may be difficult (and he was not even thinking of Chinese!), e.g. for "Grubb." Tolkien says: "Translate, if possible, in some way more or less suitable to sound and sense. The name is meant to recall the English verb *grub* 'dig, root, in the ground'" (179-80). Other names, like Took, had to be transliterated.

One particularly interesting name was "Proudfoot," because a pun is hinging on this name, or rather on its plural form(s). Bilbo is addressing the many guests on his birthday party, Hobbits from virtually all the clans in the neighborhood, when he is holding what turns out to be his farewell speech. He says (*italics are from the original*):

*My dear Bagginses and Boffins*, he began again; *and my dear Tooks and Brandybucks, and Grubbs, and Chubbs, and Burrowses, and Hornblowers, and Bolgers, Bracegirdles, Goodbodies, Brockhouses and Proudfoots.*

“ProudFEET!” shouted an elderly hobbit from the back of the pavillion. His name, of course, was Proudfoot, and well merited: his feet were large, exceptionally furry, and both were on the table.

*Proudfoots*, repeated Bilbo. . . (LF 50)

Both 聯經 and 萬象 fail to find a solution without a footnote. 萬象 renders the relevant name as 普勞富特 (Bilbo) and 普勞費特 (the elderly Hobbit) respectively. 聯經 has 普豪得福足 (Bilbo) and 普豪得費足 (the elderly Hobbit). The two solutions are very similar, and both fail entirely to convey any of the original’s pun (though 聯經 is trying to do something with its 豪 [“proud”], and also maybe with 得福足). To make up for this, the following footnotes are given:

萬象：(譯注：普勞富特「Proudfoot」和普勞費特「Proudfeet」字面上拼為「自豪的腳」之義，前者為單數，後者為複數。這位霍比特人這樣插嘴是為了開玩笑。)

聯經：普豪得福足的原文為 Proudfoot，這裡畢爾波用的是 Proudfoots，算是其複數。但英語中 foot 的複數形式 feet[sic]，因此一位普氏家族的成員要予以「更正」。

萬象’s footnote points out that the elderly Hobbit’s interjection is meant as a joke—but it does not really explain how, and it commits one serious error (a misreading) in implying that in the original Bilbo says “Proudfoot,” and then “explaining” that “Proudfoot” is the singular and “Proudfeet” the plural. Yet in the original, Bilbo says Proudfoots (萬象 overlooked or purposely dropped the important “s”), and that is where the pun comes in: *both* “Proudfoots” and “Proudfeet” are plural. Bilbo’s use is correct, for in English the plural of family names is always formed by adding an “s,” even if the family names happens to be or contain a word that has an irregular plural form when used in its original meaning (like “foot” here). The joke the elderly Hobbit of the Proudfoot clan is making lies exactly in his violation of the above rule by insisting on forming the irregular plural of “foot,” in which way he also puts strong emphasis on his big, furry feet, placed well visible on the table. (The joke is even more meaningful when one considers that, as Tolkien mentions elsewhere, Hobbits rarely wore shoes and were rather proud of the curly growth of hair on their feet—the thicker the fur, the better.)

聯經 is on the right track in noting that both “Proudfoots” and “Proudfeet” are plural forms, but for some reason it stops short of explaining where the humor of this passage lies—the translator simply says that “Proudfoots”算是其 [Proudfoot 的] 複數, and fails to give any further illustration.

This was probably the one single passage that I spend most time on trying to find a satisfactory solution. In the end I decided that it was impossible in Chinese to give an exact equivalent of the “family name plural vs. irregular noun plural”-pun in this passage: the lack of suffix flexion in Mandarin proves an insurmountable barrier. I also found it was very hard to make anything humorous out of this passage in Chinese when translating “Proudfoot” by sound. Finally I settled for the following version, knowing there may still be room for improvement:

「親愛的貝金斯，柏菲斯家人，」比寶再度開口，「還有親愛的圖克跟白蘭地巴克、挖洞家、胖啞家、還有穴居家、號角家、大肚家、凸腹家、康健家、地洞家和大腳家的親戚們...」「是大腳丫！」帳棚後方一個年長的哈比人大叫！他的姓氏呢，自然就是大腳，而且人如其名，雙腳巨大，腳毛特別濃密，而且都正攔在桌上。

「大腳家的親戚們。」比寶重複一遍，...

I felt that 大腳家（的親戚們）probably comes as close as possible to conveying the idea in the original that Bilbo is (correctly) treating “Proudfoot” as a family or clan name, while 大腳丫 imitates the elderly Hobbits emphatic referral to his feet *as feet*, and not just part of his family name—feet he has reason to be proud of, as Tolkien does not fail to point out. I hope that in this way, at least part of the original’s humor is retained.

Allow me two shorter comments on two other problems. In the “Prologue” of *Lord*, Tolkien explains the Hobbit word “mathom”: “. . . Anything that Hobbits had no immediate use for, but were unwilling to throw away, they called a *mathom*” (LF 23). In his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*,” Tolkien repeats this explanation, and advises the would-be translator to leave this “unchanged” (which in Chinese can only mean transliteration). He adds that the word “was not common speech, but a word peculiar to Hobbits . . . . It represents old English *máðm* ‘precious thing,

treasure’” (214).

The word reappears in Book I, Chapter One of *Lord*, “A Long-expected Party,” when Tolkien talks about the Hobbits habit of giving away presents (instead of receiving them) on their birthday. Tolkien explains that not all birthday present were new, that “there were one or two old *mathoms* of forgotten uses that had circulated all round the district” (LF, 61).

Both 聯經 and 萬象 did render the “Prologue,” 聯經 rendering the above passage as 凡是沒有太大實際用途卻又捨不得丟掉的東西，霍比特族一概稱之為「麥瑟姆」；萬象 has 對於霍比特人而言，沒有立即用處的東西，他們也不願意馬上丟掉的，他們把它叫做「沒啥」。

Both 聯經 and 萬象 have come up with renderings for “mathom,” yet they do not use them in Chapter 1 of Book One: in the relevant passage, 聯經 has 老玩意兒, while 萬象 gives 古董. I am not saying here these are necessarily very bad translations in themselves (though 古董 may sound a little too “precious” for something you are merely “unwilling to throw away”), yet Tolkien wished to see this peculiar Hobbit expression preserved in its original form, and thus a transliteration might have been more appropriate here. 萬象 and 聯經 might thus have considered using 沒啥 and 麥瑟姆 again, as they did in their translation of the “Prologue.” (Note that the 萬象 translation of “mathom” is very likely an attempt at a mixed translation by sense *and* by sound.)

In my own translation I rendered the passage as follows: 其中也有一兩個忘了用途的舊玩意（哈比人統稱這類東西為「瑪松」）。I did this because I had no translation of the “Prologue” to refer back to, or I would simply have used 瑪松 and skipped the explanation in brackets.

Finally, a few words on “Springle-ring.” The passage where the word appears reads: “Master Everard Took and Miss Melilot Brandybuck got on a table and with bells in their hands began to dance the Springle-ring: a pretty dance, but rather vigorous.” In his “Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*,” Tolkien writes: “*Springle-ring*. An invention; render it by a similar one suitable to the language of translation, implying a vigorous ring-dance in which dancers often leap up” (215).

萬象 has 青春鈴舞 for “Springle-ring,” while 聯經 came up with 撒潑靈格圈舞. The first translation seems to have taken “springle” for “spring,” or something

associated with “youth”—this would not be such a far shot from what Tolkien says when he describes the dance as “vigorous.” 鈴舞 then refers to the bells in the hands of the dancers. All in all, I think this rendering is not far off the mark. As for 聯經’s rendering, 撒潑靈格 is clearly a phonetic translation of “springle,” while 圈舞 would imply that the dancers go around in circles—this is not substantiated by anything in the original text.

In my own translation, I settled for 青春鈴舞 (credit to the 萬象 translator).

## 第一章 期待已久的聚會

住在袋底洞的比寶貝金斯宣佈將召開一個盛大的聚會，慶祝他一百一十一歲的生日。這件事立刻成了哈比村街頭巷尾的話題，興奮之情瀰漫各處。

比寶既富有又奇特。自從他六十年前離奇失蹤又出人意外地回來，就成了杉爾郡的傳奇。他旅行中帶回來的財富為地方上津津樂道，不管他老人家怎麼說，大家還是相信，袋底洞的山丘下一定到處是藏滿了金銀財寶的隧道。如果這樣還不夠讓他出名的話，那還有他歷久不衰的充沛精力更叫人吃驚。時間輾轉逝去，卻沒有在貝金斯先生身上留下太多痕跡。他九十歲的時候身體還跟五十歲一樣。到了九十九歲，大家都說他「保養得好」，但其實比較接近事實的說法應該是「絲毫未變」。有些人搖搖頭，認為這不是件好事。任何人都不應該同時擁有（顯然是）用之不盡的青春和（公認的）取之不竭的財富。

「這是要付出代價的。」他們說，「這件事不正常，必定會帶來麻煩。」

但是至今麻煩還沒有出現，而且因為貝金斯先生對錢很慷慨，大多數人都願意原諒他的怪異和他的財富。他跟親戚都保持來往。（當然，薩克維—貝金斯家族除外。）而在家境貧窮，或家室並不顯赫的哈比人家族中，也有不少對他忠心耿耿的仰慕者。但直到他一些年輕的堂表親戚長大後，他才開始有了真正親密的朋友。

他們當中最年長，也最為貝金斯喜愛的，是年輕的佛羅多貝金斯。比寶九十九歲時，指定佛羅多為他的繼承人，並且帶佛羅多來袋底洞同住，薩克維—貝

金斯家族的奢望終於徹底毀滅。比寶和佛羅多的生日剛好是同一天，九月二十二日。「佛羅多，你最好過來跟我住，」有一天比寶說，「這樣我們就可以一起舒舒服服地開生日宴會。」這時候的佛羅多只有二十多歲，哈比人認為這個年齡還是不負責任的青少年，已經脫離了孩童時期，卻還不到三十三歲真正成人的年紀。

至今十二年過去了。每年這兩位貝金斯先生都在袋底洞共同舉辦熱鬧的生日宴會，但眾所周知，今年秋天計畫中的這個宴會卻有不同以往的特殊意義。比寶將滿一百一十一歲，111，一個很有趣的數字，在哈比人當中，也是非常令人尊敬的年紀。（老圖克也只活到一百三十歲。）而佛羅多則將滿三十三歲，33，也是一個重要的數字：表示他進入成年。

哈比村跟水邊村的左鄰右舍開始了新的話題，即將舉行宴會的消息在杉爾郡到處流傳。比寶貝金斯先生這個人，和他的過去再度成為大家談話的主題，老人們突然發現自己的陳年回憶大受歡迎。

能讓聽眾聽得最入迷的則非老漢姆甘吉莫屬，大家都叫他蓋佛。他通常在水邊路上的一個小客棧，長春藤客棧高談闊論。他講起話來很有權威，因為他之前在袋底洞照顧花園，照顧了四十年，更早時則幫老霍曼做同樣的工作。不過現在他年紀大了，骨頭也硬了，所以工作大部份是他最小的兒子山姆在做，父子倆都跟比寶和佛羅多交情很好。他們就住在小丘上的袋邊巷三號，在袋底洞下方。

「比寶先生是個名聲很好的紳士，我一向都這麼說。」蓋佛宣稱。這也是千真萬確的實情，比寶對他都很客氣，稱呼他「漢姆師傅」，經常詢問他蔬菜成長的情況，關於根莖類植物，尤其是馬鈴薯，村子裡所有人（包括他自己在內）都認為蓋佛家是這類蔬菜的權威。

「那麼那個跟他住在一起的佛羅多呢？」水邊村的老諾克問道。「他姓貝金斯，但是據說他更像是白蘭地巴克家的人。我實在不懂哈比村的貝金斯家人為什麼要大老遠地去巴克村找老婆，那裡的人都那麼奇怪。」

「也難怪他們怪異，」兩尺老爹（蓋佛家隔壁的鄰居）插嘴說，「誰叫他們住在白蘭地河的對岸，還緊靠著老森林邊。如果傳說的事有一半是真的，那那個地方真是又陰森又恐怖。」

「老爹你說得沒錯！」蓋佛說，「雖然白蘭地村的白蘭地巴克家不住在森林的裡面，但是他們這家人看起來確實挺奇怪的。他們一天到晚在那條大河上搞那

些船，這可不太正常。我說，難怪會惹來麻煩。不過儘管如此，佛羅多先生還是一個很不錯的年輕人。他跟比寶先生很像，而且不只外表像而已，畢竟他爸爸也是貝金斯家的人。他爸爸德羅哥貝金斯是個可敬的好人，生前從來沒什麼讓人議論的，一直到他溺水去世為止。」

「溺水？」好幾個聲音同時說。這個傳言和其他更不堪的傳言，他們自然都已經聽過，但是哈比人對家族歷史有一股熱情，現在他們都打算再聽一遍。

「嗯，他們是這麼說的，」蓋佛說，「是這樣子，德羅哥先生，他娶了可憐的普麗蜜拉白蘭地巴克小姐。普麗蜜拉是我們比寶先生共同外祖父母的表妹（她母親是老圖克最小的女兒），而德羅哥先生則是比寶共同曾祖父母的堂弟。所以，佛羅多既是他的外甥，又是他的姪子，懂我的意思嗎？。那時候德羅哥先生住在他岳父，也就是高巴多克老爺爺的家，白蘭地莊。他結婚後就常常待在這裡。德羅哥很注重美食，而高巴多克家的餐點總是相當豐盛。結果那天他去白蘭地河划船，他和他太太就都溺死了，可憐的佛羅多先生那時還不過是個孩子。」

「我聽說他們是在晚飯後，在月光下去河裡划船。」老諾克說，「結果是德羅哥太重了，船才沈下去。」

「但我聽說是德羅哥的太太把他推下去，然後德羅哥把他太太也拉下水。」哈比村的磨坊主人沙地曼說。

「沙地曼，你不該聽到什麼都當真。」蓋佛說，他不怎麼喜歡這個傢伙。「講這些什麼互相推拉的事，根本是空穴來風。划船本來就是很危險的事，就算你靜靜坐著不動，不自己去找麻煩也一樣。無論如何，佛羅多因此成了孤兒，可以說被孤伶伶地留在一群奇怪的白蘭地人當中，最後總算就在白蘭地莊被帶大了。那兒真是個不折不扣的大雜院，高巴多克老爺爺那裡的親戚從來沒少過一百人。比寶先生把那個孩子帶回來跟高尚的人住在一起，真是他做過最好心的一件事了。」

「但這對那些薩克維——貝金斯家的人是很大的打擊。比寶先生離開很久，大家以為他已經去世的那次，他們就想把袋底洞據為己有了。沒想到他又回來，要求他們離開，後來又一直活得好好的，完全沒有老態，上天保佑他。接著他突然找來一個繼承人，還把所有文件都寫好了。現在薩克維——貝金斯家的人永遠別想再看到袋底洞裡面了，至少我們希望如此。」

「我聽說，那裡藏了蠻多錢。」一個外地人說，他是從西部的麥克德文來這裡辦事的。「我聽說，你們山丘頂上到處是隧道，隧道裡都是裝滿金銀財寶的箱子。」

「那你聽到的，比我知道的還多。」蓋佛說，「我不知道什麼金銀財寶。比寶先生花錢很慷慨，而且他似乎從來不缺錢，但是我從來不知道什麼隧道的事。比寶先生回來時我有親眼看到，那是六十年前的事了。那時候我還是個孩子，才剛向老霍曼先生（他是我爸爸的表哥）學功夫不久，但他就叫我去袋底洞，在拍賣會上幫他防著大家在花園裡亂踩亂踏。就在一團亂當中，比寶先生來到了山丘上，帶了一匹小馬，幾個很重的大袋子跟一些箱子。我相信裡面都裝了他從外地帶回來的寶藏，聽說那裡有很多金山。但是他帶回來的東西可不夠塞滿隧道。當然這件事我兒子山姆會比我更清楚，他常常出入袋底洞，對過去的老故事又很狂熱，還聽過比寶先生所有的故事。比寶先生還教他不少學問，他沒有惡意，這點我要提醒你們，但我也希望這不會給山姆帶來什麼厄運。」

「我跟他說，什麼精靈跟惡龍！還不如包心菜跟馬鈴薯對我們有用些。我叫他不要跟自己的老闆攪和在一起，不然一定會招來他解決不了的麻煩。我跟他這麼說，也會跟其他人這麼說。」他又加了一句，邊對那個外地人跟磨坊主人看了一眼。

但是蓋佛的話說服不了他的聽眾。有關比寶坐擁大筆財富的傳說已經牢牢深植在年輕一代哈比人的心裡。

「但是他除了一開始帶回來的那些，後來可能又增加了很多。」磨坊主人爭論說，他說出了大家共同的意見。「他常常出門。還有你看看那些來拜訪他的外地人：半夜來的矮人，還有那個雲遊四方，詭計多端的甘道夫這些人。你愛怎麼說都可以，蓋佛，但是袋底洞確實是個奇怪的地方，那裡的人更是奇怪。」

「你也是愛怎麼說都可以，但你對這件事，恐怕跟划船那件事一樣，根本什麼也不知道，沙地曼先生。」蓋佛回嘴，他比平常更不喜歡這個傢伙了。「如果那叫做奇怪，那我們這裡多一點奇怪的人也不錯。離這裡不遠的地方有些人即使住在金色城牆做的洞裡，也不會請朋友喝一杯啤酒，但袋底洞的主人待人接物卻很得體。我們家山姆說，所有人都會被邀請去參加宴會，而且還有禮物，你們注意喔，是每個人都有禮物，宴會就在這個月了。」



這個月是九月，而且天氣好得不得了。一兩天之後，消息就傳開了，（可能是消息靈通的山姆傳出來的，）說是宴會上會放煙火，而且節目內容還是自從老圖克去世後，幾乎一整個世紀以來，就沒在杉爾郡見過的精彩。

日子一天天過去，大日子越來越近。一天傍晚，一輛外觀古怪，裝著許多奇怪包裹的馬車駛進了哈比村，爬上小山丘，到了袋底洞。被車聲驚擾的哈比人紛紛從點著燈火的門口向外張望，對眼前的景象目瞪口呆。駕駛馬車的是唱著奇怪歌謠的外地人，都是留著長鬍鬚，戴著大斗篷的矮人。其中少數幾個就留在袋底洞。九月第二個星期的週末，則有一輛板車在大白天從白蘭地橋的方向，穿過水邊村進來。駕車的只有一個單獨的老人。他戴著藍色的尖頂高帽子，穿著灰色的長斗篷，披著銀色的圍巾。他有著長長的白鬍子，和雜亂叢生的眉毛，突出帽緣之外。哈比村的小孩子跟在板車後頭跑過整個村莊，一路跑上山丘。車上裝的全是煙火，正如他們所猜測。就在比寶的正門前，這個老人開始卸貨：裝了各式各樣煙火的大包裹，每一個都標示紅色的G和精靈的古文字。

那是甘道夫的標籤，想來，這位老人也就是巫師甘道夫。他在杉爾郡之所以出名，主要是因為他對火，煙，和光很有一手。他真正的工作比這困難危險多了，但杉爾郡的人對此一無所知。對他們而言，他只是宴會上的另一項「娛樂節目」，因此哈比村的孩子才這麼興奮。「好棒的煙火！」他們大叫著，老人微笑著。他們看到甘道夫的樣子就認得他，雖然他只偶爾出現在哈比村，而且都停留不久，但是除了村子裡年紀最大的長者之外，不管是這些孩子或其他人都沒看過他的煙火表演。那些表演現在都只能在傳說中回味了。

老人在比寶跟一些矮人的幫忙下，卸完貨之後，比寶分了一些零錢給旁觀的孩子，但並沒有送他們任何零星的鞭炮或煙花，讓他們很失望。

「趕快走吧！」甘道夫說。「等時候到了，你們自然可以看個夠。」然後他跟比寶就消失到門裡，把門關上了。年輕的哈比人們盯著門看了一會沒有結果，只好走開了，心裡覺得宴會那天好像永遠不會來似的。

在袋底洞裡，比寶跟甘道夫坐在一間小房間中，一扇向西敞開的窗戶旁，外面就是花園。傍晚的陽光明亮，氣氛寧靜。花朵閃耀著紅色和金色：金魚草，向日葵和金蓮花蔓延攀爬在整片矮牆上，還從圓形的窗邊探進頭來。

「你的花園真豔麗！」甘道夫說。

「是呀，」比寶說，「我確實很喜歡這個花園，還有整個親愛的杉爾郡；但是我覺得我需要去度假了。」

「你是說去進行你的計畫？」

「沒錯，我幾個月前就拿定主意了，到現在都沒有改變。」

「很好，現在多說無益，堅持你的計畫吧，注意，是整個計畫。希望到頭來會有最好的結果，對你，對我們大家都是。」

「但願如此。無論如何，我打算在週二好好享樂，還有開我的小玩笑。」

「不曉得有誰會笑？」甘道夫搖搖頭。

「我們等著瞧吧。」比寶說。

隔天有更多平板車上來山丘，接著車子川流不息。之前可能有些人抱怨他應該「肥水不落外人田」，但就在那個星期，袋底洞開始送出訂單，訂購在哈比村，水邊村或附近任何地方可以買到的食品，商品跟奢侈品。大家都開始熱中起來，每過去一天，就在月曆上打個勾，熱切地等著郵差來臨，盼望接到邀請函。

不多久，邀請函就開始大量湧出，哈比村的郵局內被堆得寸步難行，水邊村的郵局有如大雪來襲，郵局開始徵召義務郵差。郵差川流不息地爬上山丘，帶來好幾百封禮貌的回信，封封措辭不同，但意思都一樣：感謝邀請，我必定赴宴。

袋底洞的大門口出現一張告示：「除宴會有關事宜，請勿進入。」連真的跟宴會有關，或假裝有關的人，都很少被請進門。比寶很忙，忙著寫邀請函，忙著記錄回函，包裝禮物，並為他自己的事私下做一些準備。自從甘道夫來了以後，他就都避不見人。

一天早上，哈比人們醒來，就發現比寶家大門口南邊的一大片田野，都放滿了柱子和繩索，準備搭帳篷。斜坡上開了一條通道連接到路上，鋪上了寬廣的階梯，還立起一道白色的大門。有三戶哈比人住在這片空地旁的袋邊巷，他們對這一切都極感興趣，而大多數人則對他們羨慕不已。老蓋佛甚至都懶得再假裝照顧自己的花園了。

帳篷開始搭了起來。其中有一個特別大的帳篷，大到長在田野上的那棵樹都被包圍在裡頭，昂然聳立在角落，枝幹上掛滿了燈籠，位置就在主桌的首位旁。更值得期待的（對哈比人而言），是在空地的北邊角落架起了一座龐大的露天廚

房。方圓數里之內所有餐廳和旅館的大批廚師都來到這裡，協助駐紮在袋底洞的矮人和其他奇怪的外地人。興奮之情已經沸騰到極點。

接著天氣卻變得烏雲密佈。那是星期三，宴會的前夕。大家憂慮的心情頓時升高。但在星期四，九月二十二日，黎明破曉，曙光乍現。太陽高高升起，烏雲散去，晴空萬里，旗幟迎風飛揚，玩樂的時光就此展開。

比寶貝金斯稱這次活動是宴會，但其實其中混合了各式各樣的娛樂節目。幾乎住在附近的所有人都受到邀請，只有少數人不小心被漏掉了，但既然他們還是照樣出現，也就無所謂了。許多住在杉爾郡其他地區的人也受邀，甚至還有一些客人來自邊境以外。比寶本人親自在新建的白色大門旁，迎接客人（和不請自來的人）。他發送禮物給所有人和其他閒雜人等，後者是指那些從後門溜出去，又從大門進來一次的傢伙。哈比人會在自己生日時，送其他人禮物，照例不是很貴重的，也不像這次這麼豐盛。這個慣例其實很不錯，因為在哈比村和水邊村，一年中幾乎每一天都有人生日，因此這附近的哈比人一星期至少可收到一次禮物。雖然如此，他們從不嫌禮物太多。

但這次這個場合，禮物卻是特別的好。哈比人小朋友們因此興奮莫名，有一陣子幾乎忘了吃東西。其中有他們從來沒看過的玩具，全部都很漂亮，有些一看就知道具有魔法。其實有許多是一年前就定做的，遠從孤山和戴爾城送來，而且是矮人製作的。

所有客人都由主人歡迎並進門後，各處開始有了歌聲、舞蹈、音樂、遊戲，當然還有食物和飲料。總共供應三頓正餐：午餐，午茶和主餐（或說晚宴）。但唯一能看出是午餐和午茶的原因，是因為這時候所有人都坐下來一起進食。其他時間依然有許多人吃吃喝喝，從上午十一點多到晚上六點半開始放煙火為止，持續不斷。

放煙火是由甘道夫負責：他不但帶來煙火，還負責設計製作；特殊效果，花式煙火，成群結隊的沖天炮也由他施放。但他也慷慨地分送出許多爆竹拉砲，沖天炮、仙女棒，火把，矮人的蠟燭，精靈的噴泉煙火，嘎柏靈的啪啦砲，和霹靂砲。這些都是一等的精彩。甘道夫的技藝顯然隨著年齡增長而日益精進。

有些火箭就像一群晶瑩閃爍的飛禽以甜美的聲音歌唱，有些煙火的深色煙霧形成大樹的枝幹，綠色的葉片在一剎那間像泉水綻放，明亮耀眼的枝桠釋放出火紅灼熱的花朵，眼看就要垂落到目瞪口呆仰望著的哈比人臉上，又在瞬間消失

無蹤，留下一股甜美的香氣。有的像成群結隊的蝴蝶，五彩繽紛地飛進樹叢裡。有的像彩色的火焰升起如巨柱，搖身一變成為老鷹，或帆船，或列隊飛翔的天鵝。一陣紅色的雷雨過後，又掀起一陣黃色的陣雨。如雷的戰士怒吼猛然響起，伴隨著叢林般濃密的銀色長茅恍然拔地而起，接著又落入水裡，發出陣陣嘶聲，如千百條火熱的蛇。最後對比寶致敬的驚奇表演，正如甘道夫計畫的，令所有哈比人震驚無比。這時所有的燈都滅了，一道濃煙升起，慢慢形成一座如在遠處的山脈，山頭上開始閃耀光芒，接著噴出慘綠及猩紅的火焰。一條金紅相間的巨龍飛身而出，體型雖沒有真龍巨大，樣貌卻如真龍栩栩如生，口中噴發火焰，雙眼怒視下方，突然發出一聲怒吼，在眾人頭頂上來回飛掠三次。大家爭相躲避，許多人臉朝下撲倒在地上。巨龍如一系列高速火車飛越，陡然翻了個跟斗，接著發出一聲震耳欲聾的巨響，在水邊村上空爆炸開來。

「這表示晚餐時間到了！」比寶說。恐懼驚慌頓時消失，原本趴在地上的哈比人都跳起來。所有人都有豐盛的晚餐可吃，不過有些人則受邀參加特別的家族晚宴。晚宴地點就在那個角落立著一棵樹的大帳篷裡。受邀人數限定在十二打（哈比人也稱這個數字為一籬，但這種說法不宜用來指人數。）客人選自跟比寶與佛羅多有親戚關係的所有家族，另外還有一些沒有親戚關係的特殊朋友（如甘道夫）。許多年紀很輕的哈比人都受到邀請，也都在父母應允下出席。哈比人對於小孩子很晚上床通常並不介意，尤其是能免費飽餐一頓的時候。要帶大一個哈比小孩需要許多食物。

客人中許多是貝金斯，柏菲斯，圖克跟白蘭地巴克家的人，以及一些挖洞家（比寶貝金斯奶奶家的親戚）和胖啞家（他外公那邊的親戚）的人。另外還有少數客人來自穴居家，大肚家，凸腹家，地洞家，康健家，號角家，和大腳家。其中有些人跟比寶的親戚關係實在是一表三千里的遙遠，有些人住在杉爾郡極偏遠的角落，幾乎從沒來過哈比村。薩克維——貝金斯家也沒被遺漏。奧圖和他妻子羅貝麗亞都出席了。他們並不喜歡比寶，更討厭佛羅多，但邀請卡的文字是以金色的墨水寫成，製作如此精美，讓他們覺得無論如何都無法拒絕。而且，他們的表親比寶鑽研美食多年，他家裡的餐點一向叫人讚不絕口。

總共一百四十四位客人都期待著一場愉快的盛宴，不過也非常害怕宴席後主人的演說（這個項目是無法避免的）。他滔滔不絕的長篇大論中總要摻雜不少他所謂的詩句，有時候喝了一兩杯酒，還會談到他那趟神秘的旅行中，荒謬絕倫

的歷險經過。晚餐當然沒有令人失望，所有客人都享用了一頓極其愉快的大餐，可以稱為是一場迷人的盛宴：各種珍奇佳餚既多樣又豐盛，用餐時間又悠閒漫長。後來幾個星期，附近販賣食物的商家幾乎都是門可羅雀，但是比寶這次宴會幾乎買光了方圓幾里內所有商店、酒窖和穀倉的存貨，所以也無大礙。

晚宴結束後（大致算結束後），就是演講時間。但此時大多數客人心情已經比較寬容，正處於一種他們稱為「填滿縫隙」的愉悅狀態。他們啜飲著偏好的飲料，咀嚼著偏好的點心，暫時遺忘了恐懼。不論演說內容是什麼，他們都願意聆聽，講者每講一句話，他們都準備鼓掌喝采。

「我親愛的親友們」，比寶站起身來開口說話。「大家注意聽！注意聽！」他們吼叫著，不斷重複這句話，似乎不願意遵從自己的勸告。比寶於是離開座位，走到燈火通明的那棵大樹下，站到一把椅子上。燈籠的火光照在他發亮的臉上，他繡工精緻的絲背心上，金色的鈕釦閃閃發亮。大家都看到他站在那裡，一隻手在空中揮舞，一隻手插在褲袋裡。

「親愛的貝金斯，柏菲斯家人，」比寶再度開口，「還有親愛的圖克跟白蘭地巴克、挖洞家、胖嘟家、還有穴居家、號角家、大肚家、凸腹家、康健家、地洞家和大腳家的親戚們...」「是大腳丫！」帳棚後方一個年長的哈比人大叫。他的姓氏呢，自然就是大腳，而且人如其名，雙腳巨大，腳毛特別濃密，而且都正擱在桌上。

「大腳家的親戚們。」比寶重複一遍，「還有親愛的薩克維——貝金斯家人，如今我終於再度歡迎你們來到袋底洞。今天是我一百一十一歲的生日：今天我滿一百一十一了。」「好耶！祝你福如東海，壽比南山！」他們大吼，興高采烈地敲著桌子。比寶的表現好極了，他們就喜歡這樣子：簡短清楚。

「希望你們玩得跟我一樣開心。」喝采聲如雷貫耳。許多人喊著好玩（也有人喊不好玩）。樂器聲鼓譟著，喇叭，號角，長笛和橫笛，還有許多各式各樣的樂器。剛剛提到現場有許多年輕的哈比人。幾百顆音樂拉炮同時拉響。拉炮上大多寫有「戴爾」的字眼，多數哈比人根本不知道這個地名，但他們都同意這些拉炮棒透了。拉炮裡頭都有樂器，體型雖小但製作精巧，樂音迷人。事實上，角落裡一些年輕的圖克和白蘭地巴克家人，都以為比寶伯伯已經講完了（因為他顯然已經把需要講的話都講完了），現在組成了一個臨時的交響樂團，開始演奏愉

快的舞曲。艾佛拉圖克少爺和梅麗洛白蘭地巴克小姐甚至爬上桌，手上拿著鈴鐺，開始跳起青春鈴舞，舞步優美，而充滿活力。

但比寶還沒說完。他從身旁一個年輕人手上搶過一支號角，吹了很響的三聲。鼓譟的聲音逐漸平息。「我不會說很久。」他大喊。所有聽眾都大聲叫好。「我請你們所有人共聚一堂，是有個特殊的目的。」他說這句話的語氣，吸引了大家的注意。場面幾乎完全安靜下來，圖克家的一兩個人甚至豎起了耳朵。

「事實上，是有三個目的。第一個目的是，我想告訴你們，我非常喜歡你們所有的人，能跟這麼傑出令人景仰的哈比人們為鄰，一百一十一年實在太短了。」聽眾爆出響亮的喝采聲。

「你們當中有一半的人，我認識的程度不及我希望的一半深；你們當中不到一半的人，我喜歡的程度不及你們應得的一半深。」這句話出人意外，而且語意複雜，雖然有些零星的掌聲，但大多數人還在解讀這句話是什麼意思，要看看到底這是不是讚美。

「第二個目的，是要慶祝我的生日。」歡呼聲又響起。「我應該說，我們的生日。當然了，因為這也是我的繼承人及姪子佛羅多的生日。他今天成年，同時獲得繼承權。」老一輩虛應故事地拍拍手，而有些年輕人則大喊：「佛羅多！佛羅多！大好人佛羅多！」薩克維—貝金斯家人不悅地皺眉，同時懷疑「獲得繼承權」是什麼意思。

「我們加起來剛好是一百四十四歲。你們合起來的人數就是為了符合這個特別的數目：一籬，容我使用這個說法。」沒有人鼓掌。這麼說簡直太荒謬了。許多人，尤其是薩克維—貝金斯家人都覺得受到污辱，認為自己受邀，肯定只是為了湊足這個數字，就像整打包裝的貨物一樣。「一籬，真是的！這麼粗俗的說法。」

「此外，請諸位容許我提到久遠以前的故事，因為今天也是我乘著木桶，抵達長湖上，艾格羅斯城的日子。不過當時我根本沒想到那是我的生日。那時我才五十一歲，生日似乎不是那麼重要。那天的晚宴倒是十分豐盛，可惜我記得我得了重感冒，只能帶著鼻音說：『勿丕謝！』現在我想標準地重複一遍這句話：多謝，謝謝各位蒞臨我這小小的宴會。」一片頑強抵抗的沈默。大家都擔心比寶接下來就要唱起歌，或吟起詩來了。而且他們已經開始不耐煩了。為什麼他還不趕快閉嘴，讓大家舉杯祝他長命百歲呢？但比寶並沒有唱歌或吟詩，他只是停了

一會。

「第三點，也是最後一點，」他說，「我想宣佈一件事情」。他最後這幾個字說得非常突然又響亮，那些還坐得起來的人都不由得坐直身子。「我很遺憾要宣佈這件事，因為我之前說過，跟你們在一起相處一百一十一年，實在太短了。一切到此為止。我要走了。我現在就走了。再見！」

他走下台階，立刻消失了。突然閃現一陣炫目的光芒，所有賓客都忍不住眨眼，等他們再睜開眼睛，比寶已經不見人影。一百四十四個驚愕莫名的哈比人們都啞口無言地癱在椅子上。老奧朵大腳原來放在桌上的腳一下子重重落在地上。周遭一陣寂靜。大家深吸了幾口氣後，突然間所有的貝金斯、柏菲斯、圖克，白蘭地巴克、挖洞家、胖啞家、穴居家、大肚家、凸腹家、地洞家、康健家、號角家，和大腳家的人都一起開始說話。

大家一致同意這個笑話開得非常沒有品味，而且賓客亟需更多酒菜才能從飽受驚嚇的惱怒心情中恢復過來。「跟你說過，他肯定是瘋了。」可能是最普遍的評語。連圖克家的人（少數幾人除外）也覺得比寶的行為太荒謬了。這時候，所有人都還以為他消失不見，不過是個惡作劇。

但老羅力白蘭地巴克可不這麼確定。儘管他年紀一大把，又剛吃了一頓豐盛大餐，他的智慧還是不受蒙蔽。他跟他媳婦愛萊拉達說：「好媳婦，這件事有點蹊蹺！我相信貝金斯這個瘋傢伙又出遠門了。老傻瓜。不過這有什麼好擔心的，反正他沒把食物一起帶走。」他大聲喊佛羅多再送酒過來。

佛羅多是當場唯一保持沈默的人。他靜靜坐在比寶空了的椅子旁好一會，對旁人所有詢問批評一概充耳不聞。雖然他事先就知道比寶要開的玩笑，但還是挺開心的。眾賓客訝異憤慨的樣子讓他忍不住好笑，不過在此同時，他也深深覺得感傷，他突然發現自己摯愛這個老哈比人。大部份賓客都繼續吃喝，討論比寶貝金斯怪異之處，以及他的過去和現在；但薩克維——貝金斯家人已經氣沖沖地離開了。佛羅多也不想再待在宴會裡。他吩咐繼續上酒，然後將自己杯中的酒一飲而盡，默默祝比寶健康，就溜出了大帳棚。

至於比寶貝金斯，他在演講的時候，也不停地撫弄著口袋中的金戒指：那枚他多年以來秘密保存的金戒指。他走下椅子時，就把戒指套到手指上，從此以後，再也沒有任何哈比人在哈比村見到他。

他步履輕快地走到自己家洞口，站了一會，微笑著傾聽帳棚傳來的喧囂噪音，和田野中其他地方傳來的歡笑聲。然後他走進洞裡，脫掉宴會禮服，將繡花絲背心疊好，包裹在棉紙中收好。接著他俐落地穿上邋遢的舊衣服，在腰間繫上一條磨損的舊皮帶。在皮帶上他掛了一只破損的黑色皮劍套，裡頭插了把短劍。他打開一個散發樟腦丸味道的抽屜，拿出一套舊斗篷和帽子。它們原本深鎖抽屜，彷彿是什麼珍貴的寶物，但其實已經經過多次補綴，歷經風吹日曬，難以猜測出原來的顏色，本來可能是深綠色吧，而且對他而言都太大了。接著他走到書房，打開一個龐大的保險箱，取出一個舊衣服纏繞成的包裹。還有一本皮革封面的手稿，以及一只鼓脹的大信封。保險櫃裡立著一個沈重的包袱，已經快裝滿了。他把書和包裹塞進包袱上方。然後他把他的金戒指和戒指的精緻鍊子放進信封裡，封好口，信封寫上給佛羅多。一開始他把信封放到壁爐架上，但是又突然把信封拿下來，塞到自己口袋裡。這時候門開了，甘道夫快步走進來。

「哈囉。」比寶說，「我就猜想你會出現。」

「很高興碰到你沒有隱形。」巫師回答著，一邊在一把椅子上坐下。「我想在你離開前跟你交代最後幾句話。你一定覺得一切都進行得非常順利，完全如你所願吧？」

「我確實這麼覺得。」比寶說，「雖然那一陣閃光有點出人意料，把我都嚇到了，更不要說別人了。我猜這是你額外加的料吧？」

「沒錯。這麼多年來你一直很明智地不讓外人得知戒指這個祕密，因此我想有必要讓你的客人有個理由，來解釋你為什麼突然消失。」

「同時也壞了我的把戲。你這個好管閒事的老傢伙。」比寶笑著說。「不過我想你知道怎麼辦才對，一向都是如此。」

「通常是這樣沒錯，但這件事我就不那麼確定了。現在到了最後時刻，你的玩笑開過了，也驚嚇或得罪了你大部分的親戚，讓整個杉爾郡未來九天內，甚至未來九十九天內，都有話題可談。你還要繼續照原計畫進行嗎？」

「要，我需要度個假，很長的長假，我不是跟你說過了。說不定這是個永不結束的假期，我想我可能不會回來了。事實上，我根本沒打算回來，我把所有



的事都安排好了。

「我老了，甘道夫，雖然看起來不像，但我心裡真的覺得老了。什麼保養得好！」他嗤之以鼻，「不知怎麼，我覺得變得很單薄，好像被拉扯開來，你知道我的意思嗎？好像奶油被分散塗在太多麵包上。這種感覺不對勁，我需要一點改變。」

甘道夫興味盎然，專注萬分地盯著他，「確實不對勁。」他若有所思的說，「是不對勁。不過，我相信你的計畫可能是最好的。」

「無論如何，我都已經下定決心了。甘道夫，我想再看到山，到深山裡頭，然後找個可以休息的地方，安靜地生活，不再有一大群親戚在周圍窺伺打探，不再有絡繹不絕的愚蠢訪客拉著門鈴不放。我也許可以找個地方，完成我的書，我已經想到一個很好的結尾：他從此過著快樂的生活，直到壽終正寢為止。」

甘道夫笑說：「但願如此。但這本書不會有人讀的，怎麼結尾都一樣。」

「喔，會有吧，好幾年以後就會有吧。佛羅多已經看了一些，到目前為止完成的部份。你會分點神照顧佛羅多吧？」

「會的，我會全副精神都用上，只要不被別的事纏住。」

「當然如果我要求的話，他是會跟我來的。事實上，臨開宴會前他就提議過一次。但他並不是真心想去，現在還不是。我希望死前再看到一次荒野，還有那群山脈，但是他還留戀杉爾郡，喜歡這些森林、田野和小河。他在這裡應該可以過得很舒服，當然，我把所有東西都留給他了，只有一些零星物品除外。希望等他習慣自己一個人之後，會過得快樂。現在他也該當自己的主人了。」

「所有東西？」甘道夫說，「也包括那只戒指嗎？這是你同意的，記得嗎？」

「嗯，呃，對，好像是。」比寶結巴起來。

「戒指在哪裡？」

「你非問不可嗎？在一個信封裡。」比寶不耐煩地說，「放在火爐上，不對，在這裡，在我口袋裡！」他猶豫著，「這真是奇怪了，」他低聲對自己說，「不過話說回來，為什麼不行呢？它為什麼不能就留在我口袋裡？」

甘道夫再次專注地看著比寶，他眼中閃爍一抹微光。「我想，比寶，」他平靜地說，「你應該把戒指留下來，你不想嗎？」

「嗯，想，也不想。問題是，我覺得，我一點也不想跟它分開，我也看不出來為什麼一定要這樣。你為什麼要我這麼做？」他問道，聲音中突然發生奇怪

的變化，尖銳而帶著惱怒與質疑。「你一天到晚來煩我，就為了這枚戒指。我那次旅行中得到的其他東西，你從來也沒有過問。」

「是沒有。但我不得不煩你，」甘道夫說，「我只想知道真相，這一點非常重要。魔戒，嗯，具有魔法，非常稀少而神奇。我是出於使命，不得不對你的戒指好奇，過去是，現在還是。如果你再次出外遊蕩，我一定要知道戒指在哪裡。而且我想，你已經擁有它夠久了，比寶，除非我猜測錯誤，否則你以後再也不需要它了。」

比寶紅了臉，眼中閃耀著憤怒的光芒，原本和善的臉變得嚴峻。「怎麼不需要？而且我要怎麼處理我的東西，到底干你什麼事？這是我的東西，是我找到的，是它找上我的。」

「沒錯，沒錯，但是你不必生氣呀。」甘道夫說。

「我生氣也是你的錯。」比寶說，「它是我的，我告訴你。是我的東西，我的寶貝，沒錯，我的寶貝。」

巫師的表情依然嚴肅而專注，只是在他深邃的雙眼中閃爍微弱的光芒，顯示他相當震驚，而且真切地感到憂慮。「以前也有人這樣稱呼這枚戒指，」他說，「那個人不是你。」

「但我現在就要這麼說，不行嗎？雖然嘎圖曾經這樣說過，但這戒指已經不是他的，是我的了。而且我就要把他留著。」

甘道夫站了起來，嚴正地開口：「比寶，如果你真的這樣，你就是個大傻瓜。」他說，「你每說一個字，事實就越明顯。它已經把你牢牢控制住了。放手吧，然後你就能自己離開，完全自由。」

「我要做什麼就做什麼，我高興走才走。」比寶頑固地說。

「好了，好了，親愛的哈比人！」甘道夫說，「你這長長的一輩子中，我們一直都是朋友，你確實欠我一份情。來吧，你要說到做到。放棄它吧！」

「如果是你自己要我的戒指，你就說呀。」比寶喊道，「但是你拿不到的。我不會放棄我的寶貝，我告訴你。」他的手不知不覺伸向他那把小劍的劍柄。

甘道夫的眼光閃爍，「快要輪到我生氣了。」他說「你再說一遍，我就要生氣了。到時候你就會看到灰色巫師甘道夫現出原貌。」他朝比寶走近一步，似乎變得高大而兇惡，他的影子充滿了這個小小的房間。

比寶倒退到牆邊，呼吸困難，一手緊抓著他的口袋。他們就面對面對峙了

好一會，房裡的空氣似乎顫動起來。甘道夫的眼睛依然緊盯著比寶。比寶的雙手慢慢地放鬆，接著開始發抖。

「甘道夫，你是中了什麼邪？」他說，「你從來沒有像這個樣子。你這麼大驚小怪到底是為什麼？這是我的戒指不是嗎？是我找到的，而且如果當初我沒有留著，早就被嘎圖殺了。不論他怎麼說，我都不是小偷。」

「我從來沒有說你是小偷。」甘道夫回答，「我也不是，我不是要搶你，而是要幫你。我希望你能像以前那樣信任我。」他轉過身去，陰影也消失了。他似乎又縮小成原來的白髮老頭，駝著背，滿心憂慮。

比寶的手在眼睛上抹了一把，「對不起。」他說，「我剛剛覺得好奇怪。不過從此不必再去想這枚戒指，也讓我鬆了一口氣。最近它越來越佔據我的腦袋，有時候我覺得它簡直像一隻眼睛盯著我。你知道嗎？我一直想把它戴上，好消失不見，不然就是不停想著它是不是安全，不斷拿出來確定。我試過把它鎖起來，但後來發現不把它放在口袋裡，我就根本無法安心。我也不知道為什麼，就是沒辦法下定決心。」

「那就相信我吧，」甘道夫說，「我的決心很堅定。把戒指留下來，你趕快離開吧。不要再把戒指占為己有，把它給佛羅多，我會照顧他。」

比寶站在原地好一會，緊張而猶豫。他嘆了一口氣，「好吧，」他勉強說，「我會照做。」他聳聳肩膀，頗為慘淡地微笑了一下。「畢竟整場宴會就是為了這件事，真的，放棄一大堆生日禮物，可能同時會讓放棄戒指顯得容易一點。到頭來其實沒有比較容易，但我辛辛苦苦準備了半天，如果都浪費掉，也實在太可惜。這個玩笑也就開得不成功了。」

「如果你不放棄，那這整場宴會就毫無意義了。」甘道夫說。

「好吧。」比寶說，「戒指就跟其他東西一起留給佛羅多。」他深吸了一口氣。「現在我真的得走了，否則恐怕會被人瞧見。我已經道別過了，可受不了再來一遍。」他背起袋子，往門口走去。

「戒指還在你的口袋裡。」巫師說。

「啊，你說得沒錯。」比寶喊說。「還有我的遺囑和其他所有文件。你最好拿去，幫我轉送。這樣最安全。」

「不，不要把戒指給我，」甘道夫說，「把它放在火爐上。放在那裡就很安全了，佛羅多很快就會來拿。我會等他來。」

比寶把信封拿出來，但他正要把信封放到時鐘旁，手卻縮了回來，小包裏掉到地上。他還來不及撿起來，巫師就彎下腰一把抓起，把它放到定位。哈比人臉上迅速掠過一陣怒意，但突然怒意消失了，取而代之的是放鬆的表情和一個微笑。

「好，就這樣了。」他說，「我要上路了。」

他們走到大廳。比寶從傘架裡挑了他最喜歡的拐杖；然後吹了聲口哨。剛才在各個房間忙碌的三個矮人走了出來。

「都準備好了嗎？」比寶問，「每樣東西都打包好，貼上標籤了？」

「都好了。」他們回答。

「好極了，那就出發吧！」他踏出了大門口。

這是個晴朗的夜晚，黑色的夜空中點綴著星星。他抬頭仰望，深吸著空氣。「太好了！又可以出門，又跟矮人一起上路真是好玩！這就是多年來我一直期盼的！再見！」他說，望著他的老房子，對著大門鞠躬。「再見，甘道夫！」

「再見，暫時如此了，比寶。你自己小心！你年紀夠大，也許也夠聰明了。」

「小心？我不想小心。你不必擔心我！我現在比什麼時候都快樂，這就很了不起了。時間到了。我終於可以讓自己昏頭轉向，不顧一切。」他補充說。然後他壓低了聲音，似乎只想給自己聽，在黑暗中唱起歌：

路迢迢無止境  
從大門延伸而去  
長路在眼前  
我必須追隨  
以急切的腳步趕著路  
直到它連結寬廣大道  
那裡許多羊腸小徑相遇  
之後往何處？難以預知

他停了一下，沈默了一會，然後他沒說一個字就轉過身去，背對著空地上和帳棚裡的燈光與人聲。三個矮人同伴跟隨著他，一起繞進他的花園，快步踏下那條長長的斜坡道。斜坡底有一道圍籬，他從圍籬上較低的一處跳過去，然後走

到草地上，穿入夜色中，有如一陣風沙沙吹過草叢。

甘道夫在原地不動了好一會，盯著他的背影走進黑暗裡。「再見，親愛的比寶，後會有期！」他低聲說完，走回屋子裡。

佛羅多之後不久便進門來，發現甘道夫獨坐在黑暗中，若有所思。「他走了嗎？」他問道。

「對，」甘道夫回答，「他終於走了。」

「我但願——我是說，到今天晚上之前，我都還希望這只是個笑話。」佛羅多說，「但是我心裡早就知道，他是真的想走。他以前就常常拿正經事開玩笑。真希望我早一點回來，就可以送他出門。」

「我想到頭來他還是比較喜歡這樣悄悄溜走。」甘道夫說。「不要太難過，他會好好的，至少現在如此。他留了一個小包裏給你，在那裡。」

佛羅多把信封從火爐上拿下來，看了一眼，但沒有打開。

「我想裡面應該有他的遺囑和其他文件，」巫師說，「你是袋底洞的主人了。另外，我想，應該還有一個金戒指。」

「那個戒指？」佛羅多驚叫，「他把戒指留給我？怎麼會呢？不過也許會有用。」

「也許會，也許不會。」甘道夫說，「是我的話，就不會去用它。但你千萬要把它藏好，保管好。我該去睡了。」

身為袋底洞的主人，佛羅多儘管覺得十分痛苦，他還是有責任送客。發生怪異事情的謠言已經在空地上傳遍，但佛羅多只肯說：到明天早上，一切事情就會清楚了。接近午夜時，許多馬車出現來接重要的客人。馬車一輛輛地駛離，載走酒足飯飽，但十分不滿意的哈比人們。事先安排的園丁們接著前來，用手推車帶走不小心還留著的客人。

長夜漫漫過去。太陽升起。哈比人們起得很晚。早晨開始了。一些人（事先約定的）前來開始清理帳棚，餐桌和椅子，湯匙和餐刀，酒瓶和餐盤，燈籠和以花盆栽種，正在開花的灌木，麵包屑和拉炮紙花，忘記帶走的袋子，手套和手帕，還有沒吃完的食物（這個項目為量甚少。）然後又來了另一群人，（沒有約定的）：包括貝金斯家，柏菲斯家，大肚家，圖克家，和其他家在附近或在附近

過夜的客人。到了中午，連那些吃得最飽的也已經起床活動，袋底洞來了一大群人，雖然都是不請自來，但倒是不出意料之外。

佛羅多在台階上等著，臉上帶著微笑，但是看起來相當疲倦而擔憂。他接待所有訪客，但他能說的跟之前沒什麼差別。對所有詢問，他都一律回答：「比寶貝金斯先生已經離開了，據我所知，應該是永遠不會回來了。」其中有些訪客，他會邀請進門，因為比寶留了「信息」給他們。

在大廳裡堆滿了各式各樣的包裹、小包、和小件的家具。每件東西上都綁了個標籤。其中幾個標籤是像這樣的：

「給艾德拉圖克，專門為他準備。比寶。」標在一把雨傘上。艾德拉之前帶走了好幾把沒有標籤的傘。

「給朵拉貝金斯，紀念我們通信通得那麼久。摯愛你的比寶。」這個標籤是貼在一個大廢紙籃上。朵拉是比寶的妹妹，也是比寶和佛羅多活著的女性親戚中，最年長的一個。她已經高齡九十九歲，超過半個世紀以來寫了無數的忠告給比寶。

「給穴居家的米羅，希望這會有用。B. B.」貼在一枝金筆和一瓶墨水瓶上。米羅從來不回信。

「給安潔麗卡使用。比寶叔叔。」貼在一個圓形的凸面鏡上。她是貝金斯家族中很年輕的成員，顯然覺得自己的臉孔十分勻稱美麗。

「供凸腹家的雨果的收藏品使用。貢獻者之一。」標在一個（空的）書櫃上。雨果很會借書，而且借了不還的習慣比一般人還糟。

「給羅貝麗亞薩克維——貝金斯，這是送你的禮物。」貼在一個裝著銀湯匙的盒子。比寶相信羅貝麗亞在他上次出遠門的時候，拿走了不少他的湯匙。羅貝麗亞對此也心知肚明。她後來較晚時到達，馬上懂了比寶的諷刺，但也拿走了這些湯匙。

以上只是眾多各色禮物的一小部份。比寶漫長的一生中累積的東西，已經讓他的住所雜亂無章。哈比人的洞通常都會越來越擁擠，生日時送一堆禮物的習慣是主要的罪魁禍首。但當然不是所有禮物都是新的，其中也有一兩個忘了用途的舊玩意（哈比人統稱這類東西為「瑪松」），在整個村子裡不斷循環流傳。不過比寶通常送出嶄新的禮物，把自己收到的留下來。如今這個舊洞穴終於清出了一

點空間。

這些形形色色的道別禮物每一個都有標籤，都由比寶親筆書寫，好幾個包含諷刺和笑話，不過，大多數東西都送到最需要或最想要的人手上。比較窮的哈比人，尤其是住在袋邊巷的，都收到很好的禮物。老蓋佛甘吉得到兩袋馬鈴薯，一把新的剷子，一件羊毛背心，和一瓶他膝蓋咯吱咯吱響時可以擦的膏藥。為了感謝老羅力白蘭地巴克過去的熱情款待，比寶送給他一打陳年溫雅德酒莊酒：一種南部生產的烈紅酒。這些酒是比寶的父親存放在酒窖裡的，所以現在已經十分成熟。因此羅力差不多都原諒了比寶，喝了第一瓶之後，他已經推薦比寶是一級棒的好傢伙。

足足還剩下許多東西給佛羅多。當然所有主要的貴重物品，所有的書籍、圖畫，以及許多家具都留給了佛羅多。然而，比寶完全沒有暗示或提到任何金錢或珠寶，連一分錢或一顆玻璃珠子都沒有送出。

那天下午對佛羅多而言，實在很難熬。不實的謠言如野火燎原散播開來，說袋底洞要清倉分送，於是不久整個地方都擠滿了不該來，卻趕不走的人。許多標籤被撕裂，攪亂，爭吵隨即爆發。有些人想在大廳裡交換或交易，還有人想順手牽羊偷走沒寫他們名字的小東西，或任何看來沒人想要或無人看顧的東西。通往大門的路因為手推車和平板車而阻塞。

在一團混亂中，薩克維—貝金斯家人來到。之前佛羅多已經進去休息了一陣子，留他的朋友馬利白蘭地巴克在外面看著東西。奧圖大聲要求見佛羅多時，馬利禮貌地鞠躬。

「他身體不適，」他說，「正在休息。」

「你是說他躲起來了。」羅貝麗亞說，「無論如何，我們想見他，而且一定要見到他。你就這樣告訴他！」

馬利把他們留在大廳好一會，剛好讓他們發現他們的道別禮物——湯匙。但這並沒讓他們心情好一點，最後他們終於被帶進書房。佛羅多坐在一張書桌前，面前是一大堆紙張。他看起來確實不太舒服，至少沒有舒服到可以應付薩克維—貝金斯家的人。他站了起來，不安地撫弄著他口袋中的一個東西。但是他開口時相當客氣。

薩克維—貝金斯家人卻十分無禮。他們一開始提出很低廉的價錢（好像雙方是朋友似的），想購買各式各樣珍貴而沒有標籤的物品，等到佛羅多回答說，

只有比寶特別指明的東西才能送走，他們就說整件事都很可疑。

「就我看，只有一件事最清楚。」奧圖說，「就是你因為這件事得到極大的好處。我一定要看他的遺囑。」

如果佛羅多沒有被收養，奧圖就應該是比寶的繼承人。他仔細讀了一遍遺囑，然後不以為然地哼了一聲。很不幸這份遺囑十分清楚而正確（哈比人的法律習慣中，遺囑的格式規定很繁瑣，包括要有七個證人以紅色墨水簽名。）

「又落空了！」他對他太太說，「等了六十年等到什麼？湯匙？簡直是笑話！」他在佛羅多眼前狠狠彈了一下手指，就拖著沈重的腳步走出去。但羅貝麗亞可沒這麼好打發。過了一會，佛羅多走出書房看外面情況如何，結果發現她還在屋裡，正在搜尋每個角落，在地板上敲敲打打。他幫她在雨傘中拿出幾樣很小（但很有價值），不知怎麼掉進去的東西，之後便堅定地送她出了大門。她的表情似乎顯示她努力掙扎要說出一句惡毒的告別詞，但她在台階上回頭時，只說出：

「你一定會後悔的，年輕人！你幹嘛不一起走？你不屬於這裡，你根本不像貝金斯家的人——你應該姓白蘭地巴克。」

「馬利，你聽到了嗎？她可是侮辱的意思。」佛羅多對著她把門關上。

「不，那是個稱讚。」馬利白蘭地巴克說，「所以當然也不是事實。」

之後他們在洞裡巡視一遍，趕走了三個年輕的哈比人（兩個柏菲斯家，一個大肚家的），他們正在一個地窖的牆上鑿洞。佛羅多還跟年輕的桑丘大腳（老奧朵大腳的孫子）扭打了起來。他正在一間大食物儲藏間開始挖洞，他認為那個地方敲起來有回聲。比寶藏有黃金的傳言激起了大家的好奇和希望，因為傳說中的黃金誰找到就是誰的，除非搜索的過程被打斷了（反正這些黃金就算不確定是偷拐搶騙得來，來路也頗有問題）。

佛羅多制服桑丘，把他推出門後，終於累癱在大廳裡一張椅子上。「該關門打烊了，馬利。」他說，「把門鎖起來，今天不要再讓人進來了，就算他們抬著樹幹來撞門也不開。」雖然早過了下午，他還是進去打算喝一杯茶，恢復精神。他還來不及坐下來，前門就響起一聲輕輕的敲門聲。「一定又是羅貝麗亞。」他想。「她一定想到什麼很難聽的話要回來說了。讓她等吧。」

他繼續喝他的茶。敲門聲又響了一次，比之前大聲許多，但他不以為意。突然巫師的頭出現在窗前。



「佛羅多，你再不讓我進去，我就把你的大門炸到洞裡，衝過大廳。」他說。

「親愛的甘道夫！馬上來。」佛羅多大喊，急忙跑過房間來到門邊，「請進，請進！我還以為是羅貝麗亞。」

「那我就原諒你。不過我之前不久還看到她駕著小馬車往水邊村去，臉上的表情會讓新鮮的牛奶都結塊。」

「我跟可憐的牛奶差不多。說實話，我差點用了比寶的戒指，那時候我真想消失不見。」

「萬萬不行！」甘道夫坐了下來。「佛羅多，你千萬要當心那枚戒指。事實上，我今天來交代最後幾句話，也跟那枚戒指有關。」

「那枚戒指怎麼樣呢？」

「你已經知道什麼？」

「只有比寶告訴我的。我聽他說過那個故事：他怎麼找到那枚戒指，用在什麼地方，我是說那次旅途中。」

「不知道他說的是哪個版本。」甘道夫說。

「噢，不是他告訴矮人，還有寫在書裡的那個。」佛羅多說，「我搬到這裡來以後不久他就告訴我真的版本了。他說你一直纏著他，直到他告訴你為止，所以我最好也知道。他說：佛羅多，我們之間沒有秘密。但是不要再傳出去。反正戒指是我的。」

「這倒有趣。」甘道夫說，「嗯，你對這件事有什麼看法？」

「你是說他發明什麼有人送他『禮物』的嗎？嗯，我覺得真的版本聽起來比較可能，而且我也不懂他為什麼要更改，這很不像比寶的個性，我也覺得很奇怪。」

「我也覺得。但是擁有這種寶物的人，一旦加以使用，就會發生怪異的事。所以你應該引以為鑑，對它特別當心。它除了可以讓你隨心所欲消失之外，可能還有其他的力量。」

「我不懂。」佛羅多說。

「我也不懂。」巫師回答。「我才剛開始思索這枚戒指的事，尤其是從昨天晚上開始。沒什麼好擔心的，但你如果肯聽我忠告，就盡量少用，或乾脆不要用

它。至少我請求你小心使用，不要因此引起旁人傳言或臆測。我再說一遍：千萬把它藏好，保管好！」

「你真是神秘兮兮！你到底擔心什麼？」

「我自己也不確定，所以我不再多說了。等我回來或許可以告訴你什麼。我馬上要走了：暫時再見了。」他站起身。

「馬上要走！」佛羅多叫起來，「我以為你至少會留一個星期，我還指望你幫忙呢。」

「我本來是打算幫忙——但現在不得不改變主意。我可能得離開好一陣子，但只要情勢許可，我會盡快回來看你。再見到我時可不要嚇一跳，我會悄悄溜進來，以後我不會再常常公開造訪杉爾郡了。我發現自己越來越不受歡迎了，他們說我攪亂這裡平靜的生活。有些人甚至指控是我鼓勵比寶出走，還有更難聽的。如果你有興趣的話，不妨告訴你，他們說你跟我聯手策畫，密謀比寶的財產。」

「有些人？」佛羅多大叫，「你是說奧圖和羅貝麗亞吧。真是太惡劣了！如果比寶能回來，跟我一起在鄉間散步，我寧可把袋底洞跟所有東西都雙手奉送。我愛杉爾郡，但我開始希望我也離開就好了。我懷疑還能不能再見到他。」

「我也是。」甘道夫說，「我還懷疑很多其他的事。但我得走了。你自己小心！注意，我可能隨時出現，完全出乎你意料之外。再見了！」

佛羅多送他到門口。甘道夫揮了最後一次手，就以驚人的速度走遠了。但佛羅多卻覺得這個老巫師看起來駝背得特別厲害，好像背負很重的重擔。夜漸漸深了，他穿著斗篷的身影也很快消失在暮色中。佛羅多過了很長一段時間都沒有再見到他。

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## 5. 廣播劇/錄音片 **Radio Plays/Sound Recordings**

### (英文 **English**)

- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. (Sound Recording) Abridged Version. London: Argo, 1974.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *Tolkien and Basil Bunting*. (Sound Recording) Interview given in 1964. London: BBC, 1980.

### (德文 **German**)

- Tolkien, J.R.R. *Der Herr der Ringe*. Hörspiel in 30 Folgen (Radio Play in 30 Episodes). Köln: Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 1992.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *Der kleine Hobbit*. Teil I bis IV. Literaturhörspiel in Cotta's Hörbühne (Radio Play in 4 Episodes). Köln: Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 1980.

## 6. 電腦網路網站 **Websites on the Internet**

### (英文 **English**)

- The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship:  
《<http://www.erols.com/aelfwine/Tolkien/linguistics/ELF/ELF.html>》
- The Internet Tolkien Book Society:  
《<http://www.mines.edu/students/j/jchuhta/itbs.html>》
- The J.R.R. Tolkien Information Page:  
《<http://www.csclub.uwaterloo.ca/~relipper/tolkien/rootpage.html>》
- The J.R.R. Tolkien Website Directory: 《<http://www.silmaril.net/links/links.html>》
- The Mythopoeic Society: 《<http://www.mythsoc.org/>》

The Tolkien Society Home Page: 《<http://www.tolkiensociety.org/>》

The Worldwide List of Tolkien Organizations:

《<ftp://ftp.math.uni-hamburg.de/pub/misc/tolkien/societies>》

**Note:** The above websites are only a selection of some of the longer-established and better known sites. There are, however, at least dozens of homepages and discussion groups, new ones being created “virtually” all the time. Many of them are not strictly concerned with Tolkien’s literary or scholarly work, but provide forums for fans to talk about anything even remotely connected to Tolkien. This is all part of a phenomenon that comprises a whole subculture of its own, with Tolkien costume parties, video games, board games, Tolkien societies, Tolkien-related art and music, research on Tolkien’s invented languages (for example, you can download English-Elvish dictionaries), Tolkien-related products like T-shirts and other gimmicks. It is fair to say that Tolkien’s Middle-earth with all its linguistic and artistic implications is no longer just a literary creation: it has become a ‘cult object’, known to and fancied by many people who often may not even have read the books that brought it into being.