Mythological Truths

I: Introduction.

The making and use of myths appears to be ubiquitous to human culture. At least, we seem not to know of any stable human culture, ancient or modern, in which narrative materials recognizable as mythological, do not appear, whether in oral or written forms. The Book of Myths thus appears to be very large, indeed, and quite variegated in its contents. There is no general agreement, so far as I can determine, as to what constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for counting as a myth, but perhaps the rather generic definition and comment offered by Bernard Batto will do:

> …myth is here defined very broadly as *a narrative (story) concerning fundamental symbols that are constitutive of or paradigmatic for human existence*. …It attempts to express ultimate reality through symbol. Myth points to a reality beyond itself that cannot be directly symbolized, as it transcends both the capacity of discursive reasoning and expression in ordinary human language. [1]

The modern period has seen a wide variety of theories about the essential nature and purpose of myths. Thus myths have been taken to be crude attempts on the part of primitive peoples (whose primitivity is always judged, of course, relative to the alleged sophistication of the theorist and her culture) to explain natural phenomena. On this view, myths are bad science and to be replaced at the earliest opportunity with proper scientific and rational explanations. It seems to follow that on this view myths are also bound to be false, possessed of very few, if any, epistemic virtues. Sir James Frazier's great mythographic classic The Golden Bough (1890) took this view, as did the early work of the French anthropologist Levy-Bruhl. [2] Myths have also been taken to be primarily a narrative method for exploring the human psyche, and as springing from the hidden depths of the human mind. The Renaissance philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) took this view, and of course it was driven very far by Freud and his early pupil, Carl Jung, who himself found in myths and symbols the appearance of transpersonal and transhistorical realities he called archetypes, structures belonging to a universal substratum of humankind he called "the collective unconscious." More recently, the structuralists have offered a rather different view, according to which "myth is a relational phenomenon. The elements of myth (barren land, a garden, a snake, a piece of fruit, the ocean, a body of water to be crossed, and so forth) are meaningless in themselves they acquire meaning only when their relationship with other elements within a given social context is understood. In this view

myth is a sophisticated and abstract mode of thought…" [3] And, of course, mention of social settings opens up yet another, also recent, approach to myths, exploring their functions in the fostering of social bonds within a given cultural milieu, the advancement of primary cultural values, especially moral and spiritual ones, the reinforcement of fundamental power structures within those societies, and the like. Considered in these last three perspectives, myths have rich possibilities for constituting a valuable mode of human knowing, and thus of representing truths which might not be easily represented in more literal language and by means of more discursive ways of thinking. In what follows, I intend to make common cause with this very broad, and largely positive, though not uncritical, approach to myths and to mythic truths.

Before passing to my three brief case studies, I want here to acknowledge a treatment of myth that can be found in the literary critical and theological work of C. S. Lewis. Such might not be wholly inappropriate for a meeting of the Socratic Club, since we take our inspiration from a much older organization bearing the same name (and purpose) which he helped to found in a much older university. Lewis thought that myth had six basic characteristics [4]:

1. A myth is pre-eminently a pattern of events, and is, as such, communicable by any medium capable of reproducing the pattern: mime, film, dance, even (perhaps) Hermann Hesse's "Glasperlenspiel", would do. Myth is thus extra-literary, unlike, say, lyric poetry, in which one detaches theme from actual words used at one's peril.
2. The pleasure of myth is independent of the usual narrative devices of surprise or suspense: "The first hearing is chiefly valuable in introducing us to a permanent object of contemplation—more like a thing than a narration—which works upon us by its peculiar flavour or quality, rather as a smell or a chord does." [*Experiment*, p. 42]
3. As a consequence, characterization is relatively unimportant and the individual persons or personal agents that appear in myths are typically under-developed by comparison with, say, the practice of novelists.
4. Myth is usually fantastic, dealing with preternatural events, persons, and relationships.
5. Myth is always grave. Though often sad or joyful, it is never comic.

6. These last two characteristics contribute to the weight that myth has: we feel it to be numinous, even awe-inspiring, "as if something of great moment had been communicated to us." [*Experiment*, p. 44]

It probably goes without saying that Lewis has in mind, throughout this list of characteristics, what we might take to be *successful* myths, and thus that he also had in view the possibility of failure and of myths turning out to be, in many different ways, false. I will return to this issue eventually. But before doing so, I would like to explore three instances of the use (and re-use) of mythic materials for three very different purposes.

II: Biblical Use of Ancient Near-Eastern Myths.

In 1928 a Syrian farmer, plowing his fields, uncovered what proved to be the cemetery of the ancient Canaanite kingdom of Ugarit. Eventually the temple library of Ugarit was also uncovered, and within it were found a set of six clay tablets upon which was recorded, in a language related to Phoenician and classical Hebrew, a version of the myth of the gods Baal and his female consort Anat, and their titanic battles with the forces of chaos and evil. Curiously enough, the names of the scribe (one Ilimilku), of the dictating chief-priest (Attanu-Purlianni) and of the royal sponsor of this project (Niqmaddu, king of Ugarit from about 1375-1345 BCE), are also recorded on the tablets. The story is a version of what scholars of the ancient near-east call The Combat Myth, in which divine or semi-divine beings conquer the forces of darkness and chaos (often represented by the Sea and various dragons that arise from the Sea) in combat. The Canaanite version was written down in the 14th century BCE, but its oral composition is placed by experts "no later than the Middle Bronze Age (1800-1500 BCE). [5] The Combat Myth is also known from its (Old) Babylonian version, the Akkadian text *Enuma Elish*, which dates from the 12th century BCE and which was found in the ruins of ancient Nineveh in the mid-19th century. [6] Given that ancient Israel had very intimate intercourse with the cultures of Canaan and Babylon both, it is not at all surprising that elements of the Combat Myth appear with some frequency in various Old Testament texts. Critical study of these texts and their use of the motifs of the Combat Myth has proved very illuminating.

It will not be possible here to rehearse even a small number of the uses to which Old Testament writers have put elements of the Combat Myth. One study, however, is particularly relevant to our purposes. Frank Cross has found extensive use of the Combat Myth, and most particularly of its Canaanite versions in texts that retell and comment on the story of the Exodus, notably in the very old poetic material in Exodus 15, the Song of the Sea, itself a composition probably from the 12th century BCE. [7] The Song of the Sea is notable for the absence from it of the story about the splitting of the sea and the crossing over it on dry land of the fleeing Israelites, elements which are prominent in later prose accounts of the events of the Exodus. It is evident from literary-critical comparison of the relevant texts that the writer of the Song of the Sea has made extensive use of the Combat Myth to shape his own narrative. In doing so, he is able to make vivid the view that Yahweh is in control of the forces of chaos, darkness and evil, triumphing especially through the use of his wrathful wind. Cross' conclusion to his study is worth quoting at length:

> Study of the mythic pattern of Bronze Age Canaan and the history of traditions of the episode at the Reed Sea in Israel's literature reveal a *dialectic* in the evolution of Israelite religion and religious institutions. Israel's religion in its beginning stood in a clear line of continuity with the mythopoeic patterns of West Semitic, especially Canaanite myth. Yet its religion did emerge from the old matrix, and its institutions were transformed by the impact of formative historical events and their interpretation by elements of what we may call "Proto-Israel" which came together in the days of Moses and in the era of the Conquest…The Canaanite mythic pattern is not the core of Israel's epic of Exodus and Conquest. On the other hand, it is equally unsatisfactory to posit a radical break between Israel's mythological and cultic past and the historical cultus of the league. The power of the mythic pattern was enormous. The Song of the Sea reveals this power as mythological themes shape its mode of presenting epic memories. It is proper to speak of this counterforce as the tendency to mythologize historical episodes, **to reveal their transcendent meaning.** [8]

Here we have mythological materials put to use in order to draw out the theological and transcendental significance of historical events, as they are understood by a very creative writer of a later period. It is doubtful that the writer, given their cultural setting, could have worked in any other way. What is notable, also, is the extent to which the writer's understanding of the transcendental meaning of the Exodus events is shaped by the mythological materials he is using, and likewise of the extent to which the reverse influence is also evident.

In a second study, Cross illuminates an image that can be found especially vividly in the prologue to Job (1: 6-2:10), the image of the Council of Yahweh, and its messenger, ha-satanah. [9] The Council also appears often in prophetic texts, with their notion of the prophet as the messenger who delivers the

results of a divine judgment reached by Yahweh in his Council. It is especially often used in Second Isaiah, where the repeated refrain of "comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," the message that Yahweh gives, in his Council, to his messengers or heralds (see Isaiah 40: 1-8 and also a parallel in Is. 6: 1-12). The Council has its background in the ancient Canaanite myth of the god El meeting with his assembly and acting as judge in that setting, issuing decrees that represent these judgments to his people by means of his messengers. The prophet-messenger receives the judgment of Yahweh or El in a vision or audition. "In short, the typology of the El revelation—the Patriarch in his council rendering judgement as the fundamental context, the word or vision as the mode—is found in the prophetic understanding of revelation. Like El, Yahweh may be seen as Judge in his council, as King in his court, or as Divine Warrior surrounded by the heavenly hosts." [10] And once again, we find a very creative borrowing from Canaanite myth, to make a theological point (one not unrelated to the uses of the Combat Myth in even older layers of Israelite tradition): to reassure a people under threat (here of exile) that Yahweh is in control of events and will dispose of them as he wills.

In these cases, then, we see myth used and re-used to make theological points in highly colorful and vivid fashion, making use of motifs, images, and narrative patterns that would have been well known to their readers. The aim throughout is to make evident to a faithful but beleaguered people the transcendental meanings of past or contemporaneous historical events. In our next case, we see something similar, though shorn of specifically theological purpose.

III: Platonic Myth Making.

As everyone here knows, Plato is fond of myth-making. Indeed, so extensive is the mythical material in the dialogues, that Oxford University Press has recently issued a collection of the ten most highly developed such contexts under the title *Plato: Selected Myths*. I have it in mind here to comment only on the material in *Republic* VII, 514a-517a, the myth of the Cave. You will all be familiar of course with the basic outline of this stirring narrative. And if you are not, just recall the basic plot of *The Truman Show*. For us the main point will be this: Plato goes out of his way, in the wider context of the story about the Cave to tell us how to understand it. He precedes it with both the extended simile of the Sun, and the

conceptual map of the Divided Line. The simile of the Sun gives us the basic strategy of the Cave, while the Line gives us a detailed map of the ontological and epistemological distinctions which are represented in the Cave. He follows the story of the Cave, in book VII with a fairly detailed interpretation of its main elements. In all these ways he is at considerable pains to prevent misunderstanding of the significance of the story of the Cave with respect to the theory of Forms in both its metaphysical and epistemological dimensions (as well as its moral-spiritual fall out). Alternatively, we can see the myth of the Cave as his effort to capture his main philosophical theory in narrative terms. And a brilliant invention this is, indeed, for once you have read the myth, you will never forget it. Moreover, in its sequence of events (Lewis' emphasis on pattern comes into its own here), the Cave captures exceptionally well the interior dynamic of the Divided Line and especially the matter of the ascent of the human psyche from the world of matter and the senses (and imagination) to the transcendental realm of mathematical objects and ultimately the Forms themselves, a world that has its own internal hierarchy with the Form of the Good at the top. In the space of these few pages Plato also prepares for the construction of the educational scheme of his ideal city-state in the remainder of the *Republic*. The Cave, then, is the hinge upon which the whole dialogue turns, like a huge palace door finely balanced on its turning points.

It is further notable that so many of the myths found in the writings of Plato have to do with the soul and its ultimate fate. Indeed, it is arguable that almost all of the mythical material found in Plato has to do with this matter. The myths inform us about the super-sensible realm of eternal objects from which the soul has come and to which it returns, after much vicissitude in its various incarnations and re-incarnations. They tell us a good deal also about the moral and spiritual virtues which assist the soul in this transcendental struggle to return to its origins, and the corresponding vices which hinder its progress. They similarly tell us a good deal about the epistemological conditions for its traveling up and down the ladder of reality, its temporary relations with the various bodies it may occupy, its relations to other souls it encounters, and even the socio-political conditions which are likely to contribute to its flourishing, both ultimately and during intermediate stages of its history. That history itself, in the mythical material in *Statesman* 268d-274e is tied to a much larger view of the history of the entire universe. In an interesting aside just before that passage, Plato tells us that he is about to mix into his presentation an element of *play*, a kind of play explicitly compared to what children do when they are listening to a story (268 d-e). He

thereby invites us to become childlike in our receptivity to the mythical story (though its contents are hardly suitable for real children), and with it to grasp in a single act of insight the entire spiritual theory he is giving us. A number of CSL's characterizations of myths come into view, it seems to me, with this comment.

Here, then, we find mythical narratives brought to the service of very high and serious philosophical speculation. The theory of Forms, in particular, the work of Plato's philosophical maturity, and something he was reasonably very proud of, is the first global metaphysical theory known to us, one which seeks to fulfill the much later advice offered by Bertrand Russell when he said that "In order to solve one philosophical problem you must solve them all." There is something here to be pursued further than our present context will allow, and it has to do with the ways in which many levels of meaning are fused in a single narrative structure, creating what Lewis called a "permanent object of contemplation," one that gives compelling answers to what Kant would later call the most basic questions a philosopher can pose about us. The underlying philosophical theory, of course, proves to be false, as Plato himself (on one reading of it) comes to acknowledge when he rehearses the fatal Third Man argument in the opening pages of the dialogue Parmenides. And this will ultimately be very instructive for us when we turn to consider mythological truths. But a further excursion into matters childish awaits us.

IV: Fairy Tales and the Soul.

In 1938 J. R. R. Tolkien delivered a lecture at the University of St. Andrews in honor of Andrew Lang, one of the great collectors of fairy tales. In that lecture he explored two theses about fairy tales that were later much expanded in his contribution to the festschrift *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, and both of these theses bear not only on his own work in *The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*, but also on our subject. [11] The first has to do with children, their reception of fairy tales and the concept of sub-creation. He puts the point this way:

> Children are capable, of course, of literary belief, when the story-maker's art is good enough to produce it. That state of mind has been called 'willing suspension of disbelief.' But this does not seem to me a good description of what happens. What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator.' He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. [12] You therefore

> believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside. If you are obliged, by kindliness or circumstance, to stay, then disbelief must be suspended (or stifled), otherwise listening and looking would become intolerable. But this suspension of disbelief is a substitute for the genuine thing, a subterfuge we use when condescending to games or make-believe, or when trying (more or less willingly) to find what virtue we can in the work of an art that has for us failed. [13]

Later he adds this comment:

> Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language can say the green sun. Many can then imagine or picture it. But that is not enough—though it may already be a more potent thing than many a 'thumbnail sketch' or 'transcript of life' that receives literary praise. To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, story-making in its primary and most potent mode. [13b]

Now, there can be little doubt that such sub-creation is precisely what Tolkien was aiming at in his own imaginative work. Moreover, as generations of readers will testify, he succeeds there in very large measure. It is that judgment that lies behind the persistent tendency of some of his fans in my generation to wear T-shirts with epithets like "Frodo Lives." (It is also possible, at least, that Tolkien's own judgment of his success in this task of sub-creation, and his related judgment that his friend Lewis had failed, in his fiction, to achieve it, that put some strain on their friendship.) The more immediate relevance for us is that the best of myths have a similar quality of internal cohesion, the condition of constituting a Secondary World, as Tolkien calls it, into which we can imaginatively enter and within the boundaries of which we can encounter the transcendental realities the myth-maker (or re-maker) has in view. It is especially to be noted that Tolkien uses the term "true" in connection with such internal coherence and our response to it.

The other large thesis of "On Fairy-Stories" comes out in a further comment that Tolkien makes about children and their response to fairy tales, this time about himself as a child:

> I had no special childish 'wish to believe.' I wanted to know. Belief depended on the way in which stories were presented to me, by older people, or by the authors, or on the inherent tone and quality of the tale. But at no time can I remember that the enjoyment of a story was dependent on belief that such things could happen, or had happened, in 'real life.' Fairy-stories were plainly not primarily concerned with possibility [14], but with desirability. If they awakened desire, satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably, they succeeded. [15]

Tolkien goes on to consider various kind of desire that can be and often is aroused by fairy-tales, including "the Great Escape: the Escape from Death." But he finds the desire for consolation a more powerful one

yet, and with this he reaches the center of his second great thesis (cast, now, in distinctly Aristotelian, and not Platonic, terms):

> Far more important is the Consolation of the Happy Ending. Almost I would venture to assert that all complete fairy-stories must have it. At least I would say that Tragedy is the true form of Drama, its highest function; but the opposite is true of Fairy-story. Since we do not appear to possess a word that expresses this opposite—I will call it *Eucatastrophe*. The *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function. The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous 'turn' (for there is no true end to any fairy-tale): this joy, which is one of the things which fairy-stories can produce supremely well, is not essentially 'escapist,' nor 'fugitive'. In its fairy-tale—or otherworld—setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and in so far is *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief. [16]

Famously, of course, the Christian gospel is also a *eucatastrophic* tale, as Tolkien goes on to note:

> The Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories. They contain many marvels—peculiarly artistic, beautiful, and moving: 'mythical' in their perfect, self-contained significance; and at the same time powerfully symbolic and allegorical; and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe. The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucastastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy. It has pre-eminently the 'inner consistency of reality.' There is no tale ever told that men would rather find was true, and none which so many skeptical men have accepted as true on its own merits. For the Art of it has the supremely convincing tone of Primary Art, that is, of Creation. [17]

I would like to suggest here that both Tolkien's theses about fairy-stories apply also to mythical materials when they are displayed to their best advantage. It is perhaps, then, not a mere accident that many of the myths told by Plato display something of the excellence of myth-making at its best, and also that they are, taken together, and considered individually, often preoccupied with the happy outcome of the ultimate fate of the human soul. Consolation, indeed. We should also notice that myths seek to mediate to us ultimate realities, those which lie beyond the reach of our ordinary experience, and which, if the myths are true, undergird and establish that Primary World of ordinary experience in its transcendental dimensions.

Ah, but are they true? We must now turn to this issue and answer as best we can.

V: Mythological Truths.

There is a great deal more to be said about myths, their uses and re-uses. There is the matter, for example, of their relationship to human psychology and their use in exploring the hidden depths of that

often obscure and turgid realm. Moreover, at least one member of the Inklings, namely Lewis himself, attempted, in his novel *Til We Have Faces*, to use a classical myth, the story of Psyche and Eros, for this very purpose, in my view. And in his space trilogy, he used the Arthurian myth, allied with a highly imaginative recounting of the medieval world-view, for quite other purposes, having more to do with a kind of meta-commentary on the "spirit of the age," as he understood it. The Matter of Arthur was also one of the deep preoccupations of Charles Williams, whose "spiritual thriller" novels owe as much to his Christianity as to his Neoplatonism, and whose long (and virtually unreadable) narrative poems based on the legend of Arthur and his court poet Taliessin, were much admired by his fellow Inklings. But these are tales for another day. Here I wish to turn to the issue of truth and falsity in myths.

We might approach the matter by considering the various ways in which myths, given our previous analysis and examples, can fail. Myths are sometimes used to advance fundamental religious or metaphysical visions of the world at large. They can fail, and thus prove to be false, in so far as those underlying visions are false. I take it that most of the myths of Plato fail in this fashion. For I take it that the theory of Forms is false, and that with it the whole theory of degrees of reality and of an eternal realm of changeless abstract objects to which the human soul aspires to return, is likewise false. It seems to follow that any presentation of that theory in imaginative form is bound to fail. From the point of view of classical theism, the ancient near-eastern mythology of Canaan and Babylon, must also be false, for the religio-metaphysical view of the world that they advance is filled with false deities and thus give a false account of the position of human (and other) persons within that world. That view, of course, presupposes that classical theism is true, and I do not make that assumption. But others will. I can at least draw the conditional conclusion. Moreover, casting such world-views in mythological terms does not introduce any new epistemological problem. We have to use whatever are the appropriate methods for discovering the truth of world-views, regardless of the imaginative dress in which we meet them.

It is also possible for myths to fail by failing to fit their transcendental material. That is, to revert to Tolkien's terms, a myth, like a fairy-story, can fail to create a Secondary World within which the ideas in question appear very naturally as verities. But with the possibility of such failures goes also the possibility of success. In this regard, then, Plato's myth of the Cave in *Republic* VII is, I judge, an outstanding success, and thus "true." Likewise, the adaptation of the Canaanite Combat myth, by the Priestly writer of

Exodus 15, and the related adaptation of the Canaanite mythic motif of the Council of El, by later prophetic writers, are likewise outstanding successes. They are, then, and in that sense, "true." Here the ordinary cannons of literary criticism and reader-response criticism are able to assist us, and once again, no new epistemological problem is posed to us.

A further way in which myths might fail is by failing to connect with the reader or hearer. Very often, I suppose, the fault will lie in us. We may fail to understand the aim of the myth-maker; we may fail to understand the social context in which the myth is offered; we may fail to understand the idioms, motifs, very language itself, in which the myth takes shape, or the conventions that govern its formation and use. All such failures present us with myths that fail to connect to us. In these cases we will be unable to exercise what Tolkien called Secondary Belief, and for us the myths will be dead on arrival. We might call the falsity of such myths *practical* failures, for we are unable, in these instances, to make a successful *use* of the myth.

Fourthly, since myths tend to be recycled, re-used and re-deployed for new purposes, it is possible for them to fail just because the mythic materials are not well-suited to the new purposes the myth-maker (or re-maker) is attempting to put them to. The old story of new wine in old wine skins may apply here. This, too, is another kind of practical failure and represents a further kind of falsity. And, of course, the new use of an old myth might also fail because of other features of the setting in which they are being made to work, and having nothing to do with the myth or its maker, at all. Here, too, we have a kind of practical failure and falsity. And here, too, I would insist, we do not face any fundamentally new epistemological challenges. Rather, we will have to settle the issue of whether some mytho-graphic or mythological usage is practically successful in the same ways that we settle whether any other social practice is practically successful.

Are there, then, mythological truths? You bet there are. Just do not ask me for a list of them.

Endnotes

1. Bernard Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), p. 11.

2. I am much endebted to Prof. Batto's treatment, here: see *Slaying the Dragon*, pp. 6-14.

3. Batto, pp. 9-10.

4. I take this from my undergraduate thesis: *The Mythopoeic World of C. S. Lewis* (Portland: Reed College, 1970), pp. 38-40.

5. Frank M. Cross, "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," in: *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 112-144.

6. The Enuma Elish is presented in full in a recent critical translation at: www.cresourcei.org/enumaelish.html. There is also a Sumerian version.

7. Cross, *art. cit*., p. 113.

8. Cross, *art. cit*., pp. 143-44; emphasis added.

9. Cross, "Yahweh and Ba'l," in: *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 186-190.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

11. J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," in: *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, edited by C. S. Lewis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 38-89.

12. This suggests to me some interesting connections between fairy-stories and the use of thought-experiments in contemporary science and philosophy, but those connections will have to be pursued some other time, and cf. note 14 below.

13. Tolkien, "Stories," p. 60.

13b. *Ibid*., p. 68: Tolkien is almost certainly speaking here about his own work, also, and the remark, given its provenance, is almost certainly aimed at his fellow Inklings, who were, perhaps, not so persuaded of its value as he was himself.

14. Here, I think, Tolkien's usage departs considerably from the use of thought experiments in contemporary philosophy.

15. Tolkien, "Stories," p. 62.

16. *Ibid*., p. 81.

17. *Ibid*., pp. 83-84.