

TWO ROADS TO MIDDLE-EARTH CONVERGE: OBSERVING TEXT-BASED AND
FILM-BASED MENTAL IMAGES FROM THEONERING.NET ONLINE FAN
COMMUNITY

by

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for the degree of Master of Library and Information Studies

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
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Abstract

Mental imagery as a form of human cognition is still not well understood, particularly in the area of spatiality. This thesis attempts to find the relationship between the mental images of places created while reading a story (ekphrastic) and the mental images created while viewing a cinematic adaptation of that story. Using Bakhtin's idea of chronotope, and Panofsky's theory of iconography, associations can be made between places in text and film that inform the themes that readers/spectators identify and evaluate. Netlytic, an online text analysis tool, permits the analysis of online message board fan opinions of J.R.R. Tolkien's and Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* according to themes of visualization and of place. Analysis of findings suggests that mental images created from the text and from the filmic adaptation are both passively and actively integrated in order to increase comprehension of spatial elements in Tolkien's epic.

List of Abbreviations Used

CGI	Computer Generated Imagery
IMDB	Internet Movie Database
ICTA	(the) Internet Community Text Analyzer
J.R.R.	John Ronald Reuel (Tolkien)
LOTR	<i>(the) Lord of the Rings</i>
TORn	TheOneRing.net
YA	Young Adult

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Chapter I. Introduction

I.A. Background

Ask anyone who has seen a film adaptation of their favourite story and be prepared for a lengthy discussion about how the director excelled, or, more likely, for a detailed critique of how the director failed. The possibility exists, of course, that the film was simply a bad film. Another explanation is that the film did not live up to the expectations of the reader/spectator -- expectations driven by the images created in the mind of the reader when they read the story. This research examines that relationship: the correspondence between the mental images created in the mind of the reader and the visual images, enhanced by sound and experience, created on the screen from the minds of the filmmakers. By accessing Bakhtin's literary theory of chronotope and using Panofsky's guidelines for identifying symbolic and allegoric imagery, main elements and themes hidden within the words and images of the story can be uncovered. These themes form the foundation on which the correspondence between textually-based (ekphrastic) and visually-based mental images can be discussed.

The inspiration for this research was a love for both Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Jackson's cinematic adaptation of the story, fueled by M. Barker's study, *Envisaging 'visualisation': Some challenges from the international Lord of the Rings audience project* (2006). In this study, Barker highlights the unsolicited audience interviewee connections between visualizations from the film and the book *The Lord of the Rings*. In addition, extensive "making-of documentaries" included in the extended editions of Peter Jackson's cinematic trilogy, offer insight into the filming process, or, as

screenwriter Philippa Boyens calls it, the creation of “filmic moments” (Jackson, 2002a). By seeing how the filmmakers envisioned Tolkien’s story and how the audience responds to that vision, stronger links can be made to the relationship between film and audience through the lens of mental image formation. Building on both Barker’s research and Grek Martin’s (2010) preliminary foray into the dynamics of mental imagery and audience reaction and opinion, the overarching aim of this thesis is to understand the interaction of ekphrastic and film-based mental images in the minds of readers/spectators.

To understand the relationship between text and film in the minds of the readers/spectators, several questions can be asked. Do audiences watching Jackson’s trilogy envision the same Middle-earth, the same story, which is portrayed in the book? Does film simply “overwrite” ekphrastic images or do ekphrastic images reassert their dominance once the text is read again? How do (or “Do”) readers/spectators integrate these images, even though they are from different media? The struggle of reconciling the film’s vision with the reader’s own vision may result in an even more concrete visualization (Grek Martin, 2010, p. 5). By engaging both visualizations of text and film and consciously defending or accepting one or the other, the details and characteristics of visualization may be more clearly imagined. This idea appears to be related somewhat to Barker’s findings regarding shared imagining and comparison (2006, p. 19). However, to truly understand the nature of reader/spectator response with respect to mental images, it is first necessary to catch a glimpse of the world they are attempting to visualize -- that of Middle-earth.

The context in which authors write and publish their works not only speaks to the motivations for their stories, but, in the case of this project, also to the meanings behind specific characters, places, and events and how those meanings are interpreted and represented in the film adaptation. The details of J.R.R. Tolkien's life and the manner in which he wrote *The Lord of the Rings* give that story a particular time and space. In the following section on film studies, details of Peter Jackson's life and craft will communicate how he and his production team interpreted *The Lord of the Rings*, not only in cinematic versus textual form, but in light of a very different audience than the one for which Tolkien wrote. A brief discussion of Tolkien's life and inspiration for *The Lord of the Rings* will set the stage for this comparison, followed by a discussion of the broader themes of story, which will serve as points of correspondence between the text and the film.

I.B. J.R.R. Tolkien and His Works

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa, in 1892. In 1895 J.R.R. Tolkien left with his mother, Mabel, and brother, Hilary, to a cottage in Sarehole, outside the city of Birmingham, England, with the hope his father, Arthur, would soon follow. Unfortunately, shortly after Tolkien's fourth birthday, his father succumbed to rheumatic fever, leaving the family poor. Apart from that loss, Sarehole proved inspirational to Tolkien. Many scholars equate the Shire, described as an English countryside in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, with the feeling of "home." In 1904, Tolkien's mother died of diabetes and Tolkien eventually came under

the mentorship of Father Francis Xavier Morgan, a Catholic priest who fostered Tolkien's religious and academic life. Tolkien pursued English Language and Literature at Oxford University, receiving a First Class degree in 1915. He married Edith Bratt in March 1916 and in June of that year set out for France as a newly forged lieutenant with the British Army. Tolkien saw battle in July of 1916 and returned to England in November due to a severe bout of trench fever. Once recovered, Tolkien revived his writing and academic careers, with the childhood beauty of Sarehole and the blood and death of war shaping his thoughts (White, 2001).

After a career as a professor of English language at Leeds University, Tolkien was appointed Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford in 1925. There he met C.S. Lewis, author of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, a person with whom he shared a common interest in fantasy literature. It is generally believed that he began writing *The Hobbit* in 1930, and it was finally published in Britain in 1937. While initially conceived as story for a younger audience, it introduced both the designer, Tolkien, and an increasingly wider audience to the promise of a larger, more developed world -- Middle-earth. After the success of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien continued to write and publish: *Leaf by Niggle* (1943) and *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949). *The Lord of the Rings* was completed in 1949, but questions over how it should be published and by whom delayed the release of *The Fellowship of the Ring* until August 1953 and of *The Two Towers* in November of that year. *The Return of the King* was published in Britain in October, 1954. During his life, several other works were published, including *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962) and *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967). In 1971 Edith died and two years later

Tolkien himself died, after being awarded Commander of the Order of the British Empire (C.B.E.) and Honorary Doctor of Letters at Oxford. It is evident, however, that the world of Middle-earth was not limited to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, as several volumes were posthumously published, some with the editorial help of Tolkien's son Christopher: *The Silmarillion* (1977), *The History of Middle-earth* (12 volumes, 1983-1996), and *Children of Hurin* (2007). Other works published posthumously include *The Father Christmas Letters* (1976), *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien* (1979), and *Roverandom* (1984) (White, 2001, pp.264-5). While not all of his published works relate directly to Middle-earth, it is clear given the fullness and depth explored in that world, that it was the focus of his literary career.

Even limiting oneself to *The Lord of the Rings*, an analysis of the details, aspects, motivations, and inspirations of Tolkien's writing would be well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is useful to keep in mind a few key elements: his understanding of the role of fantasy literature, his attachment to natural settings awakened during his childhood in Sarehole, his knowledge and love of language as evidenced by his academic career, and his experience during WWI, combined with the loss of his parents during childhood. These elements pervade and shape the characters, places, events, and objects in the story and will inform the connections audiences make between Tolkien's text and Jackson's films. As a professor of English and of languages, Tolkien understood the importance of those elements and their ability to speak to broader lessons, morals, and themes. He also had distinct opinions on literature -- in particular fantasy literature.

The world of Arda, of Middle-earth, so completely designed by Tolkien is a work of fantasy: stories designed to catch a glimpse of Faërie. To Tolkien, fantasy or Fairy stories are not solely for children; they instead evoke desire within every reader. A successful Fairy story succeeds by awakening desire -- “satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably” -- and the heart of Faërie is fantasy, the “making or glimpsing of other-worlds” (Tolkien, 2001, p. 40). “Making” and “glimpsing” are well-chosen words as Tolkien acknowledges the roles of both the designer (author) and the audience in the production of enchantment, the quality of an experience-able other-world. For Tolkien, the enchantment produced by a successful story creates a “secondary world into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside” (p. 53.) Literature is the preferred way to access this other-world; Tolkien preferred the ability of words to describe the “indescribable, but not imperceptible” (2001, p. 10) nature of Faërie. Pictures, he argued, are “too easy” (p. 49) and close the imagination, and the stage in dramatic adaptations prohibits the sense of realness: “very little about trees as trees can be got into a play” (p. 51-2.) His view on pictorial representations of fantasy is complicated by the fact that he drew many pictures of Middle-earth (*Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1979*), some of which were assembled for a stamp collection for the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* (see Figure 1.)



Figure 1. Tolkien's drawings of Middle-earth (Norvic Philatelics, 2004).

For Tolkien, the cinematic limitations of his time meant that a *The Lord of the Rings* movie would be unsuccessful in producing true enchantment (Carpenter, 1981 pp. 266-267, 270-277); how he would have reacted to Jackson's adaptation, especially the skill of computer-generated imagery (CGI), is unfortunately unclear.

Tolkien has been the subject of much academic and commercial analysis, particularly in the advent of Jackson's cinematic trilogy (released in 2001, 2002, and 2003.) Since the release of Jackson's adaptation, several authors have critiqued aspects of Jackson's interpretation of Tolkien's work. The most fitting of these include Ford and Reid's analysis of the character Aragorn (2009) and C. Valente's analysis of the major themes represented in Tolkien's and Jackson's works (2004). These sources provide a foundation for understanding the major themes inherent in *The Lord of the Rings* and whether Jackson succeeds in emphasizing them in the films. However, most academic work has been written on the treatment of characters, rather than places. For example, does the absence of the Hall of Fire in Elrond's House (Tolkien) and the inclusion of

Arwen's private chambers (Jackson) "ruin" Rivendell for Tolkien fans? Tolkien describes few private spaces in his work, instead using epic public spaces to fill out his characters. Yet modern audiences expect insight into characters through private moments, held in private spaces. Through this thesis, analysis of fan opinions will highlight whether such dissimilarities between Tolkien's vision and Jackson's visuals are in fact explained by differences in iconological symbols and/or chronotopes.

I.C. Research Questions and Significance

Several threads compose the body of this thesis: literary, iconographic, and film analysis furnish the foundation on which to make comparisons between ekphrastic and filmic mental images; cognitive psychology supplies theory on how mental image formation works; and information studies knits all the threads together through reader/fan reaction and online information processing and dissemination. Mental imaging, or visualization, is a cognitive process -- it is a form of internal information retrieval, processing, and retention. Mental imaging can be stretched further to encompass the realm of human consciousness, tied to images in the mind's eye (Barker, 2006, p. 12-13.) Kosslyn describes mental imagery as "seeing in the absence of appropriate immediate sensory input," where imagery is "perception of remembered information" (1980, p. 267). It is well understood that visualization takes place within the context of reading a story through the process known as *ekphrasis* (Mitchell, 1994), but whether and how it takes place within the context of a more visual or cinematic experience is still debated (Allen, 1993; Wood, 2004).

By investigating how mental imaging via text and via film is related, or inter-related, and by identifying some of the factors that affect that relationship, we can better understand the nature of human information processing. This avenue of investigation is of particular interest to those in the information studies field, given the inherent focus on how people convey, receive, and retain information through a variety of media and on how the process of mental imaging is related to information retrieval and retention. How people receive and retain information conveyed in different forms is not well understood, and research into this broad, interdisciplinary field would be of interest not only to information studies, but to a wide range of the social sciences and humanities-related disciplines -- namely cognitive psychology, literature and film studies, geography, and cultural studies. In addition, applications of this research may have an impact on various fields related to media and communication technologies: one example could be the further development of e-books.

Does viewing a cinematic adaptation of a story help or hinder the visualizations brought about by reading the text? This study hopes to answer this question by analyzing online posts that compare Tolkien's (text) and Jackson's (film) versions of *The Lord of the Rings* from a popular fan website, TheOneRing.net (TORn.) It is well understood that Tolkien fans are prolific in voicing their opinions about the films and the books, which will prove helpful in uncovering further the process of creating mental images through different media. In particular, the study will focus on posts associated with how places are visualized from both text and cinematic sources. My hypothesis is that a majority of online fans will admit that the films have helped their visualizations of places described

in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, with a corresponding minority of people claiming they either did not like certain cinematic representations, or they felt the film inhibited their ability to re-envision their previous images, resulting in an overall or partial negative effect. I also consider whether lack of faithfulness to the text might be a key reason for negative responses. Building on Barker's interviews, I believe a broader, more anonymous method of research will provide a fuller perspective on this study area when combined with the interviews conducted in his original study.

I.D. Qualifications and Limitations

The Lord of the Rings is an excellent candidate for a study of this type: my knowledge of both the textual and cinematic sources, the accessibility of extensive making-of-documentaries for the films, completeness of both text and film in describing places and the world as a whole, and an large online fan base from which to gain insight into this research problem. Another plus is the development of the Netlytic Internet Community Text Analyzer (ICTA) <http://netlytic.org/> by Dalhousie University's Dr. Anatoliy Gruzd. Through Netlytic, one may examine public online posts, blogs, or tweets associated with fans' perceptions of mental imaging regarding the books and the films (Gruzd, 2010). The Netlytic facilitates exploration of the relationship between fans' views of Tolkien's text and Jackson's cinematic adaptation through textual analysis of public online posts. By focusing on language related to the concepts of mental imaging and visualization of various places, the results of this study may help discern whether the online Tolkien fan community, a very discriminating group of people, felt

Jackson achieved success in translating Tolkien's books to film and whether this success had to do with the process of mental imaging.

The limitations of the study are threefold: the limitations of the researcher, the limitations of Netlytic, and the limitations of using an online fan community. While quite knowledgeable in the fields of geography, iconography, information studies, as well as all-things-Tolkien, I have limited post-graduate experience in the fields of literary studies, film studies, and cognitive psychology. In addition, working without research support meant that all data collection and analysis had to be performed by one person. With additional support, more fan communities could have been accessed and the data more carefully examined and further analyzed. Netlytic is still under development, which is both an advantage and a limitation; the use of Netlytic in this thesis will contribute to the further development and refinement of the tool. Further recommendations for Netlytic and process of data analysis will be discussed below in the analysis section. One interesting point to make here, however, is that the use of such a tool unfortunately "fixes" what is in fact a very fluid and dynamic medium (the Internet.)

Finally, some questions may arise in the use of online fan communities (or "fandoms") for this type of research. Not only do online communities by nature exclude fans that do not post online, but using only one website forum limits the fan base further. The use of one fan website does have the value of limiting the variables of the study; this research can be viewed as a starting point for further inquiry into fan reaction as well as online text analyzers. Fans also tend to have very strong visualizations, given the amount of time and interest spent on their respective objects of obsession. Their strong

visualizations may skew the research, but provide yet another baseline from which further explorations may embark -- for instance, the difference between the mental images formed by self-identified fans of Tolkien and those formed by non-fans (the general public.) To further clarify the role of the fans in this study, the identity of the posters will remain anonymous beyond the use of usernames/avatars; therefore it is not known whether a particular fan has only read the book, only seen the film, or, if they have both read the book and seen the films, in what order they have done so.

I.E. Terminology

Since this thesis involves the integration of many fields of study, several terms may be unfamiliar. A complete list of terms may be found in Appendix A, but a few are worth noting here. A “**reader/spectator**” refers to someone who has both read the original story and seen the films (in this case, *The Lord of the Rings*.) “**Ekphrasis**” or “**ekphrastic**” refers to the process of creating mental images by reading a text. “**Chronotope**” is M.M. Bakhtin’s idea that the meanings inherent in people, objects, events, and places in narratives naturally change in reference to time and place. “**Iconography**” is the study of visual symbols and how their motifs are linked to larger allegorical meanings also based in time and place. Fuller descriptions and appurtenance of ekphrasis, chronotope, and iconography are discussed in the following chapter. Many character- and place-names in *The Lord of the Rings* will be unfamiliar to the uninitiated. A full list of the place-names appears in Appendix A as part of the data analysis. Other

names appear in Appendix A, where a brief summary outlines the characters, places, and storyline for those unfamiliar with Tolkien's work.

I.F. Structure

Tolkien's life and work is a fitting beginning for this research, as it truly is the foundation upon which this thesis rests. The following literature review builds on this foundation by shaping the argument through five major fields: literary studies (through the idea of "chronotope,") film studies (Peter Jackson and R. Allen's "projected illusion,") geography and iconography (study of place and how to represent place visually,) cognitive psychology (theories of mental imagery,) and information studies (information processing and fan reaction.) Once the argument has been established, the process of data collection will be described. In the data collection section, Netlytic will be described in further detail, to allow readers better understanding of the tool and how to use it, potentially, for their own research. The final sections of the thesis will include the data analysis, discussion, and conclusion, respectively. Attached after the list of references are several appendices used to aid the reader in further understanding of the project.

Chapter II. Literature Review

II.A. Literature and Literary Studies -- M.M. Bakhtin's Chronotope.

The notion of "chronotope," as developed by M.M. Bakhtin, can offer a platform of comparison between a film adaptation -- made in a different time, for a different audience, and with different tools -- and the original literary work. A chronotope is a person or character, place, event, or object that has a specificity of meaning determined by time and space. It is an intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature (Bakhtin, p. 84) and, I would add, expressed in film. Examples of chronotopes are "the hero," "home," "the forest," "the road," "the meeting," and "the object of power". Any narrative -- Greek Romance, epic, fairy story, action/adventure -- may have any or all of these chronotopes, but their meanings change depending on the type of story and the audience for which it is told. Comparing text to film, *The Lord of the Rings* changes from Tolkien's epic to Jackson's action/adventure-fantasy-epic-romance (see discussion below.) For this study, the audience is particularly important; therefore it is crucial to understand that people of different ages and from different cultures reading the same story might envision very different characters, places, or events. Different users on a Tolkien-based message board forum could read the same books, watch the same films, and yet have very different visualizations of both. Chronotopes also help us understand why and how Jackson and his team might have changed aspects of Tolkien's story. Jackson's interpretation of Tolkien's epic is not only different because Jackson uses film; it is different because Jackson is creating this

adaptation in an entirely different time and place. Through the chronotopic lens, it is possible to make comparisons across time and space, age and culture.

The character of Aragorn as “hero” aptly illustrates how the comparisons may be made. C. Valente explores how well the films “capture Tolkien’s epic” (2004, p. 35). For the most part, Valente admires Jackson’s ability to translate “the world of Middle-earth, nature and industrialization, fellowship and community, the role of the individual, and the centrality of mercy” (2004, p. 35). In the terminology of mental imagery, Valente believes these concepts can be well envisioned throughout Jackson’s cinematic adaptations. Where Valente feels the films fail to live up to the spirit of the book is in their treatment of pre-modern and modern values, their devaluation of majesty and the role of higher powers, and their ambivalence toward victory (Valente, 2004). Here may be the crux of the difference between what some people envision through reading the book and envision via watching the film. Tolkien’s Aragorn embodies a hidden majesty -- “All that is gold does not glitter” (1991, p. 186) -- but if that quality does not come across in the film, then the image of written Aragorn diverges from filmic Aragorn. In fact, Valente describes Jackson’s Aragorn instead as “a reluctant hero” (2004, p. 38) and Ford and Reid contend that filmic Aragorn actually fears his lineage and, in not wanting to wield the sword Narsil, does not want to be king of Gondor (2009, p. 78). Are these two versions of Aragorn incompatible?

Not really. Tolkien was consciously writing an epic, and in epics, much like in Greek or chivalric Romance, heroes take up more time and space (Bahktin, 1981, p. 149). These qualities are reflected in Jackson’s films, albeit more prominently in the extended

versions. In a scene between Aragorn and the character Eowyn, Eowyn guesses and reveals to the audience that Aragorn is 87 years old. In Jackson's Council of Elrond scene in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Legolas reveals to the Council and to the audience that Aragorn is the heir to throne of Gondor (2002a). The difference in how these revelations take place paint very different pictures of the character of Aragorn. In Tolkien, Aragorn's true nature is hinted in a letter to the hobbits, but Aragorn (referred to as "Strider" until this point) acknowledges his lineage and introduces himself as "son of Arathorn" (Tolkien, 1991, p. 187). In Jackson's films, Aragorn allows others to reveal his true nature, even showing some embarrassment when they do -- Valente's "reluctant hero." Tolkien's Aragorn reveals his own nature, thereby taking ownership of his lineage. Tolkien was writing an epic in a very particular time and space -- one that still allowed heroes to be majestic and proud of their royal heritage. This type of hero poses a problem for Jackson, as today's audiences -- in particular those in North America, New Zealand, and Australia who may have rather unsavoury views of people claiming inherited power -- might not react well to a majestic Aragorn. The two characters, textual (majestic) and filmic (reluctant) Aragorn, have the same roles, undergo the same metamorphoses, but do so in ways that appeal to their respective audiences.

The question for Tolkien fans is whether the reshaping of the character of Aragorn, or of the Shire, Rivendell, Helm's Deep, Gondor, Mordor, etc., deviate so strongly from the book that the resulting visualizations come into conflict with ones derived from the text -- are the "spirits" of these characters and places too different? Is the spirit of the book not seen in the images created by the films? The answers are not so

simple. Valente is right to point out that Tolkien wrote in a very different time than Jackson, who was “brought up in an age where hierarchy is suspect, truth relative, higher powers dismissed, and progress unquestioned” (2004, p. 38). Though I do not entirely agree with Valente’s interpretation of modern views of progress, I certainly recognize that some of the values Tolkien emphasized might not resonate with modern audiences. If the values do not resonate, then the overall appeal of the characters and the tasks they undertake become undermined, leaving the overall message of the story bereft of transmission. If Jackson had portrayed filmic Aragorn as the majestic Tolkien figure, it is entirely possible that modern audiences would not have responded positively toward the character, even though it would have been “more accurate.”

Different audiences, even those very familiar with Tolkien’s works, may interpret his words differently depending on the culture or “time that is given” them (Tolkien, 1991, p. 64). For some, the film simply does not correspond to the images they envision while reading the book and this situation depends, to some extent, on the interests of the person, whether the film accesses the spirit or essential qualities of the original book, and whether the age in which the film audience is living promotes those essential qualities. What allows us to compare these differences is an understanding that characters, places, events, and objects in literature and film are in fact chronotopes -- where “the knots of narrative are tied and untied” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 250). Chronotopes hold the meaning that shapes the narrative and as long as the specific characters, places, events and objects still perform the same functions, (i.e., Aragorn is still “hero,” Rivendell is a place of

“meeting” and “deciding,”) then Jackson’s adaptation has firm grounding for compatible visualizations.

II.B. Cinema/Film Studies

II.B.1. P. Jackson and his works

Peter Jackson was born on 31 October 1961, Pukerua Bay, North Island, New Zealand (IMDB, 2011). He began his filming career early, when a family friend gave him a 8mm camera. Further inspired by the classic 1933 movie *King Kong*, Jackson’s desire to be a filmmaker was kindled (Stephenson, 2011). He wrote, produced, and directed his first film *Bad Taste* (1987) during a time when New Zealand filmmakers were moving from a focus on essentialist, though sometimes anti-imperialist, concepts of the nation-state to more complex and constructed ideas of national identity and cultural hybridity (Alemany-Galway, 2006). Subsequent films were co-written by his partner, Fran(ces) Walsh, who was, and still is, instrumental in the creation of the screenplays for Jackson’s cinematic releases. Alemany-Galway maintains that Jackson’s early films exhibit strong postcolonial themes enhanced by his ability to blend genres, as well as contrasting what might be considered “good” and “bad” taste (Wu, 2003).

Jackson wrote, directed, and produced films in the 1980s -- a time when film as an expression of national identity in New Zealand reflected a reaction to colonial legacy. Alemany-Galway defines “postcolonial” in this context by multi-faceted and complex ideas of resistance resulting from imperial-settler colony exchanges and interactions (2006). *Bad Taste* (1987,) *Meet the Feebles* (1989,) and *Braindead/Dead Alive* (1992) all

possess strong anti-imperialist overtones, as well as introducing a new genre, “comedy splatter,” a combination of humour and the “splatter gore” genre made popular by George A. Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* films (Alemany-Galway, 2006). The popularity of Jackson’s “comedy splatter” films even contributed to a description of the developing film industry in New Zealand as “Cinema of Unease” (Wu, 2003, p. 91). With Walsh’s contributions and the success of these films, Jackson became established as a filmmaker and was able to expand his repertoire to the critically acclaimed girls’ coming-of-age film *Heavenly Creatures*. Featuring one striking “splatter gore” scene, Jackson established his credibility as a filmmaker, solidifying his skill at crossing and combining genres in film while maintaining his penchant for subtly crafted postcolonial critiques. On the heels of the critically acclaimed *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), television movie *Forgotten Silver* (1995) and *The Frighteners* (1996), Jackson embarked on a fantasy filmmaker’s dream: a three-part production of *The Lord of the Rings*.

“...Horror and art, cult and mainstream, auteur and genre, national and international,... intersect in Jackson’s films” (Wu, 2003, p. 91), and these qualities as well as his propensity toward anti-imperial themes pervade Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Jackson deftly combines horror, combat, and fantasy genres (Alemany-Galway, 2006) in addition to action/adventure and even romance, given the time devoted to the relationship between the characters Arwen and Aragorn. With a different director, the trilogy might have had all the trappings of yet another Hollywood blockbuster, but Jackson’s influence ensured it would be an entirely different, and ultimately more complicated, creation. With international, including U.S., backing, Jackson not only

filmed the trilogy in New Zealand, but succeeded in marketing it as a New Zealand film, giving a boost to tourism on the North and South Islands (Mathjis, 2006). By combining and crossing genres, accessing cult and mainstream tropes, and filming a seemingly Hollywood film in New Zealand, Jackson created a cinematic adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* that appealed to many audiences at once.

As I described in “Two Roads to Middle Earth” (2010) , the making of *The Lord of the Rings* reads as an epic tale in its own right. Mechanical and conceptual aspects of production were painstakingly crafted over several years, and fans who did not follow the production daily on one of the many fan websites, such as TheOneRing.net, could relive the production experience through the DVD releases. Most DVD and Blu-ray film releases contain “special features:” information accessible through the main menus of the discs. The aim of these features is to give fans insight into the film’s production. One aspect of particular interest to the fans of the written work is how the filmmakers fulfilled their own vision of Tolkien’s epic tale. Not only was Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* groundbreaking in special effects and digital rendering, but considering the extended DVD edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, critics “... universally hailed it as setting a new benchmark in DVD releases of mainstream cinema” (Hight, 2005, p. 5). For Jackson’s trilogy, the special features are labelled “Appendices,” mimicking the informative, behind-the-scenes feel of the Appendices in Tolkien’s work. The first Appendix -- there are two for each film in the trilogy -- is entitled *From Book to Vision* and through a series of still photographs and short films, called by documentary researcher C. Hight “making-of documentaries” (2005, p. 6), one can retrace the steps

Jackson and the entire production team took to turn this “challenging book” into film. These features afford the audience insight into how textual *The Lord of the Rings* was envisioned by the filmmakers and the ability to judge whether they succeeded in creating a cinematic vision faithful to the books.

Two main processes were at work in mechanically adapting Tolkien’s book to film: translating Tolkien’s prose into script and creating artistic renderings of actual camera shots -- called, of course, “visualization.” Scriptwriters Jackson and Walsh created the first rendition of a screenplay, based on the idea of two films. This script was subsequently altered once New Line Cinema approved a three-film adaptation, and Jackson and Walsh rewrote the script with additional writer Philippa Boyens (Jackson, 2002a). Once rehearsals began, cast contributions revised the script and rewrites continued throughout filming on an almost daily basis. Actor John Rhys-Davies admits to possessing two large boxes full of rewrites, some with their envelopes “still unopened” (Davies, as cited in Jackson, 2002a). On the “visualization” side, Christian Rivers “storyboarded” the film, or, in lay terms, drew small, cartoon-like images for every future camera shot -- a process Jackson estimated took four to five years for the entire trilogy (2002b). These images were videotaped and animated, preliminary shots taken and images re-sketched, and 3D computer animations developed -- called “pre-vis” -- for especially tricky angles and for scenes requiring integrated computer animations (Jackson, 2002a). Changes that were made to either the script or visualization necessarily needed to be made to the other, and Jackson, who worked on both, was responsible for

ensuring the image evoked from the words on the page somehow matched the image evoked from the images on the screen.

Conceptually, making the “unfilmable” book “filmable” required a certain amount of reworking of Tolkien’s original story. The film’s editor John Gilbert notes: “literal adaptations [of a book] don’t work. I think you’ve got to find what you think is essential to the book and make your movie of that” (as cited in Jackson, 2002a). Boyens commented that in order to turn “prose into filmic moments” any one aspect of the story needed to do more than one thing, and certain parts of the book had to be left out to keep the length of the film palatable to the average audience member. (as cited in Jackson, 2002a). Sometimes, reworking meant making difficult choices. Jackson and Boyens describe choosing between dramatic tension and fidelity to the “untouchable” books (Boyens, as cited in Jackson, 2003a). One example was the choice to bring a host of Elves to Helm’s Deep to aid the Rohirrim in their battle against the overwhelming force of Isengard. Boyens recalls “I have seen the film with audiences and every time those Elves show up, they cheer.” Even, she adds, when the die-hard Tolkienists know it’s completely wrong, she contends at that moment they still feel something (Boyens, as cited in Jackson, 2003a). Why? Perhaps it is because the scene honours Gilbert’s “essential quality” of the book. Throughout Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* it is clear that all free peoples of Middle-earth are fighting their own battles against the forces of evil and alliances, both ancient and contemporary, are a central theme in Tolkien’s writing (Valente, 2004). Tolkien may have not written the scene Boyens describes, but as actor Viggo Mortensen comments, “As long as you’re carrying the spirit of the book with you,

you can do a lot of things differently” (Mortensen, as cited in Jackson, 2004b; Grek Martin 2010).

The years of hard work quite literally paid off and the success of the *The Lord of the Rings* was deemed by some a worldwide event (Mathjis, 2006; Barker, 2006). The total box office, U.S. and overseas, for the cinematic release of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy neared \$3 trillion (Mathjis, 2006, p. 3). Of course, success was not only due to the dedication of Jackson’s production team, but also to financial backing and media coverage. The production budget for all three films totaled \$281M, with marketing totaling \$145M (Mathjis, 2006, p. 3), quite a leap from the budgets Jackson spent on some of his earlier works (IMDB, 2011). In addition to critical acclaim and fans’ accolades, these films made an indelible financial mark on their audience. Mathjis, citing J. Habermas to explain these above figures in terms of audience reception, explains that the high production and marketing levels reveal an awareness of existing opinion, production and legal routines, and budget (shooting conditions, etc.) possibilities (2006, p. 8). Public reception can be accessed by analyzing how local and international critical receptions feed off each other, how often topical filming references appear in local media, and the shape and intensity of online discussion:

In the case of *The Lord of the Rings*, the attempts of fans to intervene in production played such an important role that any study of the films that does not make them part of its subject risks rendering itself irrelevant. (p. 8)

On financial figures alone, it is clear Jackson’s trilogy made its mark. More accolades came from the series of awards it has received. From the Academy of Motion Pictures alone, *The Fellowship of the Ring* won four awards for Best Cinematography, Best Visual

Effects, Best Makeup, and Best Music, Original Score. *The Two Towers* won awards for Best Sound Editing and Best Visual Effects. The crowning achievement came with *The Return of the King*, winning all 11 categories for which it was nominated, including Best Picture and Best Director. The awards received from other associations and institutes are innumerable. With financial success, critical acclaim, and an explosion of fan websites online, *The Lord of the Rings* -- both Jackson's and Tolkien's -- becomes the stuff of legend.

II.B.2. R. Allen's "projected illusion"

To highlight the unique nature of film medium to integrate the mind's eye with movement and experience in the "real world," Merleau-Ponty writes

..the movies are peculiarly suited to make manifest the union of mind and body, mind and the world, and the expression of one in the other... The philosopher and the movie maker share a certain way of being, a certain view of the world which belongs to a generation..." (as quoted in Jay, 1993, p. 459).

In addition, the above sentiment echoes Bakhtin's literary notion of chronotope, but here with an eye for movies. N. Carroll describes movies as pictorial representations, closely related to the instinctual process of human visual object recognition (1996, p. 80). Oft-called "the noblest of the senses," vision is the subject of much twentieth-century (particularly French) philosophy, with notable regard given to cinematic vision (Jay, 1993). For the purposes of this project, it is beneficial to understand that there exist myriad philosophies of sight; there is no one that stands for all gazes, insights, or visions. However, it is not the purpose of this study to explain all such theories, nor is it useful,

even, to catalogue various theories of film. More valuable is to focus the lens on two aspects of cinematic theory: the idea of film adaptation of a narrative and the idea of visualization via cinema. The latter concept will be expanded further during the discussion on visualization in the context of cognitive psychology.

In a phrase akin to Tolkien's idea of "enchantment" Barthes holds that "captivation is the glue that establishes the naturalness of the filmed scene" (as quoted in Jay, 1993, p. 457). Perhaps this captivation is another way of describing Metz's transfer of a connection to reality to a connection to the filmed scene as an affective, perceptive, and intellectual activity (Jay, 1993, p. 468). If audiences are captivated, if they are able to establish emotional, perceptive, and intellectual links to what they see on the screen, then they are in essence glimpsing Tolkien's "other-world." Metz's perspective can be taken too far, since it is unlikely movie audiences believe what they are seeing is actually "real." Carroll qualifies this rather essentialist standpoint by suggesting that movies instead exploit our ability to recognize objects (1996, p. 83). If the diegetic material -- the "profilmic events, characters, and landscapes that constituted" what the film intended to represent (Étienne Souriau, as quoted in Jay, 1993, p. 466) -- is represented well enough for audience members to recognize, then spectators are more likely to make those emotional, perceptive, or intellectual connections between the diegetic material and filmic moments. These connections combined with the "special intensity of movies" (Carroll, 1996, p. 79) create the possibility of Tolkien's enchantment. For some films, the diegetic material is the "real world." In the case of film adaptations of pre-existing works of literature, the diegetic material is quite literally spelled out on the page.

Both Gilbert and Mortensen, quoted above, contend that if the essential quality or spirit of a book can be captured on film, then the film can be a successful adaptation, even if significant changes are made. Not all film theorists seem to agree:

Too many adaptation studies, Robert B. Ray argues, have applied methods adapted from New Criticism that rest “on a hierarchy or opposition of original and copy that Jacques Derrida has repeatedly deconstructed” and that have failed to acknowledge developments in poststructuralism and postmodern theory that question the notion that a text contains a single correct or essential meaning. (Johnson, 2005, p. 63)

Reading further, however, Johnson argues that Alfonso Cuarón’s adaptation of Dickens’ *Great Expectations* hypertextually “transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends” the original work (2005, p. 63). Here the argument Johnson makes for adapting text to film is clearer; it is not that a text does not have “a single correct or essential meaning,” rather that that meaning can be transformed, modified, elaborated, or extended to more accurately embody Merleau-Ponty’s “certain view of the world held by a generation,” or Bakhtin’s chronotope. As an example, Kevorkian (2003) sees Irving’s original text of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* firmly planted in Andrew Kevin Walker’s screenplay even though the worlds portrayed in each are vastly different. By removing “Legend of” from the title, the filmmakers effectively remove Irving’s text from the “frame tale” and allow the story as written to take place in a supernatural world only suggested in Irving’s prose. (para. 13). Kevorkian suggests what Johnson further asserts above, that the imposition of an artistic hierarchy positioning literature over film adaptation is questionable, given that a cinematic adaptation is by no means a copy, but rather a manifestation of a given work.

Both examples cited above compare text and film that portray the same story but in very different worlds: Cuarón's adaptation of Dickens' *Great Expectations* is set in contemporary America, while Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* is set in the right time, but in a world steeped in the supernatural, not in jealousy. Jackson's trilogy, on the other hand, is set in the same time and place as Tolkien's story, but the places depicted in the films are often fleeting thoughts on the page rather than fully developed scenes. The most obvious examples are the several scenes between the characters Arwen and Aragorn and the characters Arwen and her father, Elrond. These scenes either establish emotional ties between the characters, or they provide a stage for necessary exposition. Both provide insight into the characters' motivations in a way that modern audiences would respond to: the feeling that they have been offered a window onto a private (therefore more "truthful") moment. As mentioned previously, Tolkien's story was written as an epic; public spaces were privileged over private ones and Arwen's bedchamber was not mentioned, let alone described in such detail as Jackson's films depicted. That Tolkien did not write these aforementioned scenes, nor the scene of the Elves at Helm's Deep described by Boyens, suggests Jackson's films are hypertextual adaptations, but adaptations as manifestations, not copies, of Tolkien's work. To what extent Jackson's films succeed as an adaptation in conveying the values and themes Tolkien espoused depend largely on the reader/spectator.

Viewing narrative films from a rhetorical perspective allows the values and themes, the movie's ideology, to be understood differently according to the predisposition of the audience (Carroll, 1996, p. 286). Carroll describes this perspective a bit further:

Narrative films may be thought of as rhetorical, then, in so far as they are structured to lead the audience to fill in certain ideas about human conduct in the process of rendering the story intelligible to themselves (1996, p. 281).

Arguably, the rendering of the story intelligible is more important in fantasy and science fiction genres, as the worlds depicted in these films tend to be vastly different from the “real world.” Jackson’s team persuades the audience to feel or think about certain themes and values as they encounter different landscapes throughout the film. The Shire is created in such a way on screen so that spectators will feel affinity for it; so they will recognize it as “home” and “good.” On film the Shire is represented by green hills, tilled gardens and sunlight accompanied by sweet melodies and relatable people exchanging pleasantries and discussing the fate of their corner of the world. Not every audience member may feel this is “their” home, but they are encouraged to believe it is “home,” or in the very least “good.” By contrast, the dark, forbidding (lack of) nature of Mordor, enhanced by dissonant music and rough, almost unintelligible dialogue between frightening beings suggests a threatening place -- a place of evil. Again, not every audience member may see Mordor as “their” representation of evil, but they would almost assuredly recognize it as evil, or at least in opposition to “home” and “good.” Even though many of the characters and all of the landscapes in *The Lord of the Rings* are initially unfamiliar to viewers, they become intelligible through the filmmakers’ ability to rhetorically film a narrative: a narrative being one of the “most pervasive and familiar means of explaining human action” (Carroll, 1996, p. 87).

R. Allen agrees with Carroll that a film audience does not believe the movie is “real,” but he does not agree with him on the topic of illusion (Allen, 1993, p. 21). In

fact, Allen's theory of "projected illusion" suggests that a very particular type of illusion allows movie viewers to perceive "... a fully realized, though fictional, world that has all the perceptual presentness or immediacy of our own" (p. 40). Using Allen's example of Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, Allen contends an audience watching this movie has three choices: perceive the zombies are simply a recording of a fictional portrayal, perceive the zombies actually have been filmed as in a documentary, or perceive "a world inhabited by zombies" (p. 40). The last option is projected illusion and accomplishing this feat, particularly in fantasy and science fiction, is dependent upon audience perception of movement, sound, and projection -- all of which counteract the idea of a film as photograph and contribute to the immediacy of the cinematic experience (p. 42-43). Characters move on and off screen, sounds, too, are heard off screen, and picture depth, particularly with technological advances in resolution (Blu-ray, 3D,) suggest to the viewer that they are experiencing something other than a static recording of an image.

As these features contribute to the idea of projected illusion, many aspects of film production detract (Allen, 1993). Advances in technology mean that older films or movies made in different ways may not be able to capture a fully realized world for some audiences. Silent films, black and white films, and "grainy" footage may still be adored by many, but the vast majority will find it difficult to see past the medium; they will be too conscious of watching a film to be swept into the world of the film. Other detractors include datedness, unique or jarring camera angles or techniques, and characterizations of auteur cinema not used widely in "standard" Hollywood convention (p. 44-45). The challenge Jackson's team faced, then, was to convince the audience that they had been

transported into the world of Middle-earth. One difficulty was how to represent the character Gollum. Computer-generated imagery (CGI) is capable of creating the most fantastic creatures, but inserting those creatures into a film in a way that maintains projected illusion is extremely difficult. Any whiff of digital legacy would jar perception. By filming actor Andy Serkis and synchronizing a painstakingly designed CGI character's movements (even facial expressions) to Serkis', allowed Gollum to appear almost flawlessly on screen amid his live action counterparts.

For visualization, Allen's projected illusion has very strong implications. As mentioned previously, Allen suspects movie spectators perceive "... a fully realized, though fictional, world that has all the perceptual presentness or immediacy of our own." While the audience is only able to see a window onto that other-world as framed by the screen, the fact that objects and characters move on and off screen, that sounds suggest things heard off screen, that landscapes, cities, or buildings continue off screen suggest that there is a world beyond what is seen. Therefore, while a picture can, like D. Wood argues, limit or close down the imagination (2004, pp. 255-256), a film can in fact encourage the imagination by encouraging the perception of an entire world. M. Barker, who studied audience reaction to Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* admits that, for some, there may be little or no distinction between "seeing a film and visualizing its world" (2006, p. 12). Filming a scene in Arwen's bedchamber or Elrond's study suggest what other Elven rooms might look like. Watching a woman with a dog walk behind King Theoden in the Golden Hall while he discusses strategy with the members of the Fellowship might inspire someone to "follow" that woman and her dog, envisioning what

other rooms in the Golden Hall might look like, or it might encourage a fan to write an entire story about her. Using Allen's theory of projected illusion, it is possible to understand how Tolkien fans who have read the books and watched the films are able to imagine, envision, and visualize the world of Middle-earth through two separate and entirely different media.

II.C. Geography and Iconography

II.C.1. Geography and identity

Among those who study human geography and relevant fields within philosophy, place takes central stage in how identity is formed and performed (Tuan, 1977; Casey, 1993; Malpas, 1999). In addition, landscape is one aspect that many can envision, though visualizations may vary depending upon where a person has been and what identity, if any, they ascribe to a particular landscape. For the purposes of this project, geography becomes "place" and identity becomes the meaning ascribed to that place. An example of this relationship is the Shire as "place" and "home" as the meaning ascribed to that place by the hobbit characters in the story. As Tolkien writes from the Hobbit point of view, the audience is then led to associate the Shire with "home." Furthermore, how the audience envisions the Shire as "home" in the text, compared to their evaluation and further visualization of the Shire as "home" in Jackson's films, forms the basis for understanding how mental images of the same place interact (or do not interact) in the minds of the audience. To understand the reactions and responses of the online posters, then, it is necessary to first understand how Tolkien treats geography in *The Lord of the*

Rings and second to understand how images are used to represent ideas and meaning through the study of iconography.

Tolkien's thoroughness in rendering the geography of Middle-earth, and the meanings each landscape represented, will be discussed below, but it is useful to note here that, like in other epics, the landscape in *The Lord of the Rings* plays an important role: "there is no landscape [in epic literature], no immobile dead background; everything acts, everything takes part in the unified life of the whole" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 218). Indeed, in response to a question about the single most important character in *The Lord of the Rings*, one TORn poster answered, "It's the world itself that every reader falls in love with" (Darkstone, August 21, 2007). Tolkien is known for drawing upon different mythologies and languages, archetypal figures and cultures (Ford & Reid, 2009, p. 71), and he describes landscape in almost excruciating detail. His descriptions of Lothlorien and Rivendell evoke a beauty and harmony with Nature that Tolkien would have the audience associate with the Elves. Conversely, his depiction of the desolation before Mordor conjures the image of a poisoned and desecrated desert.

The meanings evoked from these images are what Bakhtin was referring to when he suggested epic landscapes were not mere backdrops, but active participants in the narrative. After the U.S. publication of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1965, proponents of the environmental movement recognized a kindred spirit in Tolkien, as he seemed to favour nature and natural settings to those of war and industry. Dickerson and Evans (2006) expand this idea into a full-blooded description of Tolkien's understanding of nature and how nature is represented through different places, races, and characters in the story.

What constitutes “good” and “evil” depends predominantly on how one interacts with nature. Hobbits, Elves, and Ents inherently treat nature with respect, albeit in very different ways: Hobbits act as pre-industrial agriculturalists, Elves as silviculturalists and conservationists, and Ents as “feraculturalists” -- those who prefer the chaos of truly wild nature. Evil, on the other hand, is bent on the destruction of living things and the above quote referring to Mordor is surely evidence of that. Human environments vary throughout the narrative, suggesting that humans have the capacity to inhabit or destroy Nature and that they should beware the consequences of abusing the natural world. All part of providing a fully realized other-world, Tolkien ensures that landscapes speak to very specific meanings, that they are active participants in the story to the extent that a fox’s thoughts are “overheard” and trees move.

“I wisely started with a map, and made the story fit ... The other way around lands one in confusions and impossibilities” (Tolkien, as quoted in Fonstad, 2006, p. 133). Tolkien’s maps have been a subject for many curious geographers, though he is certainly not the only author to include maps in his works. In general, maps in literature help orient the reader, serve in solidifying alternate realities, and even serve as the subject material. I. Hassan notes finer points of literary cartography: maps encourage attention to detail, maps remind the reader that story is invented, maps facilitate real-world connections, and maps serve as a foundation for interpreting and reinterpreting the narrative (Hassan, 2005). Tolkien’s maps, whether drawn by him or redrawn by his son Christopher, function in all these capacities, to varying degrees depending on the reader.

The visual aspects of Tolkien's literary cartography are discussed below, but here it is worthy to emphasize that a large part of Tolkien's Middle-earth was created through overtly geographic means. Places were important because they formed part of the narrative, as described above, but also because their placement, the connections to each other, and their roles as "home" to various peoples throughout Middle-earth were important to the creation of a full and realistic other-world. As these places were important to the author and as they have a certain agency within the story, how readers envision places in *The Lord of the Rings* are central to understanding how readers interpret the central themes, the "spirit," of the story.

II.C.2. Representing place visually - iconography

To further illustrate *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien drew pictures and maps, some of which have been included within the published versions of his books. For some readers and publishers, this was done presumably with the understanding that the geographic scope of Tolkien's works benefitted from visual reinforcement. In addition, many artists have devoted themselves to illustrating Tolkien's works, in particular Alan Lee, whose illustrated edition of *The Lord of the Rings* is well-loved and who worked as a conceptual designer for Jackson's trilogy and the upcoming two-part adaptation of *The Hobbit*. Other well-known Tolkien illustrators are John Howe, who also worked on the trilogy and currently works on *The Hobbit*, and Ted Nasmith. The geography of Middle-earth was so complete throughout Tolkien's works that K. W. Fonstad created *An Atlas of Middle-Earth* (1991), tracing not only Frodo's journey in *The*

Lord of the Rings, but spanning the breadth of Tolkien's works, including various battles, kingdoms, and voyages throughout the three Ages. Her regional and thematic maps complement the dedicated reader's vision of this world and provide yet another way to envision Middle-earth.

Cinematically, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* have been difficult to produce, due to the strange beings, epic battles, and fantastic places described in the books. Animated features *The Hobbit* (Rankin/Bass, 1977) and *The Lord of the Rings* (Bakshi, 1978) attempted to recreate Tolkien's world on the big screen, but it was not until Jackson's trilogy (2001, 2002, 2003) that most people accepted that Tolkien's epic had been successfully captured on film. Even Bakshi's rotoscoping (filming live action that would later be turned into animation) failed to provide what Tolkien might have called "enchantment:" the belief that you are in fact catching a glimpse of another world. For fans of Tolkien who were hoping for a more fully realized cinematic experience, they would have to wait. Jackson's trilogy would give many the ability to experience the epic in an entirely different way -- through sound and light (film,) rather than in black and white (text.)

Understanding how mental images created via film and via text interact and making viable comparisons between visual images and textual descriptions can be rather complicated. Critiquing imagery is very different from critiquing text or language. Most people understand how to judge words on page, but few are adept at pulling apart the subtleties of imagery in a way that makes a fair comparison between the two, especially in the case of discerning meaning. E. Panofsky, pioneer in the field of iconology (the

study of symbols) and iconography (the study of symbolic imagery,) developed a way of identifying motifs, pairing them with symbols and using context to broaden the symbols into meaningful allegories. Using Panofsky's guidelines, it is possible to compare the meanings people attribute to Tolkien's words to the meanings ascribed to Jackson's imagery.

Panofsky describes iconology as the study of images, stories, and allegories, as opposed to motifs, which presuppose a familiarity with corresponding and associated literary themes or concepts (1972, p. 11). To do this well, one must be familiar with the themes and concepts not only in their isolation, but as products of the historical conditions behind their creation. Representing "good" and "evil" may take on very different forms, depending on when and under what conditions the representations were made. Therefore, not only must we be able to identify the concepts of "good" and "evil" in our own time and space, but we must be able to identify them in Tolkien's and Jackson's. Panofsky includes a table (p. 14-15) illustrating the process of iconographical analysis, which is summarized below:

Table 1. Panofsky's levels of iconographic analysis

Stage of Analysis	Knowledge Required	Controlling Principle
"primary/natural" motifs factual/expressional	"experience" familiarity with objects/ events	"history of style" objects/events expressed by forms
"secondary/conventional" images, stories, allegories	"knowledge of literary sources" familiarity with themes/ concepts	"history of types" themes/concepts expressed by objects/events

Stage of Analysis	Knowledge Required	Controlling Principle
“intrinsic meaning” symbolic values	“synthetic intuition” tendencies of the human mind	“history of cultural symptoms/symbols” tendencies expressed by themes/concepts

Consider the example of textual (majestic) Aragorn versus filmic (reluctant) Aragorn. In the book, Aragorn carries the shards of the sword Narsil (the object of power) to be reforged in Rivendell, while in the films the sword is reforged and brought to him at a much later point in the narrative. Aragorn’s association with this symbolic object makes him heroic, though what type of hero, majestic or reluctant, depends on how that symbols comes to be associated with him. If instead we are talking about places, a poster might describe Jackson’s representations of the the Shire as not only looking like what they imagined, but feeling like “home.” Jackson would have therefore created a visual image that not only succeeded in creating a compatible mental image, but Jackson’s image succeeded in provoking a similar feeling, a similar meaning. Jackson has created a Shire beyond plentiful food, comfortable chairs, and warm fireplaces; it is a Shire that accesses meaning -- the value of “home.” How mental images can be used to access meaning is the subject of the following section: the understanding of how mental images are formed and for what purpose we attribute to them.

Finally, to reintroduce ekphrasis into the discussion of text and film, it should be noted that “...there is, semantically speaking (that is, in the pragmatics of communication, symbolic behavior, expression, signification) no essential difference between texts and images...” (Mitchell, 1994, p. 161). While I have distinguished between ekphrastic and

film-based mental images (i.e., between images created in the mind's eye while reading a text and images created while watching a film) an argument can be made that they are essentially the same practice -- that of reading. Mitchell expands this idea by reasserting the importance of the message over the media; if communication of the message is the goal and if two "texts" comprised of different media accomplish that goal, then they in essence perform the same function (1994). To reinforce the relationship between image and text, E. Gombrich refers to the "linguistics of the image," while Mitchell adds the "iconology of text" (1994, pp. 111-112). Brennan and Jay, however, assert that recently the image has demanded its own analysis, given the "visual turn" seen in many disciplines and the increase in attention paid to disciplines with visual materials at their core (e.g., art history, film studies) (Jay, 1996). Unfortunately this trend reinforces the distinction between the media and limits the discussion of vision and ekphrasis to the rhetoric of narrative and description in opposition (Goldhill, 1996, pp 17-18). With this thesis, emphasis is placed on the interrelationship of text and images in the form of mental image formation and the use of *phantasia* (imagination, impression) to comprehend both the physical world and the ethical world (Goldhill, p. 23).

II.D. Mental Imagery and Cognitive Psychology

II.D.1. Theories of mental imagery -- Kosslyn and Pylyshyn

Wittgenstein suggests that visual perception as a form of cognition is something most people intuitively understand. Difficulties arise when attempting to distinguish whether a person is talking about seeing as an ocular function, or seeing as interpreting or

understanding (Good, 2006, p. 18). The degree to which visual perception is regarded as interpretive is debated, both within and between disciplines (Good, 2006, p. 18-22; Pylyshyn, 2007, p. 126). The aim of this section is not to further any debates, but to provide basic understanding of two theories of mental imagery from the field of cognitive psychology that inform how visualization occurs and how images formed from textual sources and those from visual sources might interact in the minds of the reader/spectator. The theories of mental imagery championed by S. Kosslyn and Z. Pylyshyn not only speak to the understanding of visualization, but more specifically to the understanding of visualizing spaces.

Cognitive psychology is the field of internal mental processes, encompassing such activities as interpretation, problem solving, perception, and visualization. G. Hatfield traces this branch of psychology to Woodworth in the late 1930s and describes its roots in experimental science and Gestalt psychology, with a certain degree of departure from behavioural psychology accompanying Chomsky's critique of Skinner (2002, p. 221). With the advent of computers, cognitive psychologists likened internal processes to computational processes, though linguistics always plays a key role in the foundations of cognitive theory (p. 222). A key proponent of the computational model is Kosslyn, in particular his attempt to use experiments to substantiate cognitive computational and symbolic theories (p. 223). Pylyshyn, with Fodor, maintain more "classical symbol-processing models" of cognitive psychology (Good, 2006, p. 223). While both methods have their critiques, Hatfield contends that more classical modes of cognitive theory

remain important to the larger field of psychology, while informing the fields of artificial intelligence and neuroscience as well (pp. 224-225).

Kosslyn, a proponent of the depictive model of visualization, suggests that mental images are associated with topographically organized parts of the brain (1995, p. 292; 2006; Pylyshyn, 2007, p. 125). The act of creating mental images parallels “the role of vision in allowing us to navigate, track, and reach” (Kosslyn, 1995, p. 268) and Kosslyn’s studies suggest that the process of “seeing” mental images is akin to seeing with our eyes.

Visualization occurs

...by activating visual memories of global patterns, by activating visual memories of individual parts and then arranging them..., or by selectively allocating attention... (1995, p. 273).

If mental images are depictive, it may explain why, in studies, larger, more complex images take longer for subjects to imagine. Scanning a landscape, as opposed to recognizing a person’s face or noticing a smaller object like a pencil, takes more time because there is literally more ground to cover and the resulting information occupies more space in the visual cortex (pp. 283-290). If images viewed on a movie screen, then, are remembered as “visual memories of global patterns” or “individual parts” then mental images of places described from a text could be “activated” using those patterns or parts. If different patterns or parts of mental images are created from reading a textual description of the same place, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the patterns and parts from the visual filmic images could be integrated with those from the text and vice-versa. Given that the focus of this project is how people visualize places in *The Lord of the Rings*, and that places are usually large, highly complex images to visualize, then the

time needed to visualize a landscape like the Shire might permit a higher degree of text-film image integration than, say, the mental image of Aragorn's face. Facial recognition is immediate and as actors often bear little or no resemblance to their character's description in a text, frustration frequently occurs if an actor's face supercedes a reader's mental image. Sara Martin, on film representations of Emily Brontë's character Heathcliff, argues, "film adaptations almost inevitably cause problems for committed book-readers, because a film can embody characters too strongly," therefore causing conflict with a reader's own impressions. (Martin, as cited in Barker, 2006, p. 7)

The importance of mental imaging to places represented in textual and visual media goes beyond the suggestion that places are more highly complex and therefore take more time to construct. Kosslyn argues that visualization is highly individual (1995, p. 279) -- not all people visualize the same things, nor to the same extent -- and part of a person's individuality may be what they pay attention to. The third way Kosslyn sees visualization occurring -- "selectively allocating attention" -- may in part determine what people remember, through descriptions from the book or images from the film, and therefore may in part determine what images they visualize more vividly. Whether "attention" in this case can be traced to interest or to liking is unclear (Iran-Nejad, 1983) and beyond the scope of this project. To the extent to which Kosslyn is right about the role of the activation of visual memories in mental imaging, it stands to reason that different observations might be made between people who read the books first (remember more strongly images from the book) and those who saw the film first (remember more strongly images from the film.) Another factor in visual memory/mental image creation

may be landscape experience or association. Many people might see landscapes they have experienced as landscapes in Tolkien's books (e.g., "English countryside" with "the Shire,") and still others may have very strong attachments to particular landscapes (i.e., English people residing in a middle English countryside connecting with the Shire.) What, then, of the more fantastical places described in the books and depicted on film? These places may promote stronger links between book and film because no place exists that would counteract the film's visual imprint.

Pylyshyn, while arguing against the pictorial, depictive sense of mental imaging, admires Kosslyn's explicit description of mental imagery, as well as his belief that mental images are constrained by people's beliefs in what things look like and how they would change (2007, p. 126). The main differences between Pylyshyn's understanding of visualization and Kosslyn's is Pylyshyn's emphasis on tacit knowledge (2007, pp. 129-130) and the assertion that mental images "...are intentional objects -- they are conceptual interpretations, not raw sensory signals" (p. 141). Pylyshyn reframes Kosslyn's hypothesis that scanning large or complex spaces takes time because the space is spread out over the visual cortex by suggesting that how questions were posed to test subjects promoted "real world" answers, not "mind's eye" answers. For example, If subjects took a long time answering a question relating to an object moving in space, the subject might answer a certain way "...because moving in a straight line at a fixed velocity is what physical things do in real space" (Pylyshyn, 2007, p. 134). In fact, a person might imagine an object moving in any way, including breaking the laws of physics: "It is your image, so you can make it do whatever you like!" (2007, p. 130).

Though he admits that it is more difficult to imagine something we have never experienced (e.g., non-Euclidean geometry, such as a triangle with three obtuse angles) (2003, p. 281-284).

Pylyshyn further describes the content of mental images in three parts:

- a) what we intend our mental images to show
- b) what we know about the world and how things look, how they work and how they unfold over time
- c) the way our mind constrains us (2003, p. 286)

Within this framework, mental images are constructed in terms of what we know and what we intend to show (2003, p. 286); constraints are not external (i.e., language and culture,) but how our individual minds uniquely cognize the world around us (2007, p. 144). Put another way, mental images are formed by the limits of our imaginations and the internal “language” of our own minds. It is no surprise that mental images help a person process information -- mental images are forms of cognition -- but Pylyshyn’s take on how mental images are created brings both internal and external sources and processors of information together in an interesting way -- a way particularly suited to discussing spatially focused mental imagery.

In fact, Pylyshyn devotes much time to discussion of spacial representations (ASPARs, or active spatial representations), citing spatial representation as one of the “deepest problems in cognitive science” and attributing visualization functions to how we “represent and cognize space” (2007, p. 148).

...we can orient ourselves in space rapidly and effortlessly and can perceive spatial layouts based on extremely partial and ambiguous cues ... We can recall spatial relations and re-create spatial properties in our imagination (p. 149).

Pylyshyn contends there are aspects peculiar to representing and visualizing spatially conspicuous images: magnitude, stable configurations, three dimensional relations, modality, ability to engage the motor system, and ability to capture the continuity and connectedness of space (2007, pp. 169-172). For the purposes of this project, these key aspects may be used to understand the vocabulary used in the online message board posts: do users describe dimensions and/or motor functions (e.g., do users describe feeling able to walk “into” a scene, look around a room, etc.) magnitude and connectivity (e.g., did Jackson film heights, distances, or spatial relations accurately,) and modality (e.g., do the users engage both text and film; do they describe music, sound, touch or smell in conjunction with sight?) These aspects of spatial representation, combined with a recognition of the unique constraints of internal mental processes and external experiences provide a foundation for interpreting and understanding how readers/spectators might discuss the integration of textual- and filmic-based mental images.

II.D.2. Visualizations of place in textual and filmic *The Lord of the Rings*

As I mention in Grek Martin (2010), after many years of reading Tolkien’s works, some characters and locations are easy to picture; others are more difficult, but that does not inhibit my interaction with Middle-earth. Seeing Jackson’s films enhanced many of those pictures, even redefined them in my mind’s eye. M. Barker’s research on

visualization and the *Lord of the Rings* phenomenon (2006; also 2009, 2008, 2005), provides insight into the relationship between visualizing places found in text and film:

I think you can always shut your eyes and see your own sort of place, but to see it in front of you, then you're getting the complete experience of it. I mean, there is [sic] some bits in the book that I can imagine more vividly than others, and you know there are some bits that actually you sort of almost skim by now,... (James, as cited in Barker, 2006, p. 1).

Echoing Kosslyn's and Pylyshyn's approach to mental imagery, Barker contends that mental imaging is natural, that it forms a part of "internal speech," that it is partial and incomplete, and that there is good reason to believe some people may produce more complete images than others (2006, p. 10). Barker focuses more on Vygotsky's connection to internal, or inner, speech as a way of thinking about human consciousness -- in particular the relationship between consciousness and "dialogical," or socially-motivated, language (2006, p. 13). Drawing from Barker's study and the previous section's discussion of mental imagery from a theoretical perspective, this section turns to a more practical angle: how do readers and film spectators visualize spatial representations in the *The Lord of the Rings* and in the fantasy and science fiction genres?

Fish (as quoted in Sheldrick Ross, 1999, p. 785) suggests that readers "creatively rewrite texts" and that "reading is a transaction between a text and a reader who uses both personal experience of the world and a familiarity with literary codes and conventions to construct meaning" (Sheldrick Ross, 1999, p. 785). Perhaps it is not an accident that these aspects of the reader-text transaction mimic cognitive theory of mental image formation: "what we know about the world and how things look, how they work and how they unfold over time" is akin to "personal world experience" and "the way our

mind constrains us” can be understood in terms of “constructing meaning out of codes and conventions,” if one sees the construction of meaning as cognition. Again, the term used to denote the creation of visual images from textual descriptions is *ekphrasis* (Mitchell, 1994, p. 152-3), including the bringing to the mind’s eye a picture using verbal or textual cues. The worlds of fantasy and science fiction push the boundaries of ekphrasis, because often the author’s vision is not found precisely in the “real world.” Authors ask readers to create mental images of places that they may not have ever experienced. For some readers, however, the task of creating mental images of other-worlds may pique their interest and be part of the reason why they read fantasy and/or science fiction.

A young adult (YA) fantasy writer notes that “...the best fantasy stories create an irresistible world that the reader yearns to live in” (Kennedy, 2010, p. 414). This process is found throughout other genres as well. Radway, (1983) in a study of why some women read romance novels, found that unrealistic stories are preferred often because they do not mimic “real” life, allowing the reader to escape into a fantasy world, even if that world is not conceivably part of the fantasy genre. As mentioned in the previous section, the reader’s attention, or interest in or liking of, a story or particular aspect of the story, is a main characteristic of mental image formation. Kuhlthau, (1993) gives credence to this “affective dimension,” citing it as “a critical part of the reader-text transaction” (as quoted in Sheldrick Ross, 1999, p. 795). If readers become emotionally attached to a particular part of a story, or if something about that story piques their interest, they will likely devote more time to that aspect of the story and to the process of visualizing the

various characters, scenes, and landscapes within that story. If the landscapes are fantastical, then interested readers will take the time to visualize the world that story describes. In some instances, however, fantasy authors use real-world landscapes to describe otherworldly locations, and these locations must conform to reader expectations if the story is retold in a cinematic context.

Tolkien wrote parts of *The Lord of the Rings* to reflect the English landscape, therefore those people who recognize that connection and those who have particular affinity with that landscape will visualize and privilege a particular view:

...the Shire is very much Middle England, you know, shades of Derbyshire, but then I grew up there,... I was afraid, I think, I was afraid that some, this sound awful and I'm sorry, but that some American would get hold of the film you know, and then it would be all prairie land... even though it's New Zealand, one can identify quite strongly with the landscapes etcetera in the film. So, geographically, it was wonderful, the filmography was wonderful. (Stella, as cited in Barker, 2006, p. 2).

If the cinematic version of the story does not conform to readers' expectations, it may be due to what Ricoeur refers to as the "reciprocity between text-interpretation and self-interpretation" (as quoted in Sheldrick Ross, 1999, p. 795), or, the relationship between the reader and the text and the resulting conclusions, visions, and meanings extracted from the intermingling of the words on the page and the reader's interpretation of those words through the lens of his or her own experiences. Furthermore, Radway cautions against focusing on the text in isolation (1983, p. 54), suggesting that literary meaning is the interaction between the fixed verbal structure and a socially situated reader (pp. 54-55): a statement echoed both in Bakhtin's notion of chronotope and Merleau-Ponty's

view of filmmaking stated above. Readers' reactions to film adaptations are by no means uniform: ardent bibliophiles often criticize film adaptations, though Sheldrick Ross suggests that books may be more attractive if they have been made into a cinematic or television production (1999, p. 789). This phenomenon is bolstered by several studies in the library community that record rise in patron interest of books that have been made into movies, even if that book is considered a "classic" (Hendershot, 2007; Sellers, 2010; ALSC Research and Development Committee, 2006).

As I mentioned in "Two Roads to Middle Earth," for *The Lord of the Rings*, reader/spectator reactions have been studied extensively. In Barker's study one respondent commented after seeing the film adaptation:

I think it was different because I was able to visualise more of the things that Tolkien had described, and like the landscapes and things when I first read the book I didn't really know what...Tolkien was getting at but then after watching the movies I thought that ... I had a better idea of how Tolkien saw the things he'd written about which made it more interesting to read. ...because I can recognise parts of the books that were clearly in the film... (Fran, as cited in Barker, 2006, p. 2).

As Fran notes, there were parts of the book that were in the film, but the entirety of the book was not reproduced on screen. A film adaptation is not the book; adaptations are, in fact, different manifestations of an artistic work. To put text to film requires a significant change in medium; films are visual, aural, and, if one is discussing the full cinematic experience, highly situational. Films are constrained by length and what makes sense, visually, to an audience. Actor Christopher Lee comments on differences between the book and the movie: "There are lots of things in these films, which are not in the books,

and I think, in most cases, they are improvements, because they are scenes which have to be *seen...*” (Lee, as cited in Jackson, 2002a). Philippa Boyens relates, “If you want to explain to the audience about the culture of the Dwarves, you cast John Rhys-Davies as the Dwarf and he’ll tell you, he’ll show you, he’ll bring that culture to life for you” (as cited in Jackson, 2002a). Jackson himself adds:

... the book is a great book, the story is a great story, the characters are great, but it’s unfilmable and it *is* unfilmable. If you were to just shoot the book, page by page, scene by scene, it would be a mess. (2002b)

Brian Sibley echoes this sentiment:

Here you’ve got a book that’s a thousand pages long; it encompasses a different geography, all kinds of races of beings and creatures. It’s a book that took the author fifteen years to write. This is a challenging book to try to put on film (as cited in Jackson, 2002a).

Actors and filmmakers are readily aware of the differences between book and film; the challenge is whether and to what extent readers/spectators understand this relationship. Those who privilege the book may be less tolerant of changes, while those who appreciate cinema may be more forgiving. A filmmaker will never satisfy all audiences, particularly those for whom the text is nothing short of sacred, but common ground still may be found. Not only does the film need to satisfy the general scope -- or “essential quality” -- of a literary work in order to appear faithful (Barker, 2006), but the film should not directly contradict readers’ myriad specific visualizations for any given person, place, or thing (Martin, as cited in Barker, 2006, p. 7; Grek Martin 2010).

More than simply visualizing images from a text or from a film, the relationship between a story and a film adaptation of that story is volatile. Readers want to see their

mental images, their visual interpretations, on screen: filmmakers want to create a movie that makes sense cinematically. *The Lord of the Rings* is even more difficult not only because the book is “unfilmable,” but because, as discussed below, Tolkien fans are an extremely discerning group of people. Since Middle-earth plays such a large role in the story, descriptions of places must be accurate -- including both referenced, real-world places like the Shire and fantastical places like Rivendell and Mordor. For Jackson’s trilogy to be successful, Tolkien fans would have to recognize those places -- places many have planted firmly in their mind’s eye -- on screen. Perhaps a large part of that recognition depends upon the ability to capture the essential quality those places are meant to represent in the story.

II.E. Information Studies

II.E.1. Summary of the argument from the lens of Information Studies

Information studies is an extremely diverse field, encompassing the reception, processing, and dissemination of information from the perspective of the mind’s eye of an individual to a fully global context. Broadly situated, this study focuses on internal reception and processing, or reader response theory, combined with a more more far-reaching dissemination of information through online communities (Haythornthwaite, 1996; Wellman & Haythornthwaite, 2002; Preece, 2001). Text and film are sources of information and how readers and spectators understand what they read and what they see can be examined from different perspectives -- one of which is visualization. Ekphrasis (the process of bringing to mind pictures from textual or verbal descriptions,) along with

Allen's theory of projected illusion (film's ability to encourage the world of the movie beyond the screen,) can explain how mental images arise from these media. The space and time in which a story is told, or a movie is filmed, provide the context for understanding the meaning attributed to the different characters, events, objects, and landscapes in that story. If context changes, say, from the publishing of a book to its film adaptation, then characters or landscapes may have to be altered in order to convey their original meanings: the notion of Bakhtin's chronotope. An example is the character Aragorn -- majestic in the books, reluctant in the films -- hero in both. Considering *The Lord of the Rings*, understanding the context in which Tolkien wrote and published grants insight into the meanings Tolkien intended his audience to receive. Similarly, it helps to know the context in which Jackson created his cinematic trilogy and how he reinterpreted the characters, events, and landscapes to convey visually the meanings Tolkien intended. Comparing meaning in book and film is possible through the use of Panofsky's theory of iconography, where meaning is discerned through the use of allegorical images in context. With context and meaning firmly in place, the ways in which the fans as reader/spectators engage with story and how they visualize the information given to them can be more easily recognized.

The process of ekphrastic visualization involves transforming words into a "sense" and to that sense is ascribed "meaning" (Barker, 2006), while visualizing a story from filmic medium uses visual and auditory cues. Reading is a personal experience; words, senses, and meanings are filtered through one's own interest and through the internal "language" of one's own cognition. The sense of completeness, of events

making sense, combined with the visual nature of film is another way of communicating information. In combination with the written word, film has the power to strengthen certain “bits” of information so that they become part of a cohesive “whole,” which speaks, again, to higher order functions that Barker feels are integral to the process of envisioning (2006). Film adaptations, because of their multimedia nature, often offer more succinct, simplified, and complete versions of the stories told in novels. Seeing someone else’s vision of a literary work in the form of a film adaptation not only inspires subsequent visualization, but it also has the capacity to invite comparison, solidify partial visualizations, and promote more complete understanding by retelling the story within the confines of cinematic tradition (Barker, 2006).

One of the confines of cinema is the length of time an audience will sit in a theatre, a far shorter duration than it takes to read an entire story. The full text of *The Lord of the Rings* might take some people months to read, while one can view the entire film trilogy and gain a fairly comprehensive image of Tolkien’s world and understanding of the main storyline in the space of roughly nine hours. To some, time is quite literally of the essence. Many have described modern society as the Information Age and some, including N. Carr, have explored the effects of information overload -- including a significant attention-span deficit exacerbated by digital media (2008). People may more clearly remember scenes from a film adaptation simply because it takes less time to watch the film than it does to read the book. They may also remember the movie because the visual and aural nature of film is a medium that promotes stronger mental images. In a society characterized by information overload, shorter time and stronger mental images

mean a better likelihood of retaining information. On the other hand, interest and affection may trump the attention-deficit, information-overloaded characterization. Fans of *The Lord of the Rings* are interested in how the films were made and many are willing to pay both time and money for access to that information, whether that information is in DVD “Appendices” or through online news feeds and websites. Dedicated fans will suffer information overload in order to experience how Jackson’s team brought one of their favourite works to life.

Another cinematic constraint is one that Jackson’s trilogy has largely overcome -- that of creating believable scenes with the help of computer animation. Tolkien and Allen both stress the need for the created other-world to be a fully realized, seamless, believable world that can be experienced. In the cinematic tradition, previous types of special effects and early computer animation looked “fake” and called attention to the medium, not to the world the film intended to depict. Calling attention to the medium inhibits visualization, as the audience recognizes the images as film more than as another world. Apart from the usual “movie magic” employed to depict impossible or fantastical scenes, several techniques were developed during the filming of Jackson’s trilogy, including digitally enhanced armies and shooting the digitally created character Gollum using actor Andy Serkis (Jackson, 2003b, 2004b). Believability of the landscape was crucial to winning over audiences who loved the books for their vivid descriptions of places in Middle-earth. Finding geographically suitable places to film in New Zealand was a challenge, as well as interspersing real trees with *mallern*, in addition to pitting real people against trolls and Balrogs, and finding a way to visually depict disembodied evil

(Jackson, 2004b). The result of Jackson's efforts was almost seamless integration of live action, traditional special effects, and CGI that brought Middle-earth to life for many viewers.

If readers are able to visualize descriptions in the text as well as scenes from the movies, then the two types of visualizations can be compared -- as Barker found almost by accident (2006). Barker's study brings together the concepts of inner speech and mental images in ways important to the idea of visualizing film as information processing. Both inner speech and mental imagining are internal processes meant to relate the individual to the external world, and therefore Barker suggests mental imaging shares many properties of inner speech: it is achievement-oriented, it succeeds in unifying component parts, it is inseparable from the development of external competencies, it develops associations between the sense and meanings of words, and it is both spatially- and chronologically-situated (2006, pp. 13-14). Audience responses substantiate visualization as a form of achievement. Viewers were able to distinguish between watching the film and envisioning the world that the film portrays. In addition, many viewers felt confirmation when the film supported their visualizations, made comparisons between their mental images and those projected by the film, and overall felt a stronger sense of ownership of the story (Barker, 2006, pp. 18-9). With Allen's idea of projected illusion, it seems more than reasonable to accept that viewing a film not only inspires mental image creation, but promotes information processing both of the film and, if the film is an adaptation of a text, the story it represents.

Geographic representations -- space, place, and location -- are highly complex images to visualize. Geography was important to both Tolkien and to Jackson, which makes sense as geography is an essential element to identity. Human geographers have realized the connection for some time, but cognitive psychologists such as Kosslyn and Pylyshyn also understand its importance. Pylyshyn further asserts that how people cognize spatial representations is a key to understanding how people create mental images. Understanding ways in which we understand mental image creation from a cognitive psychological perspective aids in understanding how people describe the integration of ekphrastic mental images and cinematically-induced mental images. By focusing on geographic, locational, and spatial content in *The Lord of the Rings*, the focus of the study is not only more exact, but clues to the process of creating and integrating mental images from different media may be discovered. Additionally, the representation of place in film adaptation has not been widely researched, though representations of characters/actors have been studied (citations here...). Geography, therefore, is not merely a way of focusing the content of reader/spectators opinion, it is a way of accessing deeper cognitive functions and information processing.

II.E.2. Changing role of fans -- creators and disseminators of information

Many studies have been done about readers and movie viewers and their understanding of texts, comprehension of visual images, and visualization of both (Morra and Guðbjörnsdóttir, 2009; Mar, 2006; Marsh, Meade, & Roediger, 2003; Marsh, E. J., & Fazio, L. K., 2006; Carr & Ly, 2009; Barker, 2006), though few studies have incorporated

fans and fan responses (Na, J.-C., Thet, T.T., & Khoo, C.S.G., 2010; Chiu, C.-M., Wang, E.T.G., Shih, F.-J., & Fan, Y.-W., 2011; Thet, T.T., Na, J.-C., & Khoo, C.S.G., 2010). As fandoms and fan communities become more popular and more active both online and in the “real” world, the more those who study popular culture should take note. With the advent of the Internet, fans have more ways to promote books and films, voice their opinions, play games, display artwork, write “fanfic” stories, and organize events, as well as other myriad ways of celebrating their favourite stories with other fans online. Tolkien fans are no different in this regard and constitute a particularly vocal, knowledgeable, and opinionated fandom -- to the extent that they may have influenced the production of Jackson’s cinematic adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*. Many Tolkien-based fan sites, including the one used in this study (TheOneRing.net,) offer both breadth and depth for all fans of Tolkien’s works, including devotees of the written works, films, video games, fan art, and conventions. One of the main ways fans discuss the object of their devotion is through online message boards, or fora. By accessing and reading the conversations on these fora, it is possible to see patterns in opinion from a very knowledgeable, dedicated, and interested group of people.

“Fans,” (or “fanatics,”) suggest a person who is passionate about something, but the way this interest is manifested may be quite different from fan to fan. Increasingly, the term “fan” now is used to describe people with special interest in an aspect of popular culture, often centred on a world depicted in a book or book series, movie, or television series. As many marketing agents already know, fans of these worlds want to love anything associated with those worlds, with Middle-earth, Star Wars, and Star Trek being

key examples of this trend (Thompson, 2003, p. 53). This devotion may be manifest in different ways, but in reference to cult cinephilia, Jeffrey Sconce describes two kinds of fans: archaeological (the collector) and diegetic (the investor in a particular world) (in Wu, 2003, p. 97). Tolkien fans seem to inhabit both the archaeological and the diegetic camps: those who will collect, learn, read, and watch anything Tolkien-related and those who are invested in the overarching world of Middle-earth. The differences between the two may be subtle or extreme; archaeological Tolkien fans may know precise details of when and where *The Lord of the Rings* was first published, while diegetic fans might know the date the character Bilbo Baggins finished writing *There and Back Again* (by Shire reckoning, of course.) Not only do these fans have intense interest in their chosen passion, but they often seek ways to share that interest with other fans. For the dedicated in pursuit of those with shared interest, they need only access the Internet to find willing and knowledgeable allies.

Ross not only suggests that readers are actively engaged in constructing meaning from the texts they read, but that many do so within the context of a network (1999, p. 796). Readers in the modern (digital) Information age increasingly find their networks online and therefore have new and various ways to express their engagement within that environment. Interacting with others about a favourite topic through a website is especially appealing, given that there is a certain degree of anonymity through the use of user names and avatars (images or icons used to represent a user) online. This anonymity gives rise to public expressions of personal opinions as well as rather frank discussion (Gunter, 2009). Many online formats exist for the sharing of ideas; some, like blogs,

focus on the individual. Others, like fan-based websites, seek to create an online community of people joined by their love and devotion to a particular “fandom:” a collective of people organized socially around their shared appreciation of a pop culture object or objects” (Baym, 2007, Fandom). Fan sites are not limited to only one way of interacting; Baym notes that online groups are using multiple online and offline platforms and continue to “thrive on Web boards, in multiplayer online games, and even on the all-but-forgotten Usenet” (2007, Introduction).

Fans’ engagement does not stop at mere online discussion. Readers and fans of literature and film interact with the worlds online, but they also recreate them in the “real” world. J. Kennedy, author of the popular *Odd Fish* books, muses on the propensity of readers -- particularly YA and fantasy audiences -- to create fanfic stories, organize themed events, dress up as characters, and create fan art. “Fantasy fans want to recreate the stories they love” (2010, p. 412). One way many find appealing is through online fora, a way that Kennedy believes fosters “the kind of fan who is not content just to love a book but wants to actively celebrate it” (p. 412). The recreation of fantasy worlds in the “real” world not only celebrates the object of the fandom, but gives fans further ownership of the story -- a characteristic also described in Barker’s study (2006). Tolkien fans’ perceived ownership of the story inspired many of them to attempt to intervene in Jackson’s making of the film adaptation -- to such an extent that Mathjis contends that “...any study of the films that does not make them part of its subject risks rendering itself irrelevant” (2006, p. 8).

Tolkien fans have always been a dedicated group, but their appetites certainly were whetted with the filming of Jackson's trilogy. "...[E]xcitement and box office power is driven by the rabid fans of Tolkien's *Rings* books" and

International devotees of Middle-earth have erected an estimated 400 websites (some posted years in advance of production) parsing every detail of the productions, have made the Internet release of the 'teaser' film trailer a record-breaking media event, ... (Wu, 2003, p. 84)

K. Thompson, a researcher and message board poster on TheOneRing.net, cites a potential reason behind the websites and desire for information about Jackson's films: "The filmmakers and marketers began with one signal [sic] advantage: many fans desperately wanted to love the films" (2003, p. 53). Thompson continues by describing the effect watching the film had on fan Scott Edelman, the editor of *Sci Fi*:

As it turned out, the film indeed brought me to tears, though not for the reason I feared. At my first glimpse of The Shire, I was able to relax. And with each passing instant, I nodded and thought, "Yes, yes, that's it, he's nailed it." Jackson's obvious love for Tolkien filled the screen, and I was transported to many places -- not only back to Hobbiton, but back to my childhood dreams as well (2003, p. 53).

Fans of *The Lord of the Rings* have been credited with changes in the production of the film. While Jackson insists fans had little effect, he does admit that they

...were influencing us just by their presence, just by the fact that they clearly loved this book, that they loved the project. They didn't want us to make a bad movie. It would have broken their hearts if the film been terrible, and that influence alone was enough to make us treat the integrity of the work with a great deal of care. (as quoted in Thompson, 2003, p. 56)

Jackson clearly learned about the relationship between fans and filmmaking as he created Facebook pages for himself, *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy, and *The Hobbit*, which now includes several video blogs (Jackson, 2011). That is not to say that all fans love (or will love) all aspects of Jackson's films, but the nature of fandoms allows for this type of discussion. Fandoms incorporate both collectivity and individuality -- some have a "shared ethos," though disagreement is common and often encouraged (Baym, 2007, Fandom). With a world as richly described as Middle-earth, debate on Tolkien website message boards -- even debate on fairly high levels of textual or film analysis -- is commonplace.

For the purposes of this study, the fans represent a knowledgeable and dedicated group of people -- almost "expert," if not in the traditional, academic sense. It was suggested above that interest affects visualization; it appears that knowledge does as well. Morra and Guðbjörnsdóttir found that expertise has a considerable impact on visualizing characters in texts (2009, p. 610). In their study, participants with knowledge of Icelandic sagas in general had more vivid mental images of Þorbjörg, a prophetess in the *Eriks Saga Rauða*. These participants also liked the saga more than less experienced participants, had more interest in the saga, found themes in the saga to be more important, and generally had more positive emotions toward the story. Online Tolkien fans may not all be Tolkien "experts," but interest and affection for the story has led many of them to devote considerable amounts of time to online activity. Together with Mathjis' comments on the incorporations of fans into studies of the films, it seems fans are an interesting and perhaps crucial avenue into understanding mental images. Fans of *The Lord of the Rings*

may be more able to clearly visualize ekphrastic images and therefore may have more vivid integrations of images from the text and images from the films.

Several fields have been brought together to form the theoretical foundation of this thesis. Bakhtin's chronotope and Panofsky's iconographical analysis permit the comparison of text and film. Allen's "projected illusion" combined with Kosslyn and Pylyshyn's theories of mental imagery form the basis for understanding how people form mental images from film and from experience. Online fandoms provide an interesting possibility for further research into how people react to aspects of high and popular culture. To see whether Tolkien fans are up to the challenge, the following sections discuss how the data for this research was collected and subsequently analyzed.

Chapter III. Data Collection and Method

III.A. Data Collection

Works of literature and film, as well as their creators, have always enjoyed devoted enthusiasts, but widespread use and accessibility of the Internet have allowed devotees of such works unique fora to express their views. While many have quickly and eagerly seized the opportunity to create and disseminate information about their favourite work, few have considered ways to harness the ever-burgeoning flow of public opinion. One possible way of interpreting this information combines the well-established method of textual analysis with the dexterity of online web-based functionality through the use of a tool such as the Netlytic Internet Community Text Analyzer (www.netlytic.org/). By uploading public posts, blogs, feeds, tweets, etc., into such a tool, one can open a window onto public opinion as expressed through these online fora. The following steps outline the process taken in this study to identify, collect, and analyze posts from a public online message board hosted by a popular “all-things-Tolkien” website.

Discerning accurately the public reception of any work -- be it fact or fiction, art or science -- has always been difficult. Apart from “Letters to the Editor” columns, newspapers and magazines rarely publish public opinion and other ways of soliciting public opinion -- namely interviews, focus groups, and surveys -- have the complication of intervening researchers. On the other hand, observation rarely affords such intimate insights necessary to gauge opinion. Public fora -- websites, comments, blogs (web-logs), message (or discussion) boards, and other related public online postings -- have the benefit of being both public and personal as well as commonplace; people are

increasingly comfortable interacting within this format (Gunter, 2009). Online fora created by and for fans of a given work have the virtue of being inherently public on two levels: the sites are created by members of the general public who have a desire to share their views, and the majority of the sites are public (i.e., not password protected) and are therefore available to anyone with an Internet connection. Fans of *Lord of the Rings* are no exception and a multitude of websites attest to this fact.

III.A.1. Data collection: Selecting the source material and TheOneRing.net

While online sites abound for fans of Peter Jackson, Tolkien, and the world(s) they have created, one site stands out both as an all-encompassing site and as a popular one -- TheOneRing.net (TORn). Founded in 1999, the site has attracted thousands of viewers and claims “to be the most comprehensive Tolkien fan site on the web” (TheOneRing.net, 1999-2011a). As seen in Figure 2, the site includes news and information about *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* in both film and book, as well as a page devoted to Peter Jackson, upcoming events, galleries, and most importantly for the purpose of this study: message boards.

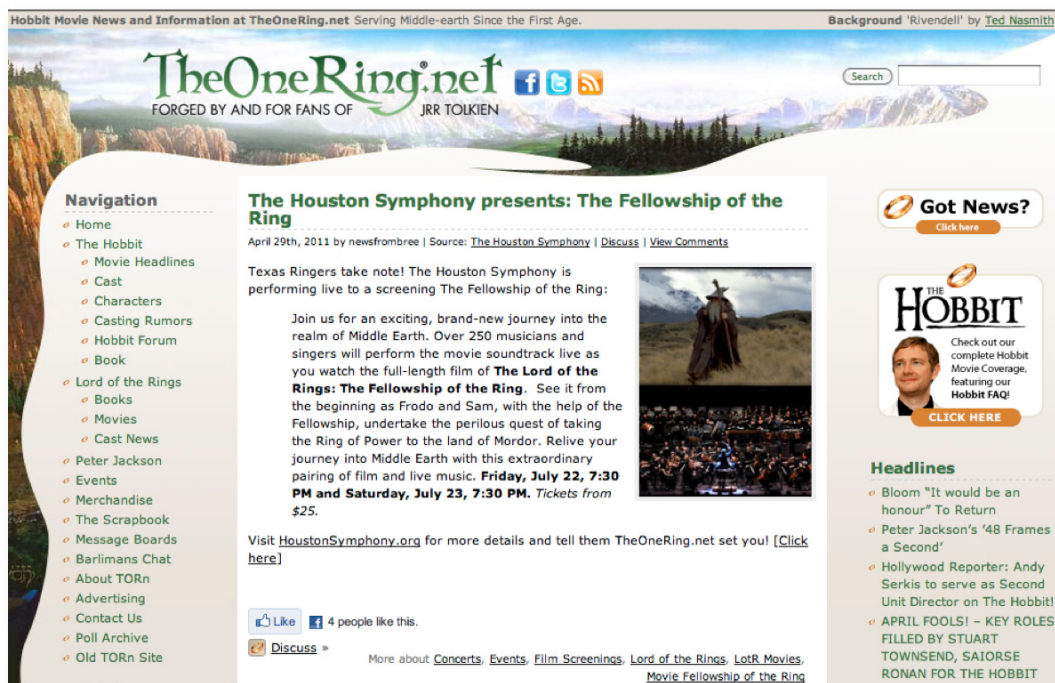


Figure 2. Homepage of TheOneRing.net (www.theonering.net).

The message boards are public, meaning no password is needed to read or otherwise access the discussions, though one must be a registered user in order to post a message to the board. Due to the public nature of the fora, no ethics approval was needed nor sought in order for me to capture and analyze the data. The boards are arranged broadly by topic and include discussions covering Tolkien's written works, Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) films, and increasingly the anticipated two-part cinematic adaptation of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, also directed by Jackson. The number of registered users on 29 April 2011 at 3:11pm was 6330 and the numbers grow daily (indeed, almost hourly!) As one might expect, the number of posts added to the message boards grow steadily as well. A cursory glance through two of the most promising boards suggested topics of discussion that would be relevant to questions regarding text and film visualization. In addition to the website, TheOneRing.net has a Facebook page and, as of 29 April 2011,

nearly 25,000 Facebook members “like” this page. Further highlighting the connection between Jackson and his fans, TheOneRing.net’s page is acknowledged on Jackson’s own Facebook page (Jackson, 2011). TORn is a comprehensive, current Tolkien fan site with thousands of registered users and countless more daily visitors. These facts combined with its international recognition and additional social media presence make it a dynamic site and one that was an excellent candidate for the purposes of this study.

With website chosen, I needed to narrow the search for relevant discussions that I could use to populate my dataset. Choosing the discussions that would illuminate fans’ perceptions of places described in the books and portrayed by Jackson on film were easy given TORn’s organization. Called “Forums,” the message and discussion boards were divided first by general topic (TheOneRing.net, 1999-2011b):

- *Welcome to TORN!* (the beginner’s starting place -- rules, FAQs, and Forum information),
 - *Tolkien Topics - Discussion of all things “Tolkien”*,
 - *Main* (general discussion of Tolkien-related things),
 - *Reading Room* (discussion of Tolkien’s literary works),
 - *Movie Discussion - LOTR* (discussing *The Lord of the Rings* movies-- not limited to, but largely, Peter Jackson’s films),
 - *Movie Discussion - The Hobbit*,
 - *The Arena* (“a chance to play out the battles you’ve always been curious about”),
 - *Gaming & Collecting*,
 - *Fan Art*

- *Off Topic - Discussion un-related to Tolkien,*
- *TheOneRing.net - Discussion about our website (feedback about the website).*

Forum Name	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Welcome to TORN!			
Welcome -- START HERE! --- Rules, FAQ & more Forum Info.	7	7	Apr 24 2009, 10:23am by Silverlode →
Tolkien Topics - Discussion of all things "Tolkien"			
Main General discussion of Tolkien, LOTR and The Hobbit literary and movie related topics: news, opinions, rumours, games and quizzes!	3200	58437	9 mins ago by geordie →
Reading Room Critical analysis and discussion of Tolkien's literary works.	1947	34472	6:29pm by PhantomS →
Movie Discussion - LOTR Discussion of the LOTR movies	2035	29536	43 mins ago by elvenhobbit →
Movie Discussion - The Hobbit The place for all Hobbit news and speculation	2343	63849	19 mins ago by Maddie →
The Arena A chance to play out the battles you've always been curious about.	269	2354	5:05pm by derwyn →
Gaming & Collecting Share the latest news with your fellow gamers and collectors!	483	2715	5:06pm by derwyn →
Fan Art Display and get feedback on your LOTR and Fantasy drawings, photography, prose and poetry	636	4321	5:06pm by derwyn →
Off Topic - Discussion un-related to Tolkien			
Off Topic Talk about other topics with your fellow Tolkien fans.	4355	102164	7 secs ago by grammaboodawg →
The Pollantir Propose a topic and invite other board members to vote on it. Tolkien-related polls welcome too!	456	10192	11 mins ago by Gimli'sBox →

Figure 3. TheOneRing.net message boards.

For those readers unfamiliar with message board terminology, a message board or forum refers to an online site or page designed to discuss a given topic -- an example would be "Movie Discussion - LOTR." Within one message or discussion board, one would find a list of individual conversations called "threads." Usually the subject line of the initial contribution acts as the title of the thread and that subject line is hyperlinked. Choosing that link would bring one to the conversation in full, with each author's contribution to the conversation identified by the subject line. In the parlance of the fora, authors are known as "posters" or "users" and individual responses from an author are called "posts," which can be as long as a single word or (on the TORn site) 5000 words (see Appendices E and F.) A certain degree of anonymity is present on the board. Registered users may choose to include information about themselves, but, for the most


part, usernames and avatars (image icons chosen to represent the user online) conceal the identity of the user, presumably permitting more frank discussions and responses. Posts and threads on TORn are regulated by moderators according to content appropriate for family audiences and for organizational purposes, i.e., a thread started in *Movie Discussion - LOTR* that pertains more to *The Hobbit* may be moved to the *Movie Discussion - Hobbit* board. To narrow the extent of my data collection to discussions about *The Lord of the Rings* books and movie, I concentrated my research on threads from *Movie Discussion - LOTR* and *Reading Room*.

Even so, not every thread from these two discussion boards would be relevant to my research question; therefore I developed a method of choosing promising threads based on the following criteria: topic relevance (whether a thread in the *Movie Discussion - LOTR* board mentioned the book, or a thread in the *Reading Room* board mentioned the movie,) geography (if any location in the movie or book was named,) and number of posts (threads with fewer than 20 posts were not included unless the topic was particularly relevant, e.g., *ROTK Geography? Where were the Rammas Echor?*) I scanned each thread's subject lines to make sure the posts stayed on topic and made a final decision whether to include that thread in the analysis. The titles of the chosen threads were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet (see Appendix B) along with the date of the thread, which Netlytic dataset it was added to, and any notes or links that would aid in organization or recall. At the time of the data collection, the posts on the *Reading Room* discussion board numbered over 29000, and the *Movie Discussion - LOTR* board over 24000 (TheOneRing.net, 1999-2009b). As mentioned previously, TheOneRing.net is a

dynamic site, with new messages posted frequently. Therefore, thread selection for each message board took place over a relatively short time to minimize the impact of a highly dynamic forum, beginning with the latest threads and moving back in time (from the present to threads dated from January 2007). Threads earlier than January 2007 are archived on TheOneRing.net, but in a format incompatible with Netlytic. For *Movie Discussion - LOTR*, 112 threads (3098 individual posts) were imported into Netlytic on the dates 16, 20, 21, and 22 January 2011. For *Reading Room*, 82 threads (2685 individual posts) were imported on 26 and 27 February 2011 and 1 and 2 March 2011.

The following screen capture gives a sense of what type of information one can learn about the registered users (to reiterate, the registered user profiles are available to anyone online and do not require a password to access them:)

The One Ring Forums:
User Profile: Modtheow

 **Modtheow**

Title:	Lorien
Status:	Registered User
Registered:	Apr 9 2007, 3:58am
Last Logon:	May 18 2010, 1:36pm
Posts:	341 (0.2 per day)
Real Name:	No name entered.
Location:	No location entered.
Local Time:	8:21 am
Email:	No email entered.

[Show user's posts](#)

Search all forums for [\(options\)](#)

Figure 4. An example of a registered user profile.

“Title” refers to the level of registered user (the highest is “Valinor”.) The rest of the information provided in Figure 4 is an example of the most basic information available. Other users give presumably “real” answers to these questions, as well as fill in non-mandatory fields such as “Gender,” “Date of Birth,” “Occupation,” “Favorite Tolkien Character,” “Less Filling or Tastes Great” and “Elves and Dragons” or “Cabbages and Potatoes.” Some users include pictures in addition to their online avatar icons. Still others fill in quite a bit of information in the “Interests” and “First *Lord of the Rings* Reading Experience” fields, allowing others to learn quite a bit about the people they interact with online.

The Reading Room seems to be the more “scholarly” of the two message boards.

... And do check out the Reading Room. I have to say, I thought I knew Tolkien pretty well when I first came here, but soon after we started the RR, I realized I was way undereducated - I'd only read LOTR, The Hobbit, the Silmarillon, Tolkien's Letters, and the biography by Carpenter. Thanks to TORN I now have an entire bookshelf of works by and about Tolkien, and my understanding of LOTR has deepened immeasurably. (Annael, January 4, 2008)

While the users do not necessarily use the words “visualize,” “imagine,” etc., they seem to prefer words that are more interpretive in nature (“good guys,” “game,” “slaughter,”) as well as literary terms like “protagonists” and “metaphor.” They also use more ambiguous words -- the Movie Discussion Board terms were easy to classify, while several terms from the Reading Room dataset could have been classified in several other categories (e.g. “struggle,” “summons,” “teeth.”) Often it appeared they were using vocabulary in their posts that Tolkien himself might have used. Their posts tend to be

much longer - encompassing multi-part posts and complaints of being “timed out” when they are posting (“a user is allowed 30 minutes to post a message or response to the forum.) This complaint may have many explanations: looking up information while posting, including quotes -- either from Tolkien or from other sources -- to back up a point, or simply thinking through a point while composing the post. Posters in the Reading Room also tend to be more spatially or geographically focused, both within the text (i.e., citing distances from different locations within the text,) or in comparing the text to real-world examples (e.g., the Shire as England.) Interpretations tend to be text-focused; if the films clarify (or mystify) a particular point, only then is a text-film comparison considered (though one should keep in mind that this board tries to steer away from discussions about the films.)

The Movie Discussion board posters tended to write shorter posts overall, though a few are quite long, especially those containing a sampling of the first movie reviews (the reviews were taken from the TORn archives and reposted as a 10-year anniversary celebration.) The posters on this forum tend to be more emotionally demonstrative, as opposed to the Reading Room board where posters tend to write in a rather “academic” or logic/reason-focused way. The Movie Discussion board exhibits a stronger concentration on specific main characters and their respective actors, as well as film-related subjects -- the movie soundtrack music, for one. In comparison, the Reading Room users tend to use descriptive collective nouns and more obscure specific Tolkien references: “travellers,” “enemies,” “protagonists,” “Noldor,” and “Dunharrow.” Incidentally, there were more words to remove in the Movie Discussion board dataset, as

though posters in this forum were more apt to use signatures that included non-Tolkien references. This practice might indicate a stronger desire to form individual identities within the Movie Discussion group, as opposed to a more “objective” individual identity within the Reading Room, or a stronger connection with a wider pop culture audience. It should be noted that several users post in both the Movie Discussion Board and the Reading Room.

Since TheOneRing.net message board posts are not in a format recognized for use in Netlytic (Netlytic requires RSS feed or XML formats,) each message board thread had to be converted to XML, using the online tool “dapper” (2010) (see Figure 6.) The first step in this process is to reformat the message board threads into something easily uploaded into dapper.

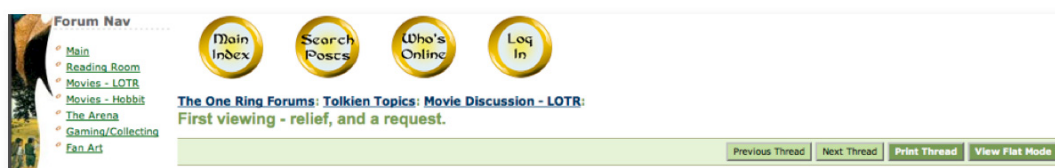


Figure 5. Choosing “Flat Mode” and “Print Thread.”

I clicked to view the thread and chose “View Flat Mode,” which displays the full content of each post one after the other. Additionally, I often used this feature during the thread selection process; it was helpful for scanning the content of a thread and determining its relevance (see Figure 5.) Once the threads were converted to “Flat Mode,” I chose “Print Thread,” which eliminates everything except the information from the main content of the message board -- the top and bottom content (e.g. advertisements, banners, animations), and the side content (e.g. site navigation.) This format streamlines the content that will be uploaded into dapper.

The second step of the process is to change the format of the content to one that can be recognized by Netlytic. To complete this step, I copied the url and pasted it into the “Set input” box in dapper (see Figure 6.) Dapper converts the content from the provided url into XML format using a conversion process set up and defined by Gruzd and saved for my use. It is important to note that the textual content of the message board threads are not changed in any way during this process.

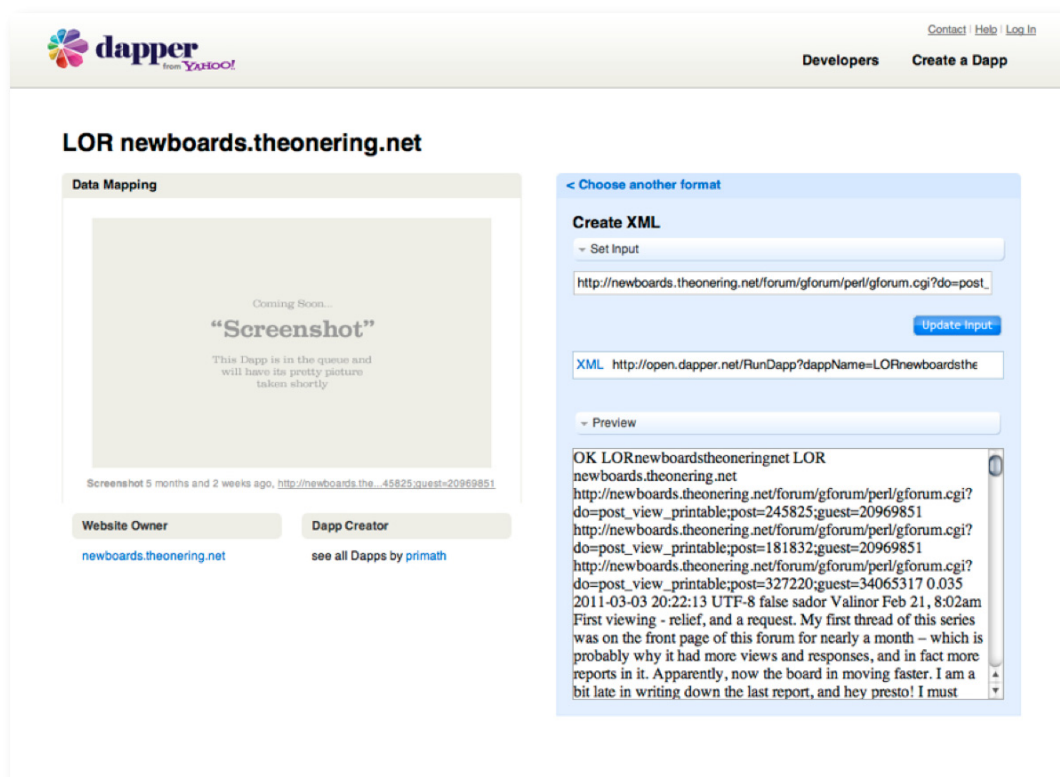


Figure 6. The dapper conversion tool, as set up by A. Gruzd.

Once the XML file is created, dapper creates a new url, and confirms the conversion process by displaying the url and preview of the file (see Figure 6.) Dapper’s Preview box not only allows the user to verify that the process was successfully completed, but the Preview displays enough content to determine if the correct information was converted. Importing the formatted thread into Netlytic involves copying the new url and

pasting into the box provided by Netlytic (see Figure 7.) The entire process, beginning with selecting a relevant thread to uploading the formatted content into Netlytic, was performed for all 194 message board threads added to the dataset.

III.A.2. About Netlytic (the Internet Community Text Analyzer)

A. Gruzd describes his Netlytic Internet Community Text Analyzer online text analysis tool as a web-based system for analyzing and visualizing large online datasets (forthcoming), giving the user the ability to examine public online posts, blogs, tweets, feeds, or other online textual media associated with any given topic. Data mining techniques are used in conjunction with visualization techniques to highlight common themes, understand specific responses, or otherwise analyze the textual information inherent in the datasets. (Gruzd, forthcoming, p. 1). For the purposes of this study, an individual post within a thread constitutes a discrete unit of analysis of the dataset, even though the posts were uploaded to Netlytic in the context of a complete thread. A powerful function of Netlytic is that while it treats each post as a discrete element, it maintains all the connections that post possesses, including relationships with other posts and the poster's relationships to other posters. This function allows not only a more traditional approach to text analysis as the researcher selects particular words or phrases, or adds new categories to the search, but relationships between posters can be examined and visualized with the aid of Netlytic.

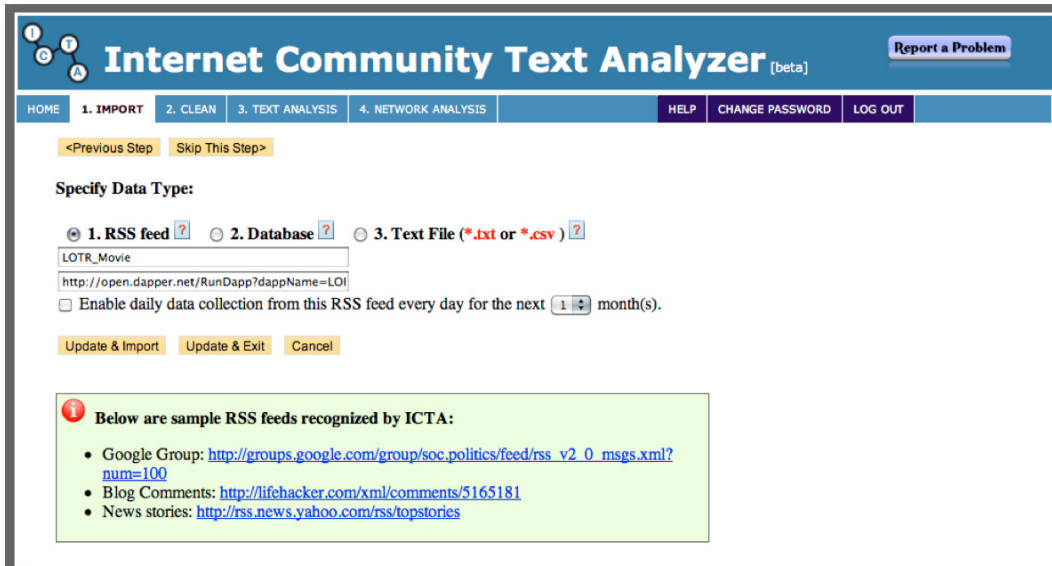


Figure 7. Importing data into Netlytic.

To allow for the possibility of comparison between the two message boards, two datasets were created in Netlytic. Threads collected from the “Movie Discussion - LOTR” board were imported to the “LOTR_Movie” dataset resulting in 3098 data elements and threads collected from “Reading Room” were imported to “LOTR_Book” resulting in 2685 data elements (see Figure 8.)

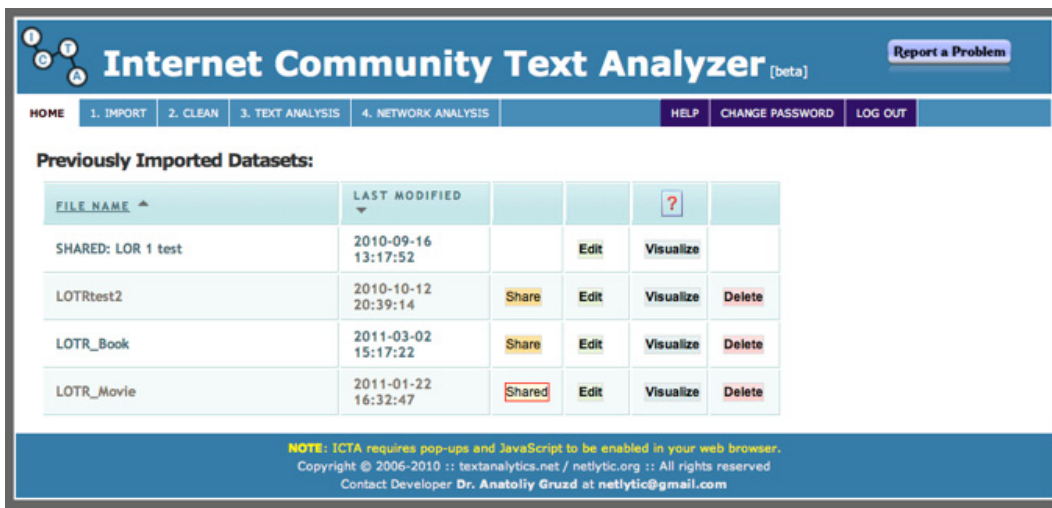


Figure 8. The main page of a Netlytic account showing test and final datasets.

Once a dataset is established, the researcher may edit, clean, visualize, or delete it.

“Cleaning” the data allows the researcher to remove common words or phrases that have been imported, but are not actually part of the content of the post -- examples are poster/user names and “signatures” (words or phrases added to the end of every post created by a particular author.) Before the data can be visualized, it must first be analyzed by Netlytic. Analyzing the data begins by choosing “Text Analysis” and at the next screen choosing “Analyze.” Tag clouds -- “lists” of frequently appearing words and phrases -- are automatically generated using two separate processes: the Yahoo! generator and Netlytic system generator. The Yahoo! generator returns frequent words and phrases, while Netlytic generator returns common etymological roots -- e.g. “hobbit*” for “hobbit,” “hobbits,” “Hobbiton.” Tagged words and phrases remain linked to the corresponding posts, therefore one can read the entire relevant blogs or posts and the context in which the information was created. The user may also create categories into which Netlytic would separate the corresponding posts. For instance, one could create the categories “good places” and “evil places” and then direct Netlytic to separate all posts containing the word “Shire” into “good places” and all posts containing the word “Mordor” into “evil places.” Doing so might highlight how good places were visualized from the text to film, in relation to evil places.

Finally, Netlytic is capable of keeping track of the posters themselves and how they relate to one another through their posts and responses through “Network Analysis.” Though not an integral part of this study, this feature could be extremely useful in identifying patterns of how people interact online. Some posters may have specific

members who seem to follow or respond to their posts, while others may have more wide-ranging influence. This feature did prove useful during the course of the analysis in identifying common user names, which were later eliminated from the datasets using the cleaning process described above. Figures 41 and 42, in the Analysis section below, demonstrate Netlytic's ability to visualize user/poster networks.

Once all the relevant threads had been identified, selected, reformatted, and imported into Netlytic, I began the textual analysis using ideas and terms supported by literary, cinematic, and geographic research. I began with words and phrases (see Appendix A) I hoped would elicit descriptions of how someone thinks or feels about the places depicted in the books and the films, if the films helped or hindered visualizations of Tolkien's world, or any descriptions related to visualizing Tolkien's or Jackson's Middle Earth. Netlytic was used to record the frequency of use of these words and phrases, and given that the context of each word is always maintained in the corresponding post, relevance to the research question was evaluated. Throughout the analysis, subsequent words and phrases were added as TORn terminology became clearer. It was expected that the words and phrases used to discover patterns of textual and cinematic visualization would change throughout the course of the study and notes were made reflecting those changes. My goal was to discern whether the TORn community, a very discriminating group of people, made connections between the book and the film through the process of visualization, and did they believe Jackson succeeding in translating Tolkien's books to film. If they did, or did not, was it due to the

fact that their visualizations of the text were in concert or conflict with Jackson's cinematic vision?

III.B. Method

III.B.1. Text analysis: knowing the data and term refinement

In order to perform an accurate text analysis using TheOneRing.net message board posts and Netlytic, a few important steps needed to be taken: familiarization with the data, elimination of extraneous terms, and identification of key terms and themes apparent in the data sets. Given the number of records in each set, 2685 for the Reading Room and 3098 for the Movie Discussion Board, familiarization was limited by available time and research support. However, since I was the only the researcher involved in the entire process -- from data collection, refinement, through to analysis -- a reasonable degree of familiarity with the records was attained. Term refinement was facilitated by Netlytic Yahoo! and Local Extractors, which are context and semantic search algorithms that return frequently used words, phrases, or letter combinations. The words and phrases returned by the extractors set the stage for further term identification and subsequent analysis. As expected, I became increasingly familiar with the data as the analysis progressed, allowing for more judicious application of terms and categories to the research question.

While the tool used in the data collection and analysis, Netlytic Internet Community Text Analyzer, is quite new, the theoretical foundation for text analysis is well-established. The method employed to know and analyze the data is best situated in

B. Glaser's grounded theory (1967), the concept of discovering patterns in data through comparison and emergence. Grounded theory is particularly suited to this project for two reasons: it permits direct observation of the views of a globally diverse part of society and it accommodates the strengths of Netlytic. As Glaser mentions (1999), grounded theory works well with data obtained from a culturally diverse "microlevel" of society -- an apt description for the fans of TheOneRing.net. Grounded theory also works better in such cases than does formulated evidentiary models, as normative preconceptions geared for society at the macrolevel often miss trends at the culturally diverse microlevel (p. 839). Constant comparison needed for grounded theory to work (Glaser, 2004) is easily attainable using Netlytic; the context of the data (i.e., the posters' messages) are always immediately available, therefore patterns and trends in written communication are observable and can be used to modify searches and categorization. This thesis, then, is a potential model for combining the tradition of grounded theory with a new text analysis tool to facilitate research into online communities.

Message board posts contain many elements in addition to the main body: usernames, avatars, linked images, signatures, and dates of creation. Depending on the research question, interesting patterns can be discerned from these elements, but for other types of research -- including this study -- these elements are not needed to understand the data that the posts contain. In fact, the words or phrases in these elements may hinder understanding by complicating the data with terms that are not part of the opinions and responses espoused by the poster. Netlytic is able to "ignore" certain parts of the posts, either through the clean up process (Step 2 of the Netlytic menu) or through the Yahoo!

and Local Extractor options menus. For this project, A. Gruzd set up Netlytic to only consider the body of the message board posts for analysis, though this process did not eliminate all extraneous terms -- e.g., if posters referred to each other by username in the body of their messages. Familiarity with the dataset made possible the ultimate refinement of the original terms identified and returned by Netlytic.

A certain degree of familiarity was gleaned previously through the data collection process described in the section above. By reading and evaluating threads and posts, a general ethos emerged for the two boards, and as well, the usernames of frequent posters such as “Magpie,” “Weaver,” “Darkstone,” “Squire,” and “Inferno.” Some posters used signature phrases tacked to the end of the body of the post, and some of these usernames and signature terms were discovered by the two vocabulary extractors employed by Netlytic -- the Yahoo! Extractor and the Local Extractor. The Yahoo! Extractor is a proprietary program, therefore limited information is available on the algorithm used to return terms. However, according to the developers, the search uses both context and a semantic network to return words or phrases that are more relevant than, say, common words and phrases used in everyday speech (Kraft, Maghoul, & Chang, 2005). Several usernames and signature terms were identified by the Yahoo! Extractor and appeared in the resulting tag cloud. They were examined and confirmed to be extraneous and subsequently those terms were eliminated (see Appendix C for the steps required to perform this function using Netlytic.) The Netlytic Local Extractor, which uses a different algorithm to find common letter combinations, suffered less from this situation; therefore no terms were eliminated from the tag cloud generated by the Local Extractor.

The process of examining and refining the terms generated by the two extractors -- for both the LOTR Movie Discussion Board (dataset = LOTR_Movie) and the Reading Room (dataset = LOTR_Book) -- is outlined below, and in Appendix C.

The tag clouds generated by the two extractors served as a starting point for the text analysis. The top terms from both extractors and both datasets were compared to each other and terms connoting “places/worlds” or visualization/emotion” were noted. Not only were terms used by both datasets noted, but also terms favoured by one dataset or the other. These favoured terms might indicate not only how visualizations were discussed, but they might offer insight into process of mental image formation. Additionally, these terms were compared to a previous list of terms that I generated during the project proposal stage (see Appendix A.) Throughout the processes of familiarization, refinement, and analysis, the most relevant terms were identified, though it should be noted that no single term was always used in the same context. Instead, it should be understood that terms I deemed relevant contained a significant number of messages that solicited contextually relevant material. This process was enhanced by the fact that Netlytic made the context of any term always immediately available -- either in part or in the context of the full message. The availability of context allowed for different words and phrases to be tried in various combinations throughout the text analysis process, without the fear of overstating the evidence the data provided. With the following processes in place: familiarization of data, elimination of complicating terms, and identification of key terms, textual analysis of TheOneRing.net message boards through Netlytic could begin.



Figure 9. Tag cloud for the top 30 terms, Yahoo! Extractor, from the LOTR_Movie dataset (3098 records.) Note: numbers to the upper right of the words are estimated counts and may differ from the actual number of instances.

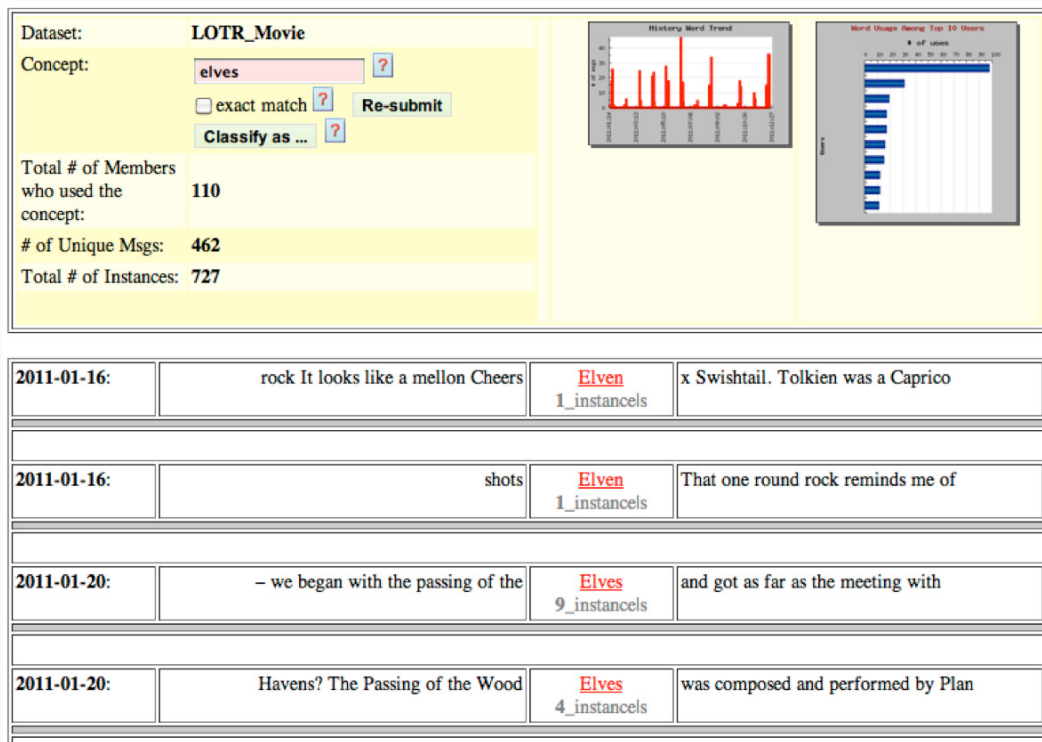


Figure 10. Term (concept) page revealed by clicking on a word in the tag cloud.

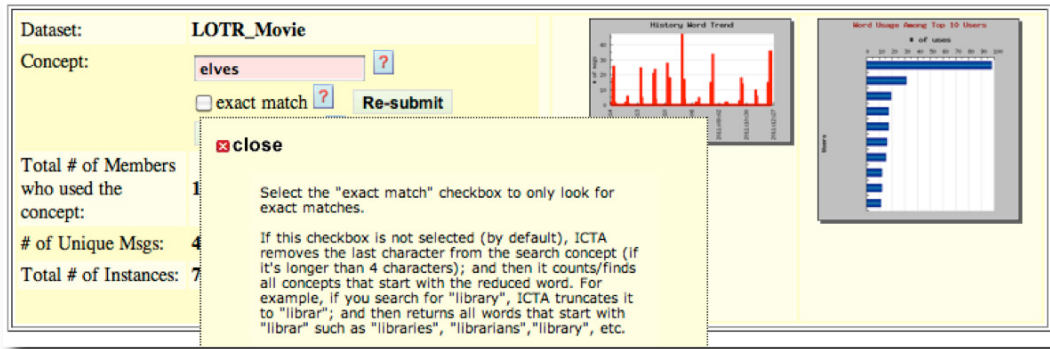


Figure 11. How Netlytic creates term variants.



Figure 12. Tag cloud for the top 30 terms, Local Extractor, from the LOTR_Movie dataset (3098 records.)

III.B.2. Category Creation and Use

The process of category creation within Netlytic not only enhanced knowledge of the datasets, but permitted me to sort data according to pre-defined or user-defined categories. A description of the process of category creation as part of the text analysis process is outlined below, followed by step-by-step instructions in Appendix C for using Netlytic to create categories. Once categories are created, they must be populated by words and phrases identified during the term refinement process. Terms can be added or deleted easily in Netlytic and results of analysis are immediate. As such, changes to

categories -- and results of those changes -- are quickly made and analyzed, allowing me to find the best ways to represent the data concepts defined by the research question.

Part of Netlytic's strength lies in the flexibility and visualization capabilities of the user-defined categories. The categories edit menu can be accessed by clicking on the notepad icon to the right of the word "Categories" in the Text analysis screen (see Figure 13 and Appendix C for step-by-step instructions.) Netlytic user has the ability to modify pre-existing, term-populated categories by adding or "deleting" words. It should be noted that throughout the category creation process no term is ever deleted completely, which is a benefit, as Netlytic categories layout serves as a record for words and phrases that have been used. It also enables the user to try various combinations of words without needing to retype them, thus ensuring the exact forms of the words or phrases are used each time. If the researcher cannot discern useful patterns from the pre-existing categories, the user may also create new categories and populate them manually. The user may create any number of categories, though visualizing a large number of categories (see Figure 14 below) may be somewhat counter-productive and the fact that no term is ever deleted means that the categories screen can become quite cluttered. For this study, several categories were created to see, literally, the patterns of use within each dataset. As patterns of use became more apparent, categories were further refined to reflect the interaction between ekphrastic and film-based mental imagery among the posters on TheOneRing.net message boards.

NETLYTIC | Internet Community Text Analyzer Report a Problem

HOME | 1. IMPORT | 2. CLEAN | **3. TEXT ANALYSIS** | 4. NETWORK ANALYSIS | HELP | CHANGE PASSWORD | LOG OUT

<Previous Step | Next Step>

Select Dataset: LOTR_Movie [records:3098]

YAHOO! CONCEPT EXTRACTOR (DISCONTINUED FEATURE) ?	
# of found Yahoo! terms:	4809
# of unprocessed messages:	1
Discontinued Feature Export Results Visualize	

LOCAL CONCEPT EXTRACTOR ?	
# of found terms:	201078
No new messages to process	
Clear Export Results Visualize	

CATEGORIES ?	
# instances of each category:	6391
No new messages to process	
Clear Visualize	

Figure 13. The Netlytic Text Analysis screen.

As mentioned in the section above, the tag clouds created by the Yahoo! Extractor and the Local Extractor, (shown above, Figures 9 and 12,) served as a starting point for populating the categories. The first category to be created was “visualization:” a category meant to contain all terms relating to the process of creating and describing mental images (see Figure 15 below.) Some of these words and phrases came from the tag clouds, while other terms were added to the “visualization” category from the initial list of terms I created. Still others were added once the text analysis began. Subsequent modifications of the “Visualization” categories and the results of other categories will be discussed in the Analysis section below and are also illustrated in Appendix C. The pattern of use produced by the category “visualization” was reviewed by visualizing it

through Netlytic. By clicking the “Visualize” button in the “Categories” section (see Figure 17,) a screen appears with a box (or boxes) containing the name of the category (or categories). Clicking on a single box displays a graphic representation of the data corresponding to the words and phrases populating the category (see Figure 15 “visualization” and Table 2 for the number of instances each major term was used.)



Figure 14. The “Categories” page of Netlytic, showing the modified pre-existing category “agreement.” Other pre-existing categories are “certainty,” “evaluation,” “opinion,” “positive,” “reference,” “self,” “uncertainty,” and “us.”

Netlytic uses the number of instances the exact term was used in the chosen dataset to size the category and term boxes (category box size would correspond to the sum of all the terms in that category.) Hovering the cursor over the box containing the term reveals this number. Clicking on a category box shows the breakdown of terms in that category (see Figures 18 and 19 below.) Again, positioning the cursor over the term box gives the exact match number for that term, while clicking on the box gives a new screen showing the term plus all of its ending variances. For example, “image***” yields 130 exact matches, but clicking on the term gives yet a further breakdown of the term and the context in which the term is used (see below, Figure 20.) It is important to note that it is always possible to uncover the direct usage of any term through the term/concept screen, where the context and full message can be viewed for each instance of use of that term or its variants. Like the terms recalled from the tag cloud, the user can access the entire original message from this screen.

To “delete” a term, or to see what the data looks like with a certain term removed from consideration, click the red box/white “x” to the right of the term in the “Categories” screen (see Figures 14 or 15 below.) This action will not, in fact, delete the term, but will instead render it inactive. The term remains as part of the list for that category, and as previously mentioned is a good reminder for what terms have been used. For example, “moment” was taken from the Local Extractor from the LOTR_Movie dataset, but upon review it does not elicit the same visualization references in the Reading Room as it did in the Movie Discussion Board. Removing this term from the list yields a different visualization of the data, since “moment” occurred frequently. To see a

new configuration, click the “Clear” button, which clears the previous results and resets the data for a new category analysis. Once the previous categories results have been cleared, click the “Analyze” button. When the analysis is complete, the “Visualize” button will reappear and the new categorization scheme can be visualized.



Figure 15. Visualization: a user-created and user-defined category. This image shows all the terms in the first composition of the “Visualization” category and, as well, a “deleted” term.



CATEGORIES 		
# instances of each category:	0	
# of unprocessed messages:	3098	
		Analyze
↓ See more processing options		

Figure 16. “Visualization” ready to be analyzed.



CATEGORIES 		
# instances of each category:	6391	
No new messages to process		
		Clear Visualize

Figure 17. “Visualization” ready to be visualized.

Table 2. A comparison of number of major term instances in the “Visualization” category.

Reading Room (2685)		term	Movie Board (3098)	
1023	50%	“think”	1116	36%
692	26%	“see”	853	28%
521	19%	“find”	360	12%
476	18%	“make”	528	17%
443	16%	“thought”	503	16%
420	16%	“made”	492	16%
317	12%	“look”	500	16%
167	6%	“show”	231	7%
130	5%	“image***”	185	6%

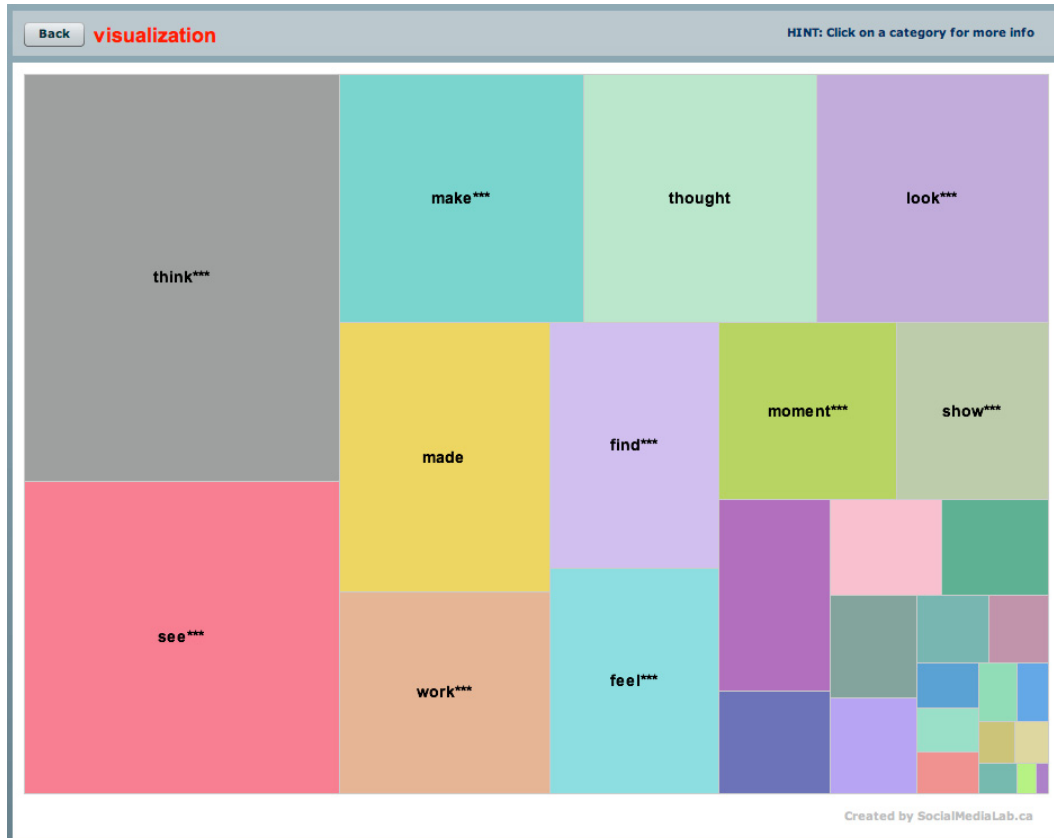


Figure 18. A visual breakdown of terms within the category “Visualization” from the LOTR_Movie dataset. There were 6391 instances of terms used (out of 3098 records.)

Changing datasets yields a slightly different configuration. For the Movie discussion board, the overall number of instances of terms for the “Visualization” categories was 6391; for the Reading Room, it was 6195. The number of instances of use for the major terms in both datasets is highlighted in Table 2 (above.) The corresponding term and number of instances for boxes with no term displayed (due to size constraints of the box) appear when the user hovers the cursor over the box in question. The breakdown of the instances in the Reading Room looks like the following:

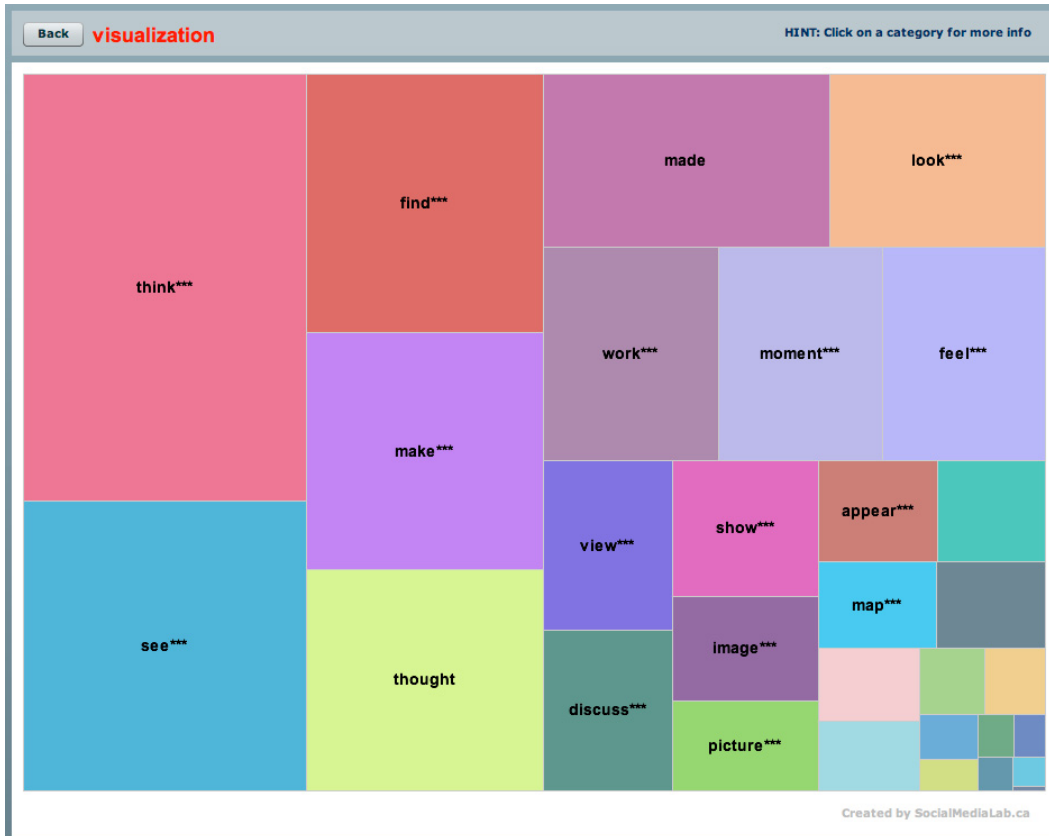


Figure 19. A visual breakdown of terms within the category “Visualization” from the LOTR_Book dataset. There were 6195 instances of terms used (out of 2685 records.)



Figure 20. “Image***” term screen and selected message.

Netlytic is a new tool for text analysis; therefore analysis progressed from a rather simplistic “baseline” to more complicated analyses meant to bring out the ideas surrounding mental image formation. A baseline of analysis was created with the categories “book_firster” and “movie_firster:” two terms that appeared during the collection and examination of the data. While not used extensively, these terms appear to be somewhat unique to the fandom, with the understanding that if someone is a “book firster,” they have read the books before watching the films. A “movie firster” then would be someone who came to Middle-earth through the films and often these people decide to read the books for further exploration into Tolkien’s world. Another term used is “purist,” which denotes someone who privileges Tolkien’s written work in the cases when it differs from Jackson’s films. “PJ” is an acronym for “Peter Jackson” and “Professor” is an affectionate nickname for Tolkien. The results of the first analysis led to subsequent rounds: one centred on words that bring out ideas of visualization from the datasets, in particular the difference between descriptive words and active statements, one focused on place and different types of places discussed by the fans, and one that tried to unearth terms related to integration of ekphrastic and cinematic mental image creation. Finally, the last analysis centred on finding out as much about the fans’ interactions with each other and with the textual and cinematic story.

On a further note, time and lack of research support did not allow for thorough numerical analysis of concept and non-concept terms in the larger returns. For example, not every context of “look***” discussed the concept of mental imagery, but “look***” returned 861 instances in the LOTR_Movie dataset alone. I relied on my familiarity with

the data and the Netlytic context screen to obtain a reasonable sense of which terms provided more reliable and consistent comments on mental image formation. As such, the success of particular words and phrases to bring forth comments on visualization will be discussed accordingly. “All” means every instance of a term produced a comment on some aspect of visualization. “Almost all” means that less than five percent did not produce a desired context. “Many” refers to a situation in which there is a substantial number of non-concept references, but not enough to warrant further refinement or deletion of the term from the category. While this aspect is a limitation of the research, it does provide a solid foundation for future study.

This process of creating categories, reviewing their patterns, and analyzing and refining them, was the main avenue of text analysis for this study. Best situated in Glaser’s grounded theory approach, this project highlights the patterns and trends observable in the online fan community. Given the newness of Netlytic in combination with this type of research, this process has a few limitations. However, since the limitations can be used by Gruzd to further develop Netlytic for researchers of various subjects and disciplines, they will be discussed in the conclusion as Future Recommendations. Following this section, the Analysis and Discussion section will describe the results of this study, using quotes and screen captures to illustrate the findings.

Chapter IV. Analysis

IV.A. Introduction

For Tolkien, enchantment was the goal of Fairy stories: the creation of an “other-world” that both the designer and spectator could enter. For cognitive psychologists like Pylyshyn and Kosslyn, enchantment might resonate as media (text or film in this case) that successfully produces mental imagery in the minds of the readers/spectators. This research aimed to find references to such enchantments, with special regard to place, in online message board posts on a popular Tolkien fan site. Numerous approaches might have garnered such references to “enchantment”, but two successful patterns included words connoting visualization and words connoting place and different aspects of places with *The Lord of the Rings*. Finally, much was learned about fandoms and fan communities, in particular how and why fans turn to the Internet, how they construct meaning from interacting with a network, and the feeling of ownership over a chosen story.

IV.B. Books Versus Movies in the Two Datasets

The first analysis discussed is the difference in the datasets based on terms alluding to the books and terms signifying the films. This analysis served as a kind of test both for Netlytic and for the two discussion boards, since the boards have distinct parameters of discussion: the Reading Room (dataset = LOTR_Book) focuses on the written works of Tolkien and the Movie Discussion Board (dataset = LOTR_Movie) focuses on Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* films. The expectation is that the

LOTR_Book dataset will return more terms focusing on the book and Tolkien and the LOTR_Movie dataset more on the films and Jackson. In the creation of this comparison, several terms were tried and subsequently deleted, since Netlytic did not return many instances of those terms in either dataset. For the list of terms used in the analysis, see Figure 21 below.

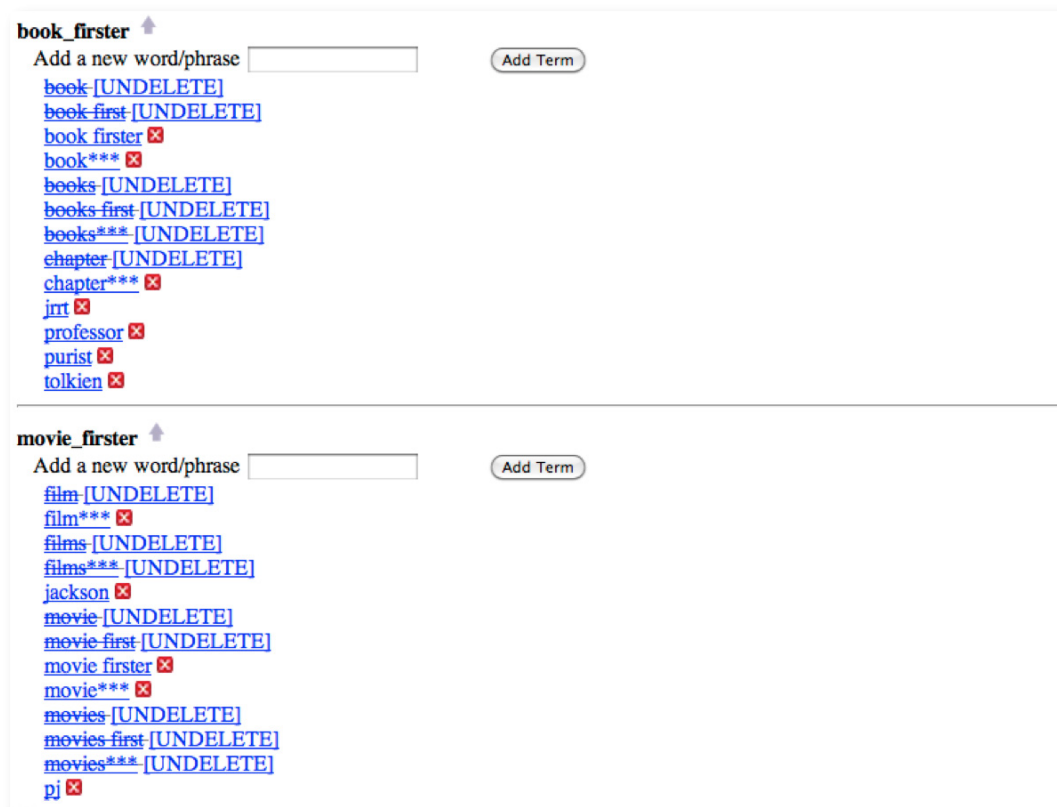


Figure 21. The list of terms used in the book_firster/movie_firster comparison, showing “deleted” terms.

In the figure above, and the following tables, the three asterisks directly following a term indicate variable ending -- a feature that Netlytic uses in a specific way. The goal of Netlytic is to draw out concepts from online content, which tend to be short compositions: tweets, blog entries, message board posts, etc. Very often these compositions have only one or two main concepts per entry; therefore the variable ending

feature of Netlytic is set up to return one entry per concept. For example, if the user includes the term “book***,” Netlytic will return one record for the first instance in each record of “book,” “books,” “bookend,” “bookshelf,” and all other endings of “book” so that the user may have as many possible records associated with all concepts of “book.” If one post contains more than one instance of “book,” it will keep track of all the instances, but will only return the post once. If the user is interested in seeing all the instances in all the posts, Netlytic can view them in the term/concept screen. The downside is that Netlytic visualization takes into account the number of instances of the base term provided in the search, so although “book***” has 619 instances in the LOTR_Book dataset, the visualization shows only the number of instances of the exact match to “book” (521 instances.)

Table 3. LOTR_Book: Book v. Film -- 2785 (3109) instances of 2685 records.

book_firster 2152 (2302)*		movie_firster 633 (807)*	
tolkien 1179	44%	movie*** 356 (463)	13% (17%)
book*** 521 (619)	19% (23%)	film*** 135 (202)	5% (8%)
chapter*** 357 (395)	13% (14%)	jackson 100	4%
jrrt 56	2%	pj 40	1%
professor 34	1%	movie firster 2	<1%
book firster 14	<1%		
purist 5	<1%		

* number of instances vary according to base term /term variants. Numbers in parentheses indicate instances of all term variants.

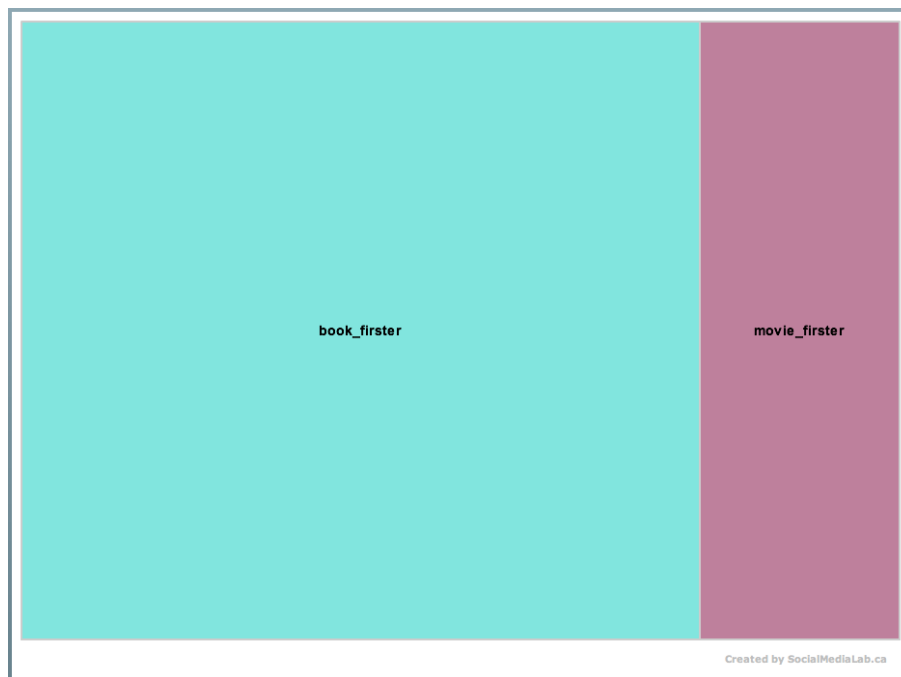


Figure 22. The Netlytic visualization of book_firster/movie_firster categories for the LOTR_Book dataset.

For the most part this feature works well, as most posts are short enough to see all instances of the term in use. To ensure that the visualizations are as accurate as possible, it is recommended to use the base term with the highest number of instances (usually the root of a verb or the singular form of a noun.) One feature to keep in mind is the fact that Netlytic truncates the base term by eliminating the final letter for words longer than four letters. This feature works well for most English words, but words like “elf” (plural “elves”) and “fan” (root of non-concept words like “fantastic” and “fantasy”) necessitated slightly different strategy for employing the Netlytic text analyzer. These altered strategies will be discussed below in the sections on place and the fans.

For this analysis, Netlytic and the two datasets performed as expected -- the Reading Room contained far fewer references to movies, films, and Jackson than did the Movie Discussion Board. Additionally, the Movie Discussion Board seemed to have slightly more references that compared film to book, as well as more references to “movie firster” and “book firster.” As mentioned above, this outcome is not surprising, given that the Reading Room is more committed to discussion of the written works of Tolkien, with posts that read like “I hate to bring in the movies, but...” when they do reference the films. An interesting trend is that while both fora privilege Tolkien and the book, there seems to be less comparative emphasis on either creator (be it Tolkien or Jackson) in the Movie Discussion Board. It was expected that the Reading Room would not mention Jackson as often (4.5% -- 140/3109 total instances,) but it was expected that the Movie Discussion Board would have perhaps mentioned Jackson a bit more often than the data suggests (10% -- 495/4933 total instances.) Tolkien, on the other hand, garnered 41% in the LOTR_Book dataset (1268/3109 instances) and 16% in the LOTR_Movie dataset (793/4933 instances.) The identification of this potential trend combined with the fact that Netlytic and the message boards performed as expected is a useful baseline for further comparisons.

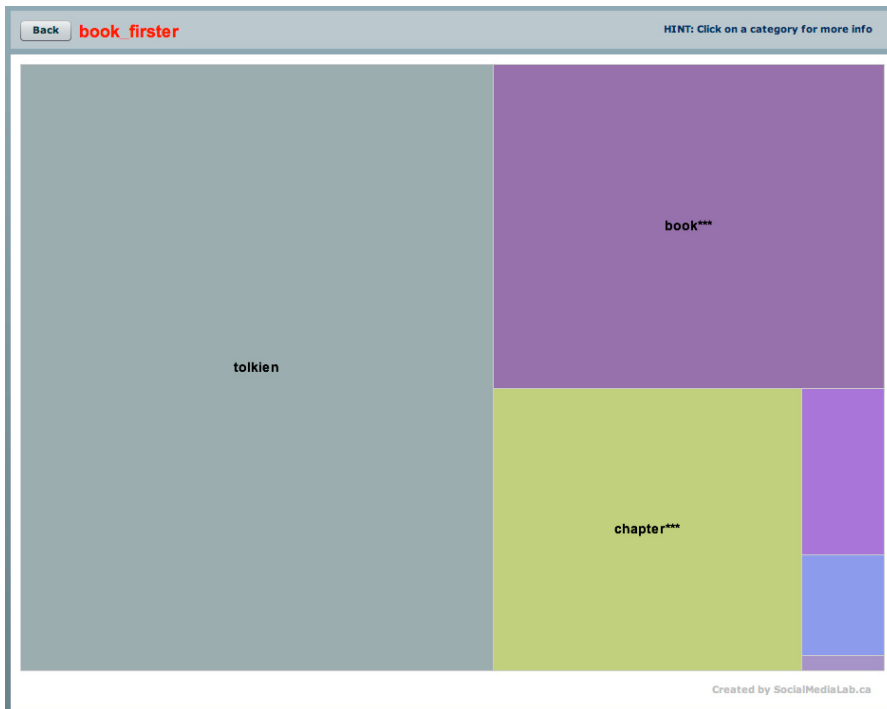


Figure 23. The Netlytic visualized breakdown of terms within the book_firster category (LOTR_Book.)

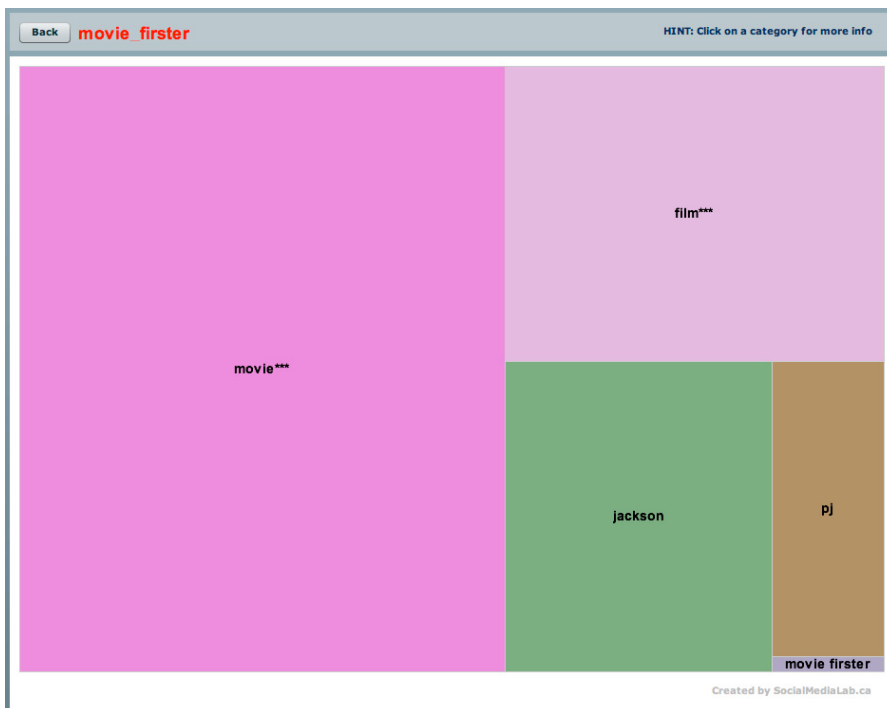


Figure 24. The Netlytic visualized breakdown of terms within the movie-firster category (LOTR_Book.)

Table 4. LOTR_Movie Book v. Film -- 3502 (4933) instances of 3098 records.

book_firster 1628 (1903)		movie_firster 1874 (3030)	
tolkien 753	24%	movie*** 793 (1062)	26% (34%)
book*** 746 (1006)	24% (32%)	film*** 562 (909)	18% (29%)
chapter*** 56 (71)	2% (2%)	jackson 273	9%
professor 28	1%	pj 222	7%
purist 19	<1%	movie firster 24	1%
book firster 14	<1%		
jrrt 12	<1%		

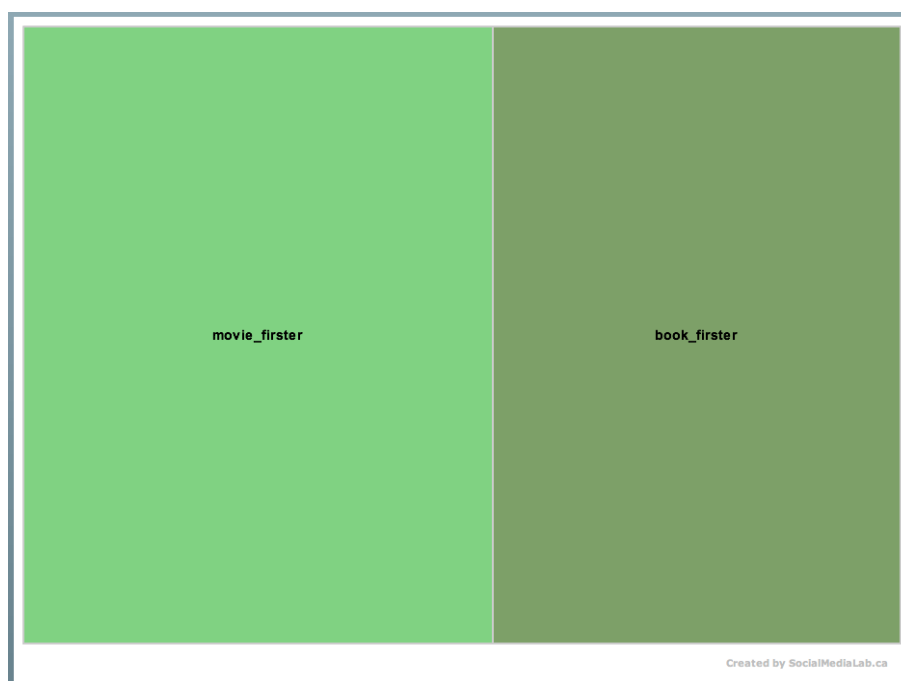


Figure 25. The visualization of the categories book_firster/movie_firster in the LOTR_Movie dataset.

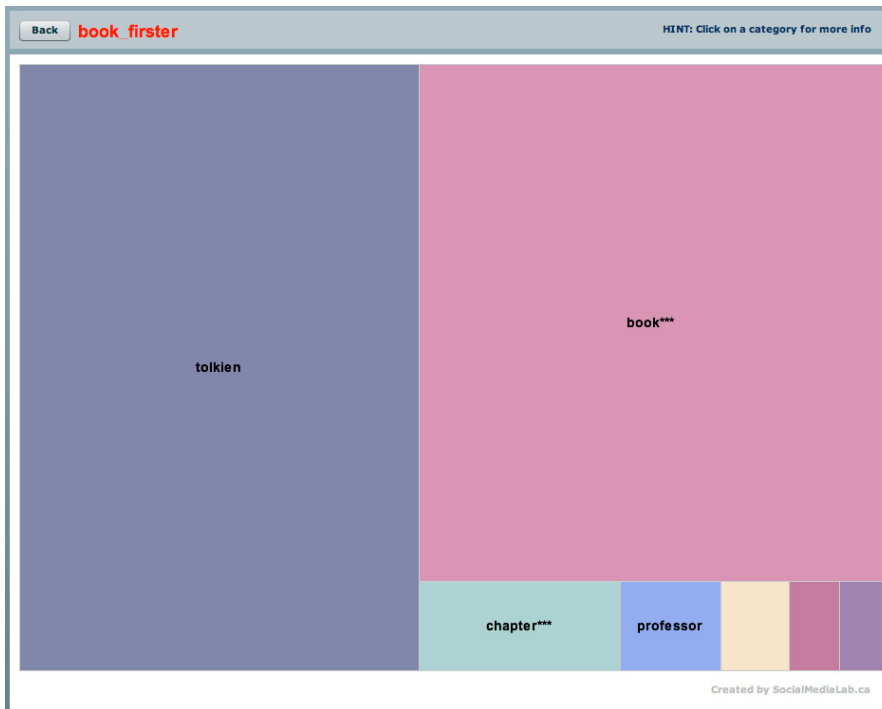


Figure 26. The Netlytic visualized breakdown of terms within the book_firster category (LOTR_Movie.)

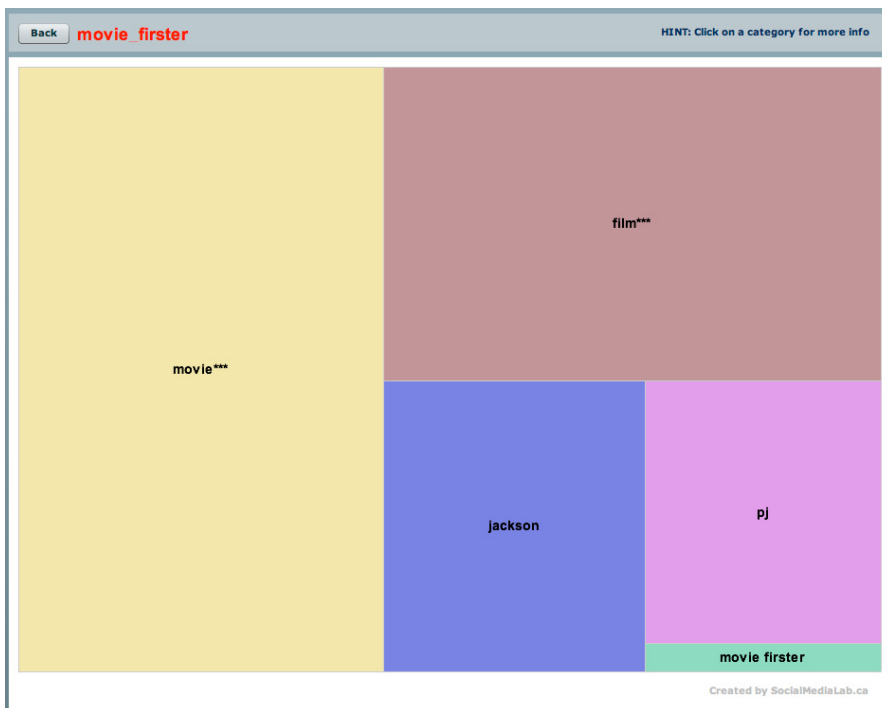


Figure 27. The Netlytic visualized breakdown of terms within the movie_firster category (LOTR_Movie.)

IV.C. Visualization Versus To Visualize

One way to discover poster comments regarding visualization is to look at the types of words people use to talk or write about mental images. To determine what words TheOneRing.net posters used, a category comprised of words describing this function was created and analyzed using Netlytic. Words from the tag clouds, from the literature review, from my own list, and from examination of the datasets were used to create the initial category “Visualization.” Review of the posts returned from the Netlytic category analysis, however, uncovered many instances where the term was used, but not often in the context of mental image formation. This finding suggested that further refinement of the category was necessary in order to get a better sense of the vocabulary used.

Examination of the contexts and the posts in this category helped narrow the definition of visualization to mental image formation as a *process*. To unearth more contextually relevant comments, another category was formed -- “Visualize” -- with a concentration on more active statements. In fact, the Netlytic analysis of this new category did reveal more visualization-relevant comments within posts. However, not every active statement was useful; it appears “I” statements were more helpful in returning statements relating to visualization. As well, not every term in the “Visualization” category was unavailing; phrases like “in my head,” or “in my mind” also returned comments from posters relating to visualization. See Figure 28 below for the complete lists of terms in both categories.

One note when reviewing the tables and visualizations in the corresponding Appendix (Appendix C,) is the difference between the exact term match and actual number of instances for the terms ending in *** (e.g., “look***,” “work***,” etc.) The

visualization produced by Netlytic is based on the exact match of the terms, which is often less than all the variants of that term. For the most part, the “Visualize” category is relatively unaffected, but because of the various endings for nouns, “Visualization” has more non-related variant terms (e.g. “appear***” also returns “appeal”) that might have been overlooked if I had not clicked on the term for more information. As mentioned in the previous section, Netlytic looks for concepts, therefore some words like imagine*** produce word variations that still call forth the same concept, but are nouns and/or verbs (“imagine,” “imagined,” “imagination.”) The best way to avoid unwanted variants is to be very specific in term selection: trying many possible variations, including active statements that bring forth the desired concept. This practice often produces the base term with the largest number of exact matches, which helps produce more accurate visualizations. Understanding how Netlytic returns concepts means that familiarization with the data and evaluation of term variations can produce very accurate representations of concepts referred to in the data.



Figure 28. The lists of terms for the final “Visualization” and “Visualize” categories. The screen captures shows words that were tried, but ultimately not used.

To refine the “Visualization” category, several of the most common, most varied in meaning, and most problematic terms were refined or deleted and the visualization tried again. Through trial and error, the above sets of terms for each category were created. As expected, specific visualization-focused terms drew out comments centred on mental imagery, e.g., “in my head,” “in my mind,” “envision***,” though overall not many instances of these terms were found. Other terms were a bit more surprising. In the Reading Room forum, “description” and “moment” were more reliable visualization terms than in the Movie Discussion Board. As one might anticipate, the most common

non-visualization related comments in the Reading Room were in reference to poster interpretations of the text. Additionally, the posters in the Reading Room used more terms more frequently, while on the Movie Discussion Board, posters tended to stick to the words “look,” “work,” and “moment” more often. In the LOTR_Movie dataset, terms that more frequently called forth the process of mental image formation were centred on the process; both “work***” and “struggle***” were key terms that referred to visualization (interestingly, “work***” was much less consistent in the LOTR_Book dataset, as it also referred to written works.) An example of “work” in the context of a posted comment, and as it relates to visualization, can be seen below in Figure 29 and in Appendix C. This quote will appear again in the discussion below on the integration of ekphrastic and film-based mental images.

# instances found: 565			
2011-01-20	I try to make the two	work	together for something
2011-01-20	I know it's a lot of	work	to write up these
2011-01-20	I understand how it	works	on me - but on others?
2011-01-20	came from; but it cannot	work	within The Lord of the
2011-01-20	Alan Lee and John Howe's	work	to accept it as the way
2011-01-20	interior design - the	work	done by designers and
2011-01-20	background noise when I	work	from home or clean but
2011-01-20	lighting, music, etc. --	work	together to make it a
2011-01-20	in the book, yet it	works	there because it gives
2011-01-20	grow here again. What	works	for me here is not only
2011-01-20	who created these great	works	. I was prepared for the
2011-01-20	without the incredible	work	of Andy Serkis as
2011-01-21	me at least, they both	work	. Like others, I also
2011-01-22	too. It certainly	works	for me! The screencap
2011-01-22	about how all of this	works	and hope that you would
2011-01-22	because well.. it	works	! It's an art form that

about things! Quote! I have often complained that Saruman's complexity was diluted in the movies, and perhaps I was wrong to project my ideas to this scene. Was I? I don't think so. For two reasons. One, I appreciate and love the movies in many ways. But the book is, imo, superior and when I have to make a choice on which form of art to either conjure up or allow to take precedence, it's almost always the book. It's more satisfying for me. I try to make the two **work** together for something greater than the parts (since the audio visual component of the movies helps me 'get' the story better) rather than allowing the two spar for a position of 'better' when they don't agree with each other by discarding what doesn't **work** (usually from the movie) and substituting (usually from the book) what does. Two, although I appreciate a detached, academic examination of Tolkien's **work**, I just as much (well.. probably more) appreciate

Close

Figure 29. An example of “work” as reference to visualization and evaluation. (Magpie, January 2, 2011).

This idea of mental image formation as “work” is repeated in the category “Visualize,” since active statements seem to bring about more consistent comments regarding visualization, even to the extent that “makes me” and “made me” contribute to the feeling that some amount of work or transformation took place. That “work” overall appeared more consistently in the LOTR_Movie dataset suggests an evaluative quality (e.g., “this scene worked for me...”) and perhaps an indicator of integration between ekphrastic and film-based visualizations. As mentioned above, “work” in the context of the Reading Room often referred to “written work(s).” Another difference between the Reading Room and the Movie Discussion Board was the overall use of action statements to describe visualizations. More Movie Discussion Board posters than Reading Room posters used the more active “visualize” terms, with the exception of the word “look,” likely due to the visual medium of the films (e.g., “Rivendell looked like...,” “Aragorn looks like a Ranger,” etc.) Overall, it seemed the Reading Room posters used more varied words more frequently, while like in the Book v. Film discussion above, the Movie Discussion Board used fewer words more frequently. That the Reading Room tends to be “more scholarly” may account for this trend. In general, however, it is interesting to note that the overall breakdown of categories (i.e. “Visualization v. Visualize”) is very similar between the two datasets, which may suggest that people in general speak in the same ways about the concept of visualization.

Several of the Reading Room and Movie Discussion Board poster comments beautifully illustrate the concept of visualization (the term and dataset that prompted the quote precede the quote in parentheses:)

("think" -- LOTR_Book)

I have to confess... I did **think** of Lydney Park myself, but I'd forgotten the name of it, and didn't have time to look anything up before I posted! So I hoped someone would come along and add some information about that.... The Lydney Park experience surely must have been added to the "soup" from which Tolkien's fiction was brewed (to mix Shippey's and Tolkien's own metaphors!) ... (FarFromHome, February 25, 2008)

That quote about the stones keeps making me **think** about a place-name down the slope from the Real World inspiration for the mountains of Moria. Not Hollin, but Hostenstein---"fetch stone". Of course, I also **think** about another place nearby called Wargistal---which looks like a variant spelling of the word for "strangler" + "valley"...though no reports of tentacled monsters appeared after the flooding in the Grindelwald,Switzerland area..... (Eowyn of Penns Woods, February 25, 2008)

(I ** picture*** -- LOTR_Movie)

What movie version of something from the books did you like best, or think was particularly well done? For me it's all of middle-earth. That might be cheating, but I think they couldn't have picked better locations to film. Whenever I think of middle-earth **I always picture** it as in the movies. I also think they did really well with the battles, considering how Tolkien didn't really go in-depth with the detail on them. (Cegwyn, 28 January, 2009)

The comments shown here are representative of what one might find throughout the Reading Room and Movie Discussion Board discussion threads and serve to illustrate how a single word or phrase might unearth a fully formed reflection on a visualization of

a place, either in the context of real-world places or the films. More poster comments on all aspects of mental image formation can be seen in Appendices E and F. As evident in these comments, one observation might entail several facets of mental image formation; the quote from Cegwyn illustrates thinking/picturing cognitive interaction, evaluation of own imagery and the films, as well as association with real-world locations.

The outcome of this analysis suggests that certain active statements will more reliably bring forth comments on visualization from online posts. Terms encompassing the verbs “to think,” “to see,” and “to imagine” are particularly useful, as well as words or phrases that speak directly to mental image formation as work or a process. The quotes above from Eowyn of Penns Woods and FarFromHome illustrate that “I ** think” would have also brought forth their observations, and probably with less distraction from unrelated instances (“think” returned far more instances than “I ** think”.) Additionally, it may be that the posters in the Movie Discussion Board, when using such “working words,” are more apt to be comparing the film to other visualizations, either from the book, from illustrations, or from other sources. It is clear that comments on visualizations can be gleaned from non-active, descriptive words and phrases, like “image,” “imagination,” etc., but further refining of the terms in the “Visualization” category are needed to draw more substantive conclusions.

IV.D. Place in *The Lord of the Rings*

The broad category of “place” can be discussed in many different ways, but for this thesis it is useful to pare it down to a few themes: generic place terminology and how

it is used, specific places mentioned in the data, and relating places to essential qualities or meanings. “Generic” place terms are words like “place,” “landscape,” or “geography;” words that, in the datasets, might point to a poster commenting on a spatially oriented visualization. Additionally, Tolkien described and named numerous specific places throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, and several were mentioned by name in the films and in the scene list available in the DVD liner notes. What place names the Reading Room posters used more frequently will likely be quite different than the place names used by the posters in the Movie Discussion Board. What the differences are gives insight into how readers/spectators interact with the text and film with regard to place. Finally, Tolkien’s love of nature and the way he wrote active landscapes into *The Lord of the Rings*, may have implications for extracting the essential quality necessary for discussion of Bakhtin’s chronotope in the following section.

IV.D.1. General place terminology

Table 5. Generic terms for concept of “place.”

LOTR_Book (2685)		term	LOTR_Movie (3098)	
475 (485)	18% (18%)	world (worlds, worldly)	373 (381)	12% (12%)
381 (465)	14% (17%)	place*** (places)	290 (372)	9% (12%)
180 (237)	7% (9%)	scene*** (scenes)	526 (688)	17% (22%)
156	6%	nature	76	2%
81	3%	race	23	<1%
63 (98)	2% (4%)	culture*** (cultures, cultural)	38 (48)	1% (2%)
56 (67)	2% (2%)	landscape (landscapes)	41 (55)	1% (2%)
50	2%	geography	17	<1%

LOTR_Book (2685)		term	LOTR_Movie (3098)	
27	1%	atmosphere	22	<1%
25 (29)	<1% (1%)	environment (environments)	51 (65)	2% (2%)
1494 (1695)	.56 (.63)	<i>total instances/records</i>	1457 (1747)	.47 (.56)

Referring to the numbers in the table above and to the context of the terms as used by the posters, “world” appears to be a fairly good indicator for descriptions of large areas (i.e., Middle-earth as a whole, or other large cultural areas.) In context, “world” also works for Middle-earth comparisons with “real world” places, particularly in the Reading Room. “Scene” is used to describe settings in both book and film, but it was expected to occur more frequently in the Movie Discussion Board, as “scene” is a common cinematic term (compare Figures 30 and 31 below.) In Tolkien, landscapes work with the people who inhabit that landscape to reinforce the meaning that place is meant to convey. Therefore, terms like “race,” “culture,” and “atmosphere” unearth comments contributing to the overall meaning, feeling, or visualization of a particular place. “Race” is a very consistent indicator of when a poster in the Reading Room is referring to the different races (Elf, Hobbit, Dwarf, Men, Orc, etc.) as is “culture***.” Posters in both the Reading Room and the Movie Discussion Board often ask questions that are meant to promote discussion of a particular topic or scene. “Atmosphere” and “environment” were often used in these types of questions, and in doing so prompted people to write about places from the perspective of mental imagery. “Landscape” and “geography” were very focused terms; almost all context surrounding these terms was associated with discussion or description of a place or places. The following quote from

Elven typifies the kind of context the term “place” might uncover. Note that the quote contains concepts of place, film-inspired visualization and evaluation, and fan interaction:

I loved the look of the Grey Havens, it seemed to be the kind of **place** that filled your mind with beautiful visions and colour, and very appropriate as the last thing you see for memories sake, as you leave the shores of Middle-Earth. Thanks Ataahua...(Elven, March 11, 2011)

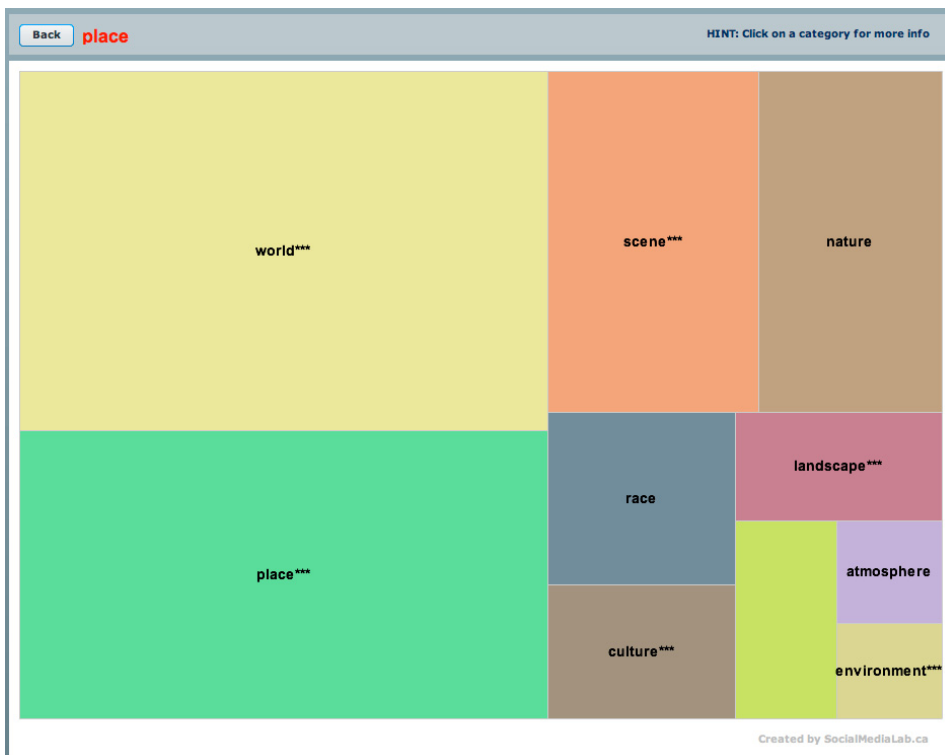


Figure 30. Breakdown of generic terms for “place” in LOTR_Book.

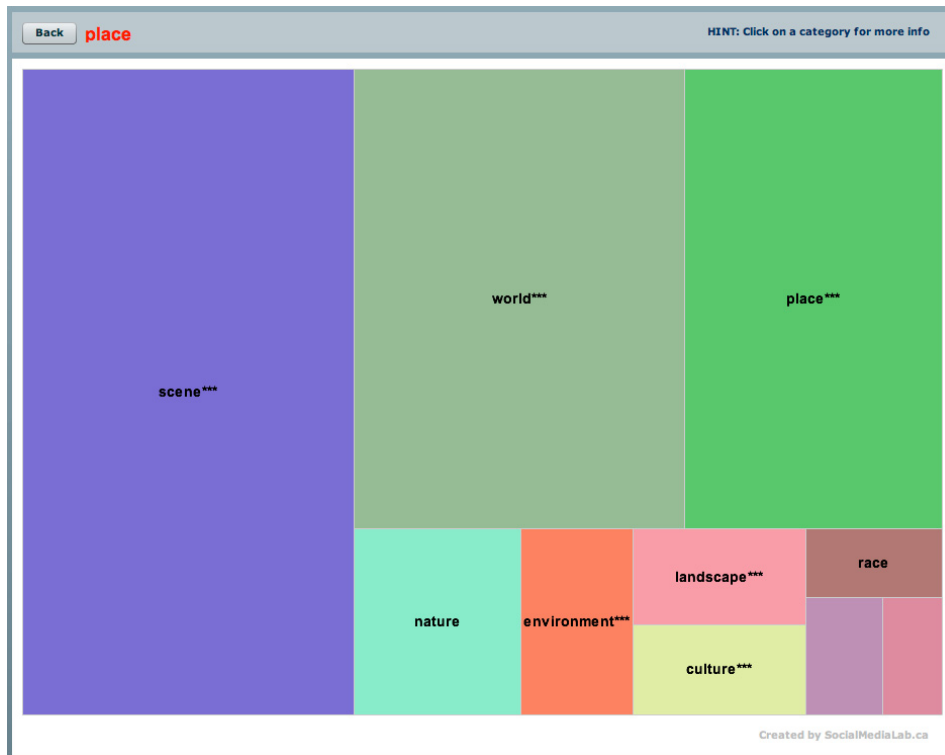


Figure 31. Breakdown of generic terms for “place” in LOTR_Movie.

IV.D.2. Specific Places in *The Lord of the Rings*

Tolkien created a fully realized other-world, replete with numerous places: cultural areas, town or city names, and fortresses. Therefore to make fair comparisons of specific places, only names that occurred both in the books and in the films -- either directly mentioned in the extended editions or used in the scene list including in the extended edition DVD liner notes -- were used in the analysis. As opposed to the analyses above, Netlytic was used to compare categories of information, with each category containing a list of terms corresponding to the place indicated. The complete list of terms for each category, along with the corresponding visualizations, can be found in Appendix D. Several interesting trends were observed through this analysis: the

Reading Room posters referred to more places overall (6152 v. 4383 instances,) the Reading Room also referred to more “real-world” places in context, and the Movie Discussion Board referred to more specific place names within categories (Gondor and Rohan in particular.) One point worth noting: while some posters recognize the ability of one character to represent a place, as in quote below, most described the character as the person, instead of as the place or culture they inhabit.

...Fangorn, as both a character and a place. Too, we've seen the idea of the larger-than-life character who really embodies the whole sense of a place before, and in connection with forests, no less – Tom Bombadil in the Old Forest, and Galadriel in Lothlórien. Surely, these are not coincidences – ... (visualweasel, April 28, 2008)

Sometimes, as visualweasel states, a place is “...both a character and a place” and one example is “Sauron,” a term included in the list of terms for Mordor. Since Sauron is meant to represent disembodied evil, it was fitting to allow that character to stand for the landscape and meaning it inhabits. Other characters, including Gimli who Philippa Boyens mentions earlier as standing in for the dwarves, were described in the post as the character, not as the place the character represents or inhabits. Therefore, the lists of terms included for each place category include primarily specific place names, regional/cultural names, and ethnic group/race terms. In the case of ethnic group/race terms, the plural was preferred as these tended to be the used more frequently by posters and “Haradrim” and Easterlings” were left out as the places these people inhabit are not described in as much detail in the book and the films. Additionally, the variant feature in Netlytic allowed for both singular and plural instances to be recorded, except for the

following words “elf” and “elves,” “orc” and “orcs,” and “ent” and “ents.” Netlytic will not truncate words less than four letters long, so the plural variants will not bring out the singular forms. For “orc” and “orcs,” and “ent” and “ents,” this peculiarity did not pose a problem, since the singular form was rarely used. For “elf” and “elves,” however, the singular form was used frequently; therefore that form was added to the list with the understanding that it may affect those results.

Table 6. Specific places in *The Lord of the Rings*, by category. Each category contains a list of terms that refer to the category (see Appendix D.)

LOTR_Book (2685 records)		place (category)	LOTR_Movie (3098 records)	
1132 (1189)	42% (44%)	elves	662 (803)	21% (26%)
1128 (1313)	42% (49%)	mordor	616 (706)	20% (23%)
777 (1086)	29% (40%)	hobbits	757 (1034)	24% (33%)
672 (679)	25% (25%)	gondor	585 (605)	19% (20%)
591	22%	rohan	371	12%
312 (312)	12% (12%)	other good	171 (171)	6% (6%)
276 (443)	10% (16%)	dwarves	200 (371)	6% (12%)
262 (267)	10% (10%)	isengard	151 (162)	5% (5%)
253 (272)	9% (10%)	other evil	148 (160)	5% (5%)
5402 (6152)	2.0 (2.3)	<i>total instances/records</i>	3660 (4383)	1.2 (1.4)

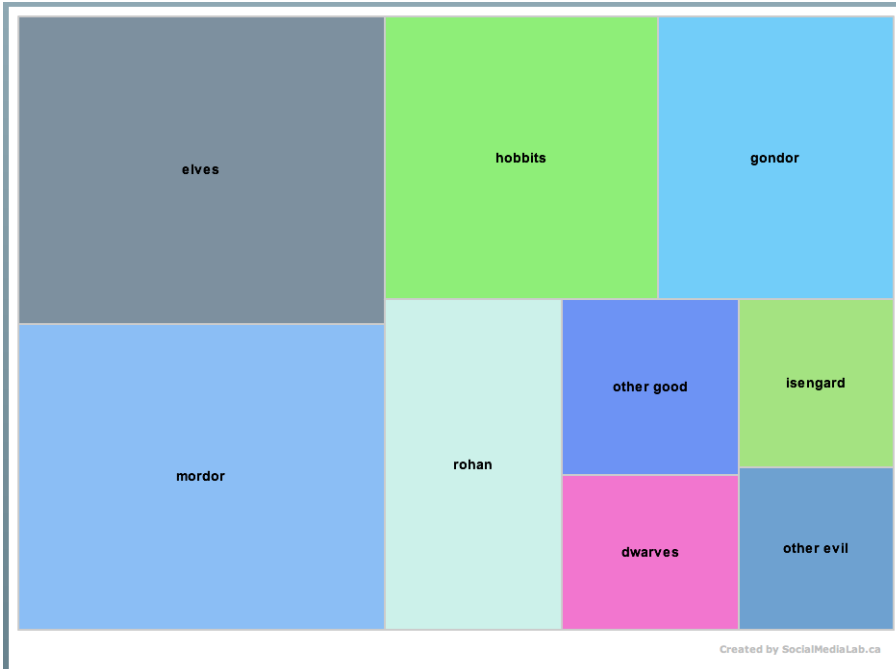


Figure 32. Category breakdown for specific places (LOTR_Book 5402 (6152) instances.)

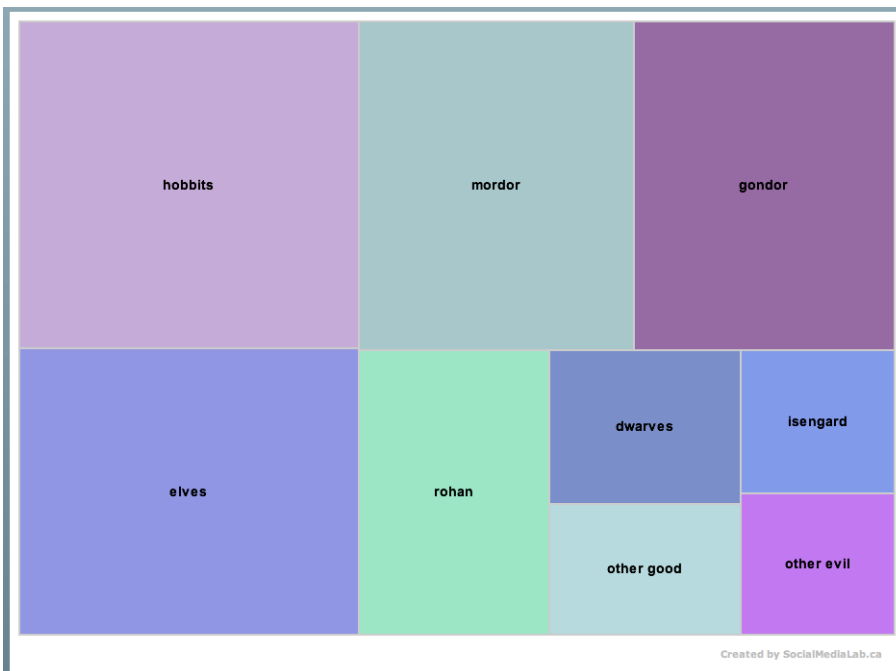


Figure 33. Category breakdown for specific places (LOTR_Movie 3788 (4511) instances.)

One of the biggest differences between the Reading Room and the Movie Discussion Board was the topmost category in both datasets: the categories “elves” and “hobbits.” Several reasons may account for this difference. That “elves” topped the Reading Room list is not surprising; *The Lord of the Rings* does not focus on elvish culture and places, but many of Tolkien’s other books do (*The Silmarillion* for one.) Elves may also be a widely discussed topic for the Reading Room because that culture, while described in great detail by Tolkien, is somewhat ambiguous. This ambiguity came through in the posts, as some posters felt the films portrayed them perfectly, while others lamented that they were portrayed more like *Star Trek’s* Vulcans:

Here's what I don't understand: In reading LOTR and The Silmarillion, we see elves being happy, sad, angry, wrathful, treacherous, prideful, noble, faithful, and the list goes on and on. So, why is it so difficult to imagine that elves can also be merry and joyful? I, for one, would gladly give the gold-crowns right off of my teeth to hear Lady Galadriel laugh. Somewhere along the line, everyone started envisioning elves to be just like Vulcans from Star Trek. Yes, elves are very old and very wise, but I don't see them as only exhibiting cold, clear, logic without emotions like Vulcans. ... (Kdgard, November 10, 2007)

In contrast, the Movie Discussion Board focused the most on the hobbits, which is understandable, given that *The Lord of the Rings*, in both the book and the films, were created from the perspective of that culture. The main characters of all three films are Hobbits and, while cinema offers sweeping panoramas of landscapes, the focus is most often on the characters. In addition, the Shire is arguably the most broadly filmed of all the landscapes. Viewers might have a stronger impression of hobbit places, not only because they have seen more of the Shire, but they have been given a sense of what daily

life is like there. Non-hobbit places in the films are either shown briefly, or do not offer much insight into what daily life might be like.



Figure 34. Term use breakdown for “Gondor” and “Rohan” (LOTR_Book.)

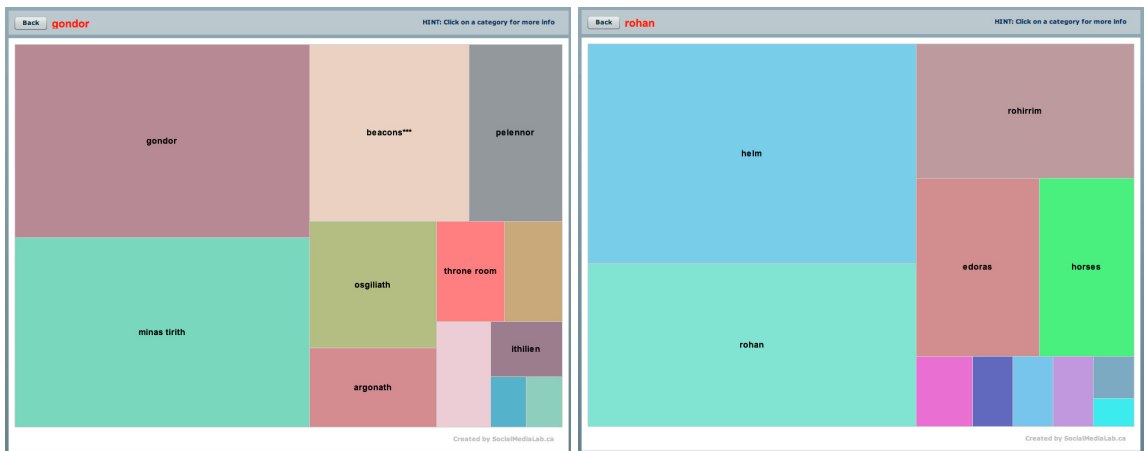


Figure 35. Term use breakdown for “Gondor” and “Rohan” (LOTR_Movie.)

Another striking difference between the Reading Room and the Movie Discussion Board is the treatment of both Gondor and Rohan. In the Reading Room, the terms “Gondor” and “Rohan” were used more often than individual place names, as opposed to the Movie Discussion Board, where the situation was almost reversed. Again, there may

be many explanations for this situation. One possibility is that while the books describe Gondor and Rohan as places and as cultures more vividly, the films show landscape scenes of both only for a few seconds, concentrating further on specific places (cities or structures) or on specific characters. Another possibility is that both Gondor and Rohan are “human,” with strong analogies to ancient human cultures. In the Reading Room particularly, connections tend to be made between Tolkien’s world and the real world, whereas in the Movie Discussion Board, connections tend to be made between film and book. This overall trend, then, may account for the difference. A final possibility is one that becomes stronger upon recognition of the places on which the Movie Discussion Board focused: Minas Tirith, the beacons, Pelennor (fields,) and Osgiliath for Gondor; and Helm(‘s Deep,) Edoras, and Meduseld for Rohan. All of these places were the settings of striking, repeated, and protracted scenes in the films. Minas Tirith and the Pelennor Fields were the site of the final battle in *The Return of the King*, while Helm’s Deep was the site of the major battle in *The Two Towers*. Both Minas Tirith and Edoras/Meduseld interiors and exteriors were shot extensively and Osgiliath was the scene of two battles involving the character Faramir. Finally, even K. Thompson recognized the uniqueness of the “beacons scene,” as she is a registered user on TORn (see below, Figure 36:)

# instances found: 79			
2011-01-22	fields. I also like the	beacons	a lot - but is this
2011-01-22	is the lighting of the	beacons	... absolutely amazing
2011-01-22	of the lighting of the	beacons	. . . but what a moment
2011-01-22	listing all of the	beacons	between Greece and Troy
2011-02-16	# The Lighting of the	Beacons	# "I can't carry it for
2011-02-16	out the lighting of the	beacons	- the scenery, the
2011-02-16	The lighting of the	beacons	- awesome!!! The
2011-02-16	visual (well, maybe the	beacons) or the lines spoken,
2011-05-16	& children, and lit the	beacons	before Gandalf & Pippin
2011-05-16	about the	beacons	sequence Greetings,
2011-05-16	We then see the	beacons	progress, it is night
2011-05-16	time to light enough	beacons	to cover that distance.
2011-05-16	describing the	beacons	from Troy to Athens
2011-05-16	me... I love that the	beacons	start with Pippin and
2011-05-16	of the lighting of the	beacons	- we see a view from
2011-05-16	of the lighting of the	beacons	Looking at the films.

FROM: **Kristin Thompson**
DATE: **2011-05-16**

Question about the **beacons** sequence
Greetings, all! I know the **beacons** sequence in ROTK is a favorite for many of us. I'm writing an essay about it at the moment and so have been pondering it. It's difficult to pin down the appeal of that scene. Nothing really happens in it in terms of the plot. A cut from Gandalf looking out at the second beacon lighting to the shot of Aragorn seeing the last beacon would have made the same narrative point: the **beacons** have carried the news from Gondor to Rohan. But it's a stirring sequence nonetheless, between the mountains and the music and so on, and a lot of people have commented on it. In the DVD commentary, PJ says it's his favorite sequence. But let me ask a specific question. I'm sure you all remember that in the shot where the last beacon flares up

Close

Figure 36. Researcher K. Thompson commented on the “beacons” sequence.

Overall, it appears that not only do posters in the Reading Room use a wider vocabulary to describe generic places, they also reference a wider variety of specific places more frequently. The posters in the Movie Discussion Board tend to use fewer generic place words to a greater degree and refer to very specific places that were showcased in the films. Of particular interest is the treatment of Gondor and Rohan, two human cultures portrayed more as settings in the films than as cultures. The spectator never sees “daily life” in either of these places, because in the films they are either under siege or constantly under threat of attack. Rohan or Gondor do not appear to be “lived in” environments. Conversely, Elvish culture may be more easily envisioned through Rivendell and Lothlorien because, although the spectator does not see elvish daily life per se, it is more easily imagined due to the overall sense of safety and harmony in those places. Hobbits are the easiest culture for movie viewers to discuss, because daily life of the Hobbit is shown in depth and the Shire does not come under threat of attack (as it

does in the book.) Clearly discussion of places and cultures in *The Lord of the Rings* varies, however subtly, depending upon whether someone is focusing on textual Middle-earth or on cinematic Middle-earth.

IV.D.3. Finding the essential quality in places

“Essential quality” is an elusive notion, containing many varied and nuanced meanings, but it is useful in understanding the meanings of characters, places, objects, or events in a narrative. One way to understand how place conveys essential quality or meaning in *The Lord of the Rings* is to understand how Tolkien used place in this work. While many regard some of his places as “real” (the Shire, Gondor) and some as “imaginary” (Lothlorien,) many believe Tolkien infused all of his places with some commentary on the real world. According to Dickerson and Evans (2006) Tolkien employed a very complex and integrated environmentalism through his use of place. Elves are “aesthetic preservationists” and horticulturalists, Hobbits are agrarians/sustainable agriculturalists, and the Ents are “feraculturalists” -- those who favour wild Nature. These three cultures/places inhabit an older time that Humans (in *The Lord of the Rings*, “Men”) must learn from in order to avoid the destruction of Nature illustrated in the depiction of Mordor. Compare the following description of Caras Galadhon...:

There was a wide treeless space before them, running in a great circle and bending away on either hand. Beyond it was a deep fosse lost in soft shadow, but the grass upon its brink was green, as if it glowed still in memory of the sun that had gone. Upon the further side there rose to a great height a green wall encircling a green hill thronged with mallorn-trees taller than any they had yet seen in all the land. Their height could not be

guessed, but they stood up in the twilight like living towers. In their many-tiered branches and amid their ever-moving leaves countless lights were gleaming, green and gold and silver. (A description of Caras Galadhon, in *Lothlorien*, 1991, p. 373)

...to that of Mordor:

Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light. (A description of the desolation before Mordor, 1991, p. 657)

With regard to the natural world, Tolkien hoped readers would attribute various meanings to the landscapes in *The Lord of the Rings*. Since meaning is often in the mind of the reader, using Netlytic to bring out such specifically worded ideas as “aesthetic preservationist” or “sustainable agriculturalist” was futile. Instead, words synonymous with “essence” or “nature” (as opposed to “Nature”) were more forthcoming.

Once again, the Reading Room uses more words more frequently, while the Movie Discussion Board prefers to stick to “mean” and its variants (“means,” “meant,” and “meaning.”) While all the terms listed in Table 7 drew out the concept of “essential quality,” the words “spirit,” all variants of “represent***,” “essence,” “metaphor,” all variants of “symbol***,” and “core” were the most reliable. To truly see how TORn posters made connections between landscapes in *The Lord of the Rings* and the meanings of those landscapes, a Boolean function combining the places listed above and the terms below would be ideal. Since that function is not available at this time, a selection of comments noted throughout the data collection, evaluation, and analysis will suffice.

These comments and a discussion regarding chronotopes and the integration of ekphrastic and cinematic mental images follows in the next section.

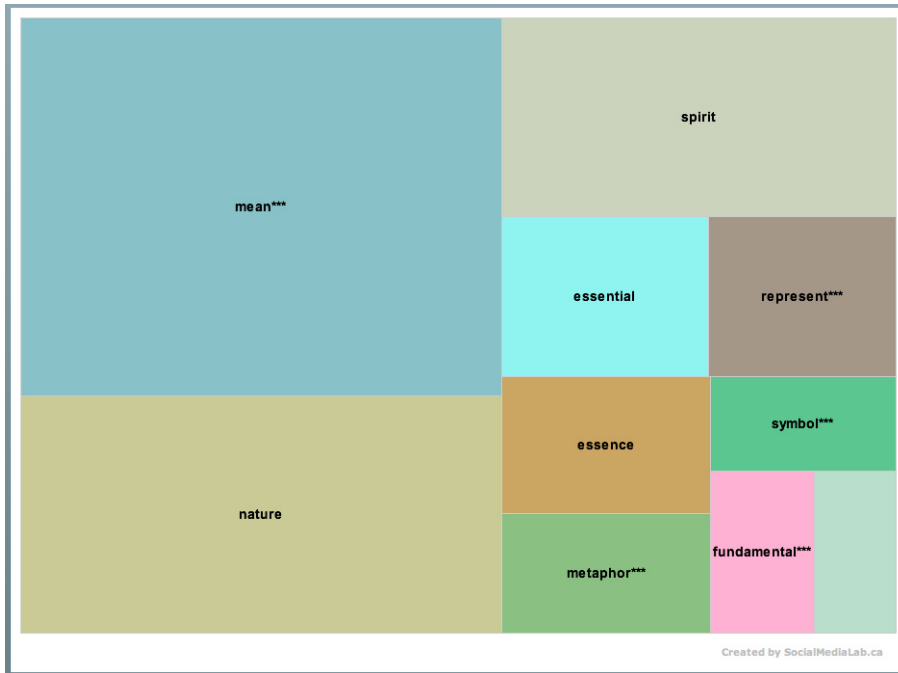


Figure 37. The breakdown of “essential quality” terms for LOTR_Book.

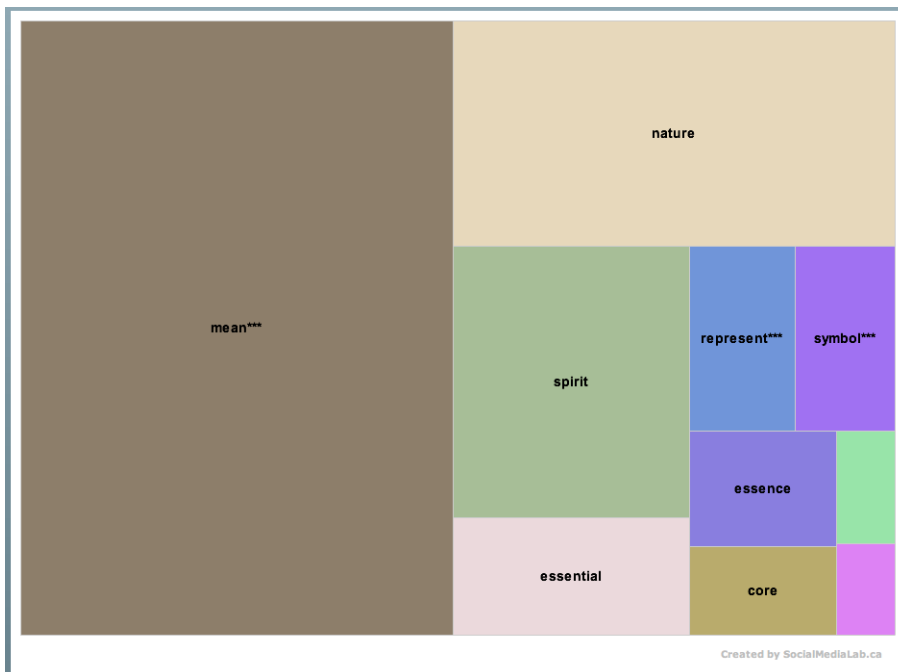


Figure 38. The breakdown of “essential quality” terms for LOTR_Movie.

Table 7. Term use denoting “essential quality.”

LOTR_Book (2685)		term	LOTR_Movie (3098)	
249 (566)	9% (21%)	mean*** (some non-context)	203 (385)	7% (12%)
156	6%	nature	76	2%
107	4%	spirit	49	2%
45	2%	essential (some non-context)	21	<1%
41 (120)	2% (4%)	represent***	15 (78)	<1% (3%)
39	1%	essence	13	<1%
34 (58)	1% (2%)	metaphor***	4 (12)	<1% (<1%)
24 (85)	<1% (3%)	symbol***	14 (73)	<1% (3%)
23 (34)	<1%	fundamental*** (some non-context)	5 (8)	<1% (<1%)
18	<1%	core	10	<1%
736 (1269)	.27 (.47)	total instances/records	410 (725)	.13 (.23)

IV.E. Integration of Ekphrastic and Cinematic Mental Images

IV.E.1. Recognition of chronotopic nature of film adaptation

Bakhtin’s notion of chronotope is predicated on the foundation that certain characters, places, objects, and events in a narrative that have particular meaning within a story vary in space and time. While this concept is a difficult one to pin down, even with a conceptual text analysis tool such as Netlytic, poster comments referring to such a concept have been discovered throughout the course of this research. The idea of chronotope is important, because it is one way of understanding how people might integrate ekphrastic and film-based mental images. For example, readers/spectators may equate the Shire with the essential quality of “home:” one from reading the text, one from viewing images of warm fireplaces and good, hearty food. If readers/spectators blend

those two sets of images through the thread of “home,” it may point to a way of understanding how people create mental images from different media (or, why they may be unable to do so.) This section deviates somewhat from the previous analyses, as it will focus on poster comments, rather than on numbers drawn from the Netlytic text analysis. It should be noted, however, that these posts would have not been discovered so easily without Netlytic’s context screen. The following analysis is divided into three parts: readers’/spectators’ recognition of essential nature of places, readers’/spectators’ understanding of the nature of film adaptation, and readers’/spectators’ integration of ekphrastic and film-based imagery.

IV.E.2. “Essence” in place

Drawing from the previous section, posters on the TORn message board did use vocabulary that suggests understanding of “essence” or meaning attributed to places. Given the more academic nature of the Reading Room, the fact that words denoting meaning were used more frequently than on the Movie Discussion Board is not surprising -- understanding the meaning behind Tolkien’s words is part of the focus of that forum. What is perhaps more interesting is the desire of posters on the Movie Discussion Board to find meaning in the visual images they were shown on screen. As mentioned in the literature review, critical evaluation of imagery is not as well understood as critical evaluation of textual material. Keeping this text-based, image-based dichotomy in mind, it is likely that posters on the Movie Discussion Board used different words to describe the relationship between the images on the screen and the meanings they represent.

In the Reading Room, the poster Darkstone echoes, in humourous fashion, Dickerson and Evans' portrayal of the nature of Fangorn and Lothlorien (the original discussion question is shown in italics:)

... Treebeard makes a more explicit reference to Lorien later in the chapter. How similar, and how different are the two woods? Fangorn is a forest, Lorien is a garden. Galadriel is an Entwife at heart. It's basically wild anarchy versus regimented fascism. ... (Darkstone, April 8, 2008)

Other posters emphasize Tolkien's use of colour to inspire imagination, which suggests a sense of the iconographic. This aspect of fan interaction is illustrated in a rather lengthy Reading Room discussion in Appendix E. The Movie Discussion Board posters, even those like Ataahua who post on both boards, describe the experience of finding meaning in place slightly differently:

... "When I look at the stairs in Moria I don't think about their practicality but about what that design says about Dwarves: That they are grand thinkers, boastful, ignore space in favour of large statements and don't in any way think of themselves as being small. In this, the stairs fit the aesthetic of the many-pillared hall. ..." (Ataahua, January 9, 2011)

Some posters in the Movie Discussion Board, knowingly or unknowingly, seem to grasp Panofsky's concept of iconography through the simple image of a pumpkin in the Hobbits' local pub The Green Dragon:

instances found: 701

** think (858)		I think	
2011-10-22	Hollywood "wisdom".	I think	the Beowulf discussion
2011-10-22	is a very good question.	I think	it's the hobbits.
2011-10-22	in scope but not in form	I think	LotR is epic in its
2011-11-16	they cut from the TE	I think	were quite essential to
2011-11-16	a real place to me --	I think	what works, in terms of
2011-11-16	atmosphere and	I think	the pumpkin adds to
2011-11-16	Earth Landscape	I think	the landscape of New
2011-11-16	related to Rohan....	I think	the Ent's attack on
2011-11-16	by comparison, but	I think	the "power" you mention
2011-11-20	of the Shire? Well	I think	the water-wheel was a
2011-11-20	Deep, Aragorn and Cliff	I think	obviously superceding
2011-11-20	to convey a story.	I think	PJ made really great
2011-11-20	Oh the whole, though,	I think	the movies worked very
2011-11-20	worked in the book, but	I think	it would have been
2011-11-20	in order to fit it in.	I think	at least a mention of
2011-11-20	coming to the rescue.	I think	it would've worked.

FROM: mamph17
DATE: 2011-11-16

Pumpkin I liked what someone said about the idea of how everything blends together to create a very comfortable atmosphere and **I think** the pumpkin adds to that because it has the nice orange hue. Think, for a moment, if they chose a giant cucumber or watermelon, a dark green would give a darker feeling to the shot and not the warmth and comfort that it does now. I could be over analyzing, but it's fun to do so sometimes

Close

Figure 39. Poster recognition of iconographic elements.

Cinematic imagery, then, is not lost on the spectator -- particularly not on the devoted fans that seek out online communities with which to share their thoughts and ideas.

Unearthing meanings from place in *The Lord of the Rings* is not limited to the academics in the Reading Room; participants in the Movie Discussion Board also find meaning in the visual images on the screen and connect them to the meanings Tolkien attributed to them. Posters not only connect meaning to place, they understand the nature of film adaptation and how some things must change according to the medium, time, and space represented.

IV.E.3. The nature of film adaptation

Understanding basic differences between text and film is one thing; understanding that Jackson filmed in a different time and place and filmed for an audience affected by that time and place is another matter. The posters on TORn may not have mentioned the

word “chronotope” in their posts, but the idea is present nonetheless. Some posters recognized that a film adaptation is not the (written) story and that some things, as Christopher Lee was quoted as saying earlier, “just have to be seen.” Others recognized that each storyteller tells their own version of the narrative. For both perspectives, hallmarks of success depended on whether Jackson captured the spirit of the story and whether certain critical elements were filmed in concert with the posters’ interpretations. For most posters on TORn, recognition of the difference of media, and of Jackson filming in a different time and place, comes through discussions centred on evaluation of whether the films were successful in adapting Tolkien’s story.

Since one focus in the Reading Room is not to talk about the films, evaluation of Jackson’s efforts overall are a bit harder to find. Instead, posters in this forum tend to comment on a particular character, place, or scene that the movies enhanced, e.g., “the movie captured the Balrog perfectly.” Other Reading Room posts regarding the films are discussed below as ways in which the films helped visualize complex settings. The denizens of the Movie Discussion Board, however, often discussed Jackson’s films as adaptations of Tolkien. Many comments that bring out the discussion of the nature of film adaptation read like the following quote and Figure 40, both from the Movie Discussion Board:

I do see the movies as something separate from the book. Admittedly, it took me three viewings of Fellowship to stop thinking in terms of what Jackson did wrong and start seeing the film on its own merits. What helped me was to think of Jackson as a modern-day Man, retelling the story of LOTR from the viewpoint of Men rather than Hobbits.

Like any storyteller he embellished certain things and got some parts of the story wrong. ... (Annael, January 4, 2008)

# instances found: 479			
2011-01-22	1. Comments on this	image	? Do you feel
2011-01-22	makes shot is that	imagery	and presence of those
2011-01-22	1. Comments on this	image	? Do you feel
2011-01-22	blown away by the	imagery	. The effect has died
2011-01-22	1. Comments on this	image	? Nice. Both are ready
2011-01-22	of the greatest and most	imaginative	adaptations ever
2011-01-22	provide from their own	imaginings	and skills to make the
2011-01-22	they're very close to my	imagining	of them... but to be
2011-01-22	you only can see the	images	in your head,
2011-01-22	a lie!!) Honestly, the	image	of *Disney* using
2011-01-22	I got 6 pgs in and the	image	of the 5 sisters
2011-01-22	Alan Lee & John Howe's	imagery	, I think we're seeing
2011-01-22	didn't look like they	imagined	, or the actor's
2011-01-22	script. So they had the	images	but not the
2011-01-22	can), and see if we can	imagine	what he may have
2011-01-22	Could Tolkien have	imagined	at his death in 1973

FROM: grammaboodawg
DATE: 2011-01-22

I'm glad you like the movies I'm sorry you can't appreciate the effort Jackson and his NZ filmic-family did to make them possible. I've loved this story since 1971, and I have no problem with the changes. This is Jackson's telling of the story. He wasn't trying to do the book, he was making the films he'd always wanted to see. There's no way everything could be included let alone done to everyone's satisfaction. United with Howard Shore's music and guided by Alan Lee & John Howe's **imagery**, I think we're seeing the closest thing possible to Middle-earth. Did you enjoy SEEING the storming of Isengard by the Ents? Aragorn and Arwen's story expanded? The attack of the huorns? More mumakil than you could shake a stick at? There's been much discussion on other directors and what they're take on these films would be and/or should be for the upcoming Hobbit & sequel films. Seek those

Close

Figure 40. Poster “grammaboodawg” recognizes the nature of film adaptation.

While some fans may disagree with grammaboodawg and Annael, most seemed to understand that filming the book was impossible -- in fact, “unfilmable.” The focal point of debate, then, was which scenes worked with the images already formed from reading the book, and which did not. In addition, scenes from the film that helped visualize places in the book were specifically noted by the TORn posters. However diligently Tolkien may have described a place in Middle-earth, readers may not have envisioned that place completely.

For both Reading Room and Movie Discussion Board fans, the films helped them visualize difficult or complex parts of the book. The following comment was made as a question to start off a Reading Room discussion thread:

Helm's Deep: Part 1: ... 7. Description of Hornburg and the rest: did anyone else struggle to picture this in their mind, even after rereading it? I never got how it all fit together until I saw the movie. (CuriousG, February 21, 2011)

References like the one above appear in the Reading Room, but they were more common in the Movie Discussion Board. One place in the films that drew a significant amount of attention was the lighting of the beacons from Gondor to Rohan:

...I'm not sure there was anything added to the movies that would really benefit the books. I think the further development of Boromir comes the closest, as many others have said. But a lot of the changes that I liked only really benefit the movie version. Best example I can think of offhand is the lighting of the beacons... absolutely amazing scene in the movie, but if it had been in the book (beyond what is already there), it wouldn't have been anything special. That's a pure cinematic moment. ... (acheron, January 3, 2008)

... it wouldn't have done much for the book to have a peak-by-peak description of the lighting of the beacons . . . but what a moment on film! (Annael, January 3, 2008)

These comments bolster the results from the previous analysis section regarding discussion of specific places -- more posters in the Movie Discussion Board than in the Reading Room commented on the beacons, potentially because it was a dramatic scene in the film. That the beacons worked cinematically, but not textually (unless one has filmic images from which to draw,) is interesting. Perhaps the meaning and significance of certain scenes or events have greater resonance in a visual or cinematic environment, and therefore it may be that these types of images work in concert either as a foundation on

which to build ekphrastic images, or the images integrate more easily into preconceived mental images of the scene in question.

IV.E.4. Integrating ekphrastic and filmic mental imagery

Some believe, including Tolkien himself to some extent and D. Wood (2004) mentioned in the literature review, that pictures and film “close down” the imagination, that viewing someone else’s vision of a story will overwrite one’s own view. Several comments from the TORn posters allude to a fear of this predicament, but most found the films’ visual nature inspired further visualization of the places in Middle-earth:

A huge benefit of these films has been the visualisation of places that I had difficulty grasping. The layout of Helm's Deep and the size of Isengard and its gardens were two of them - but a third was the Grey Havens. Here, I can see that the Grey Havens weren't merely a couple of buildings for making ships and sleeping in, and an ancient pier: This was a city in its own right, now empty as the time of the Elves comes to a full stop. It has the feeling of a place that was once busy, but which has slowly aged and started to fall into disrepair as, over the centuries, fewer and fewer Elves have lived there. The activity of the Grey Havens has dwindled, but evidence of its past activity is evident. It is all beautifully rendered. ... (Ataahua, March 10, 2009)

Ataahua is a forum moderator and poster on both fora, but this one, like most film-specific posts, came from the Movie Discussion Board. Other posters expanded their mental images of places from scenes in the films, including one who imagined various rooms in Meduseld that did not appear on screen (grammaboodawg, May 4, 2009).

These comments illustrate how, as R. Allen (1993) theorized, films can and do inspire

further visualization of the world they are representing. Ataahua's description of the Grey Havens imagines that city in an earlier time; grammaboodawg is inspired to create rooms that are never seen on the screen. Comments such as these, and others contained in Appendices E and F, certainly point to ways in which people integrate ekphrastic and filmic mental images.

Another way comments illustrate this concept is by referencing the film's ability to elicit understanding of meaning. One striking comment from FarFromHome (Reading Room) acknowledges the film's ability to strengthen the chronotope of the sword Narsil (later Andúril) as an object of power for Aragorn:

... I had never realized just how closely and physically the Sword and the Ring are connected until those iconic repeated movie shots of the fateful moment sank into my brain. The Sword captured the Ring, but the Ring shattered the Sword, and eventually, through Isildur's downfall, also shattered the line of Kings that the sword represents. So perhaps it's not surprising that Aragorn carries the sword to his fateful first meeting with the Ring. ... (FarFromHome, January 12, 2008)

These types of comments were difficult to unearth and even may have eluded a Boolean-defined search in a text analysis, but this comment was able to be identified and retrieved through the context screen of Netlytic. The difficulty arises in the elusiveness of the concepts (both visualization and essence,) as well as the length of some of the posts, particularly in the Reading Room (Inferno, for one, see Appendix E.) Some Reading Room fans describe wanting to see some of their favourite book scenes on film; one of the most popular of these have to do with the character Tom Bombadil and material from

the Appendices (simplyaven, March 19, 2009). The fact that some posters in the Reading Room do interact with the films, and the fact that they generally seek symbolic and metaphoric meaning in the text, point to the potential to integrate the meanings of both text and film from a chronotopic standpoint.

The most interesting comments regarding ekphrastic/filmic mental image formation and integration directly refer to the idea of integration. The following posts are from the Reading Room:

... They [Ents] are such different creatures altogether, it is very hard - Frodo Hoy to get an "accurate" vision of them in my imagination. Additionally, the Bashki version interrupts my free-form fantasizing. That is one of my only regrets about the PJ project, btw. No matter how well done, after I view his films, they will influence my mind's eye picture of Middle Earth. ... (Inferno, April 26, 2009)

... In Jackson's defense, it is hard to make a movie of LotR and still retain the ambiguity of the written word. But Jackson did not really try to maintain ambiguity; for better or for worse, he made his choices explicit, even where it meant diverging from the letter of the book. In many cases I like his choices, but where I don't, it is really difficult for me to forget my own choices that I made when I read the story. That doesn't always mean that Jackson's choices were "wrong"; there's enough ambiguity in the book to encompass many of Jackson's choices. (Curious, June 27, 2010)

For Curious, the ambiguity in the story means that the reader/spectator has the ability to consciously decide whether Jackson's filmic choices were right or wrong, suggesting the reader has the ability to choose an interpretation. Inferno regrets the influence of "the PJ

project” on the mind’s eye, but the choice of the word “influence” rather than “overwriting” or “closing down” of the imagination suggests an integration of the two types of mental images. Inferno also states the need to work to get an “accurate vision,” though he also admits to “free-form fantasizing,” which suggests cognitively mental image formation can be more consciously directed, or one can allow the mind to wander subconsciously into the formation of mental images.

Informative comments relating to the integration also came from the Movie Discussion Board [emphasis Grek Martin]:

...From seeing the films, characters have a much more distinct identity, so I found that all a lot more easy to digest afterwards. It was also hard beforehand to appreciate what elves, dwarves, hobbits and orcs really looked like, and acted like. It was all so new to me, basically! **Now I have a better idea of all this, and in addition, it helps to visualise in my head the places and people that aren't even in the films What I am particularly pleased about, is that the film hasn't totally 'taken over' middle earth in my imagination. By that I mean that although the film has shown many of the places and people in LOTR, I can still make up how things look myself.** ... (Eryn, April 3, 2010)

... I think seeing the films first though probably was an advantage for me because ME was already set up, I just have to build upon the existing foundations, similar I think to Eryn. The fact that I can expand (and have done) upon characters, myths & languages etc by reading UT, HoME etc just makes it all the more fabulous ... (the_argonath, April 3, 2010)

I appreciate and love the movies in many ways. But the book is, imo, superior and when I have to make a choice on which form of art to either conjure up or allow to take precedence, it's almost always the book. It's more satisfying for me. **I try to make the two work together for something greater than the parts (since the audio visual component of the movies helps me 'get' the story better) rather than allowing the two spar for a position of 'better' when they don't agree with each other by discarding what doesn't work (usually from the movie) and substituting (usually from the book) what does.** (Magpie, January 2, 2011)

Other comments can be found in Appendices E and F that speak to one or more of the ways in which it is possible to integrate ekphrastic and filmic mental images. From these posts, mental images sometimes “spar” for supremacy, while other times they are built on existing visual (cinematic) images. Magpie also acknowledges the role of the audio component -- another possible future area of research given the number of posters who commented on the musical score. Conscious decision, often described in terms of “work,” or “struggle,” suggests a strongly cognitive element to the formation and development of mental images, especially when faced with a visual image that differs markedly from one’s own. In any event, it is clear from these comments and from the possibilities suggested from the comments in the sections above, that ekphrastic and filmic mental images can be, and are, integrated cognitively.

Fans exhibited many ways of interacting with both text and film. From the analyses presented, they talked about both in terms of visualization, generic and specific places, and in terms of chronotopic “essential quality” and meaning. Some aspects of

visualization were found more often in one forum or the other. Reference to the real-world as evidence of cognitive “experience” used in mental imagery was more common in the Reading Room. The Reading Room posters also used more varied words to describe visualization and general places more frequently. The Movie Discussion Board members spoke more often about Jackson’s overall success in terms of how well he captured the essential qualities of specific places and the story as a whole. Both contributed to the concept of integrating mental images with the images already formed from reading the book, however, those in the Movie Discussion Board tended to do so more frequently and directly. This situation may be explained by the focus in the Reading Room on the text, i.e., an aim not to mention the films. Overall, it is clear that evidence exists to suggest that films do inspire further mental image formation of a story and that these images may be integrated cognitively into ekphrastic mental images. It seems that this integration is pronounced when the textual description of a place is complex and therefore difficult to imagine without visual cues.

IV.F. Fans, Fandoms, and Fan Communities

In her study of avid readers, Sheldrick Ross found that readers tend to creatively rewrite texts and do so often in the context of a network (1999). This “rewriting” is a figurative concept taking place in the mind of the reader as they seek to relate the meaning in the text to their own experiences, as opposed “fanfic,” where readers literally write (or rewrite) fandom-centred stories. In the past, these readership networks may have been friendships or book clubs; today many readers and fans of popular culture turn

to online fan communities. Through the course of this thesis, several themes surrounding reader/fan interactions came from the reading of poster comments and opinions. The first is that not all message boards on the same site are created (or act) alike. Other themes focus on the fans themselves: fans seek interaction online, fans exchange thoughts and opinions online, and their understanding of the world grows from this interaction. Discovering these posted comments prompted me to search the datasets for further insight into how the two groups interacted, both within their own groups and with each other (see Figures 41 and 42 below for Netlytic visualization of poster networks.)

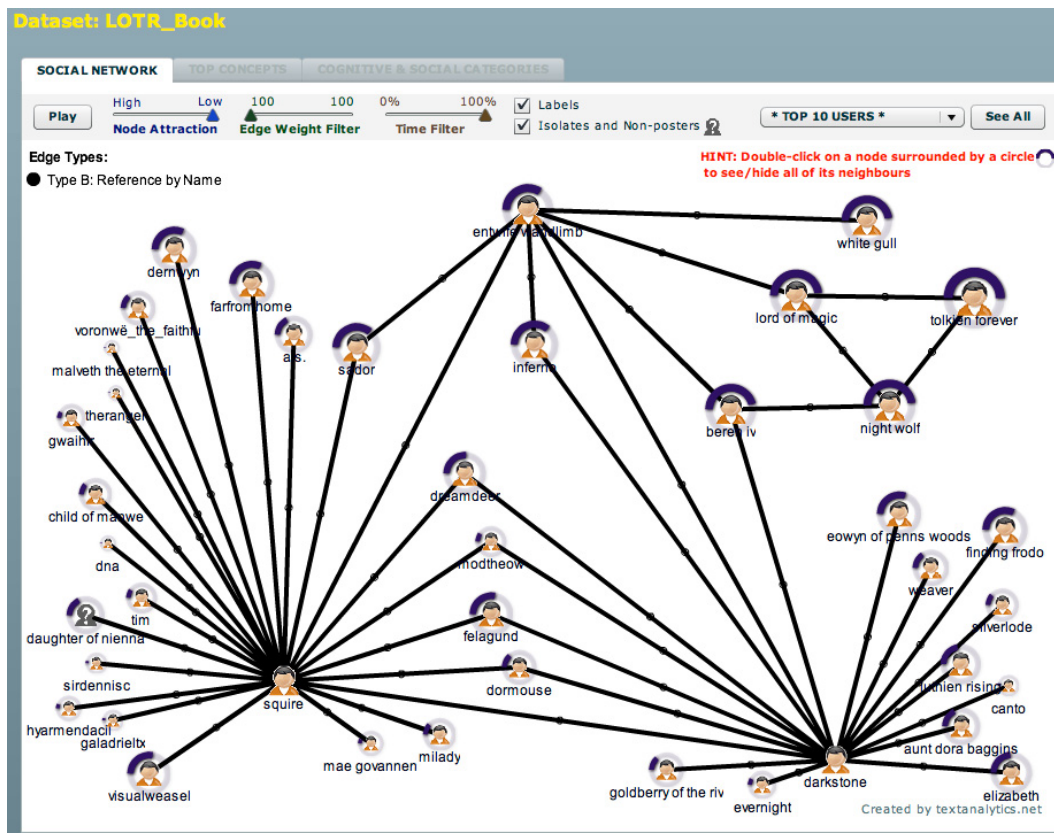


Figure 41. The Netlytic network analysis showing connections between the Top 10 posters in the Reading Room. Double-clicking on “Darkstone” and “squire” reveals all of those posters’ neighbours and interconnections between posters.

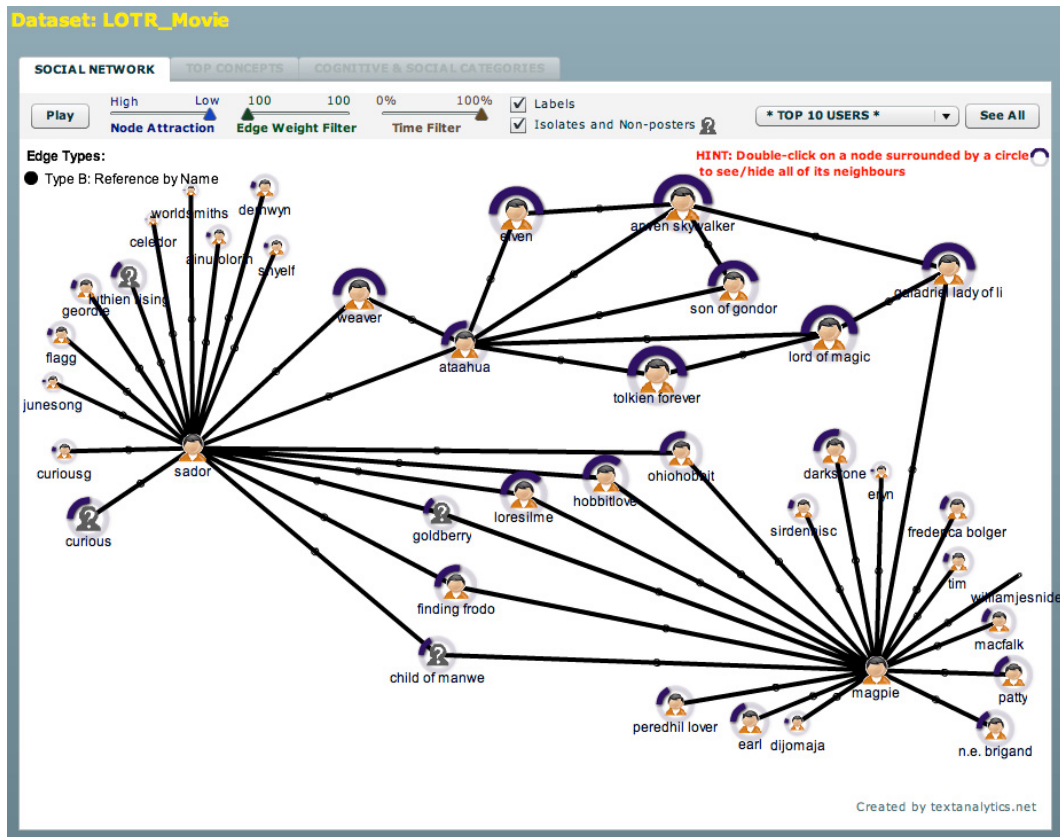


Figure 42. The Netlytic network analysis showing connections between the Top 10 posters in the Movie Discussion Board, “sador” and “magpie” expanded.

Table 8. Term use relating to “fans” or aspects of the “TORn” website.

LOTR_Book (2685)		term	LOTR_Movie (3098)	
419	16%	reading room	231	7%
170	6%	torn (“TheOneRing.net”)	401	13%
117	4%	rr (“reading room”)	51	2%
101	4%	movie board	46	1%
97 (126)	4% (5%)	fantasy***	77 (134)	2% (4%)
72 (78)	3% (3%)	forum***	18 (23)	<1% (<1%)
59 (342, 216)*	2% (8%)	fan***	107 (377, 243)*	3% (8%)
1034 (1353)	.39 (.50)	total instances/records	930 (1263)	.30 (.41)

*The Table above is a record of six fan- or website-related topics, with the term “fantasy” added to balance the number of instances of the term “fan***.” As mentioned above, given the truncation function of Netlytic, the word “fan” or “fans” results in the return of an unrelated concept “fantasy.” Subtracting the number of instances of fantasy*** from fan*** yields a more accurate reading of the term “fan***,” shown in red.

“Reading Room” tended to be a signature line of many of the posters, e.g., “Now discussing chapter VI in the Reading Room!” These signatures acted like advertisements, since many posters with that signature post both in the Reading Room and the Movie Discussion Board. “Forum” as used in the Reading Room also acted in a similar manner. “RR” is shorthand for people who post in the Reading Room (sometimes the acronym was located in a signature, but not as often as the term “reading room.”) The advertisements may indicate that the people in the Reading Room felt they needed to attract more posters, as their “ads” were more prevalent than the comparative term “movie board.” If this is the case, then the data may point to a situation in which the films attract people to Tolkien’s world and once they are attracted, the more interested fans become further involved with more aspects of the fandom (books, games, etc.) Reading Room posters also tended to be slightly more self-referential than Movie Discussion Board fans and the culture of the Reading Room seems to be defined more overtly (i.e., posters consciously not talking about the films, or apologizing if they do.) Movie Discussion Board posters referred to the entire TheOne Ring.net website as a whole more often than did Reading Room posters (401/930 versus 170/1034). This

characteristic, combined with advertising the Reading Room, self-referencing, and overt forum defining make the Reading Room seem a bit more exclusive -- a sub-set of the website and perhaps not a main attraction. However, Reading Room posters do participate in other fora and their invitations for others to join in the discussions in the Reading Room show a willingness and a desire for interaction and for more and varied opinions.

Many registered users came to TheOneRing.net because they read the books and many because they watched the films (book first v. movie first.) Some came because they desired interaction with other fans of Tolkien:

...that was when my life seemed to fully shift into another dimension. I read the three books over that summer of 2002 while watching FOTR matinees at my neighborhood theaters. I also, for the first time, **used the internet to satisfy [sic]this hunger I had for all things Tolkien.** When I finished rereading ROTK in early August, I was in a daze. I felt that me and my perception of the world had completely changed. I think I might have looked a little crazy to family and friends. I felt alive like I had never felt before. ...**To see me taking my first steps into the world of the internet and know that it's a huge part of my life now.** There were lots of things working in concert that made the movies and books affect me so profoundly. But, in the end, I feel the primary factor was Tolkien and his words. (Magpie, February 2, 2009 [emphasis Grek Martin])

Magpie's comments are not the only ones that cite the life-changing nature of Tolkien; other TORn fans reported similar reactions to the book and/or the films. For a work and its manifestations to have such an effect on the lives of its devotees makes the thought of seeking others who understand the experience and are willing to engage at great length

and depth on the topic quite understandable. While not all Tolkien fans share the extent to which Magpie was affected by *The Lord of the Rings*, other fans do share thoughts, opinions, and debates about the object of their obsession on intellectual and emotional levels.

The following comment illustrates how some posters learn more through interacting with fellow fans:

...I don't know that the previous discussion has changed my mind, exactly. All the times the RR has gone through LotR, I've learned to see things I've never noticed before, in all my readings. Sador's amazing post in this very thread is a case in point. He helps me see more about the Council of Elrond than I ever did before. (Aunt Dora Baggins, March 17, 2009)

Some fans, like Aunt Dora Baggins, directly acknowledge this interaction, while in other contexts, the interaction has to be seen in order to be appreciated. Several threads promoted discussion in which it is clear the opinions of posters are heard, acknowledged, and minds changed or opinions defended. Examples of these threads can be seen in Appendices E and F -- put there not only because they are rather long, but because they exhibit many other characteristics this thesis aimed to discover. Finally, as mentioned in the literature review, disagreement is often encouraged among members of fandoms (Baym, 2009), and by reading through examples of posts, TORn users are no exception. Some interactions result in agreement, some do not, but the end goal is more and better understanding of the world of Tolkien and by that definition TORn users excel.

Finally, the concept of ownership as an aspect of readers/spectators/fans was noted throughout many of the posts. "Ownership" of a story is the feeling that you as the

reader/spectator know something about this world. It also can be described as Sheldrick Ross's "creative rewriting" or as the readership/spectatorship that Barker acknowledged in his study (2006). From an earlier section of the quote above, Magpie writes "This story, this world was mine!" in reference to finding out that someone else knew about Middle-earth (February 2, 2009). The "specialness" associated with belonging to a fandom -- knowing a particular story, or feeling you know more than anyone else about a particular world -- is alluring to many people. At times it may foster a sense of exclusivity, as Darkstone noted in a 2008 post responding to whether Tolkien would have like Jackson's films:

...It may be it's not the movies they resent, but, like the British fans of the 1960s, the influx of the Great Unwashed into a previously exclusive little fandom. I strongly suspect that's why Real Fans get so passionate about niggly little details from the book that are missing from the films. It says "I'm A Real Fan because I came to Tolkien because of the books. You'll never understand how important [fill in the blank] is to the story because you came to Tolkien through the films. *sniff*" Ugh! I'm glad I'm Not A Real Fan! (Still, how could have Jackson left out The Fox????) (Darkstone, January 3, 2008)

It is clear from the comments above, and from those in the Appendices, that the Tolkien fans of TORn are heavily invested, not only in the world of Tolkien, but in the world of readers/spectators/fans. They seek out other people with similar interests in order to engage the material and interact with others, and all with the hope that more knowledge about their beloved world will be gained. Knowledge comes not only from agreement, but from disagreement as well. Intellectual debates are infused with emotional moments and comments made in good faith are heard and acknowledged. The

online presence of Tolkien fans not only facilitates the interaction with others about all-things-Tolkien, but promotes a certain sense of ownership of the story. TORn fans are dedicated, active, and enthusiastic members of fan community focused on learning and sharing knowledge about Middle-earth, which begs the message board-like question “What would the Professor have thought?”

Chapter V. Conclusions

V.A. General Conclusions

A broad-based textual analysis of online opinions posted to a public fan website offers valuable insight into the complex relationship between mental images formed while reading the original text (ekphrastic) and formed while watching a cinematic adaptation of the same story. To understand the complexity of such an endeavour, it was necessary to draw from several fields of study: literature and literary studies, film studies, iconography, cognitive psychology, and information studies. According to researchers in the cognitive sciences, spatial mental images are particularly intriguing; large, complex locations offer stronger possibilities of integrating textual, experiential, and visual (cinematic) images. The relationship between geography and identity therefore was used to focus this research by narrowing the text analysis to comments surrounding place in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

The Netlytic Internet Community Text Analyzer was a novel approach to the study of fan communities through a grounded theory approach to content analysis. Netlytic proved to be a valuable analyzer of the fan community's posts and several interesting conclusions were drawn on the basis of the data collected through this new online tool. Through use of the tool for a longer-term, in-depth analysis, several recommendations can be made to further enhance the benefits of Netlytic to future researchers. Fan communities have not been the subject of wide research, but the findings of this thesis suggest that this situation should change; fans are knowledgeable, dedicated, and intensely interested in their chosen worlds. Further studies are

recommended for both Netlytic (and other tools of this nature) and fan communities online, particularly in the area of reaction to popular culture.

Many findings supported the hypothesis posed at the beginning of this thesis. Posters in the Reading Room used book-related terms more frequently than did the Movie Discussion Board posters and they also used a wider variety of terms more frequently, whether the terms were visualization-related or place-related. These findings are not surprising, given that the Reading Room focuses on discussing Tolkien's written works. The Movie Discussion Board posters focused on prominent aspects of the films, also not surprising, but nonetheless interesting considering the attention paid to the cultures and places of Gondor and Rohan. Posters referenced these two areas, not in terms of culture as in the Reading Room, but in terms of specific settings in which dramatic scenes were filmed. This finding suggests that readers/spectators are strongly influenced by certain scenes that are better visualized with the help of visual cues. All of the above findings were expressed through Netlytic as numbers of instances, but they were not the only types of observations that were unearthed during this investigation.

Many types of words or statements elicited comments centred on visualization, but the frequent occurrence of active statements and words like "work" and "struggle" suggest that mental image formation can be a dynamic cognitive process. The context of numerous poster comments suggested that fans not only understand the nature of film adaptation -- that an adaptation is not the same as the story because of the medium employed -- but also the chronotopic nature of a work written in one time and place compared to the cinematic adaptation filmed, in this case, half a century later. Readers/

spectators also glean meaning (“essential quality”) through text and through the iconographic nature of film. Posters identified, discussed, and debated these meanings, sometimes quite vigorously. Indirectly, these comments point to the integration of mental images of place. However, the most exciting findings indicate that the online fans of TORn indeed did describe mental image formation as an integration of ekphrastic and cinematic images. This finding suggests that mental image formation as a form of cognition is akin to the broad concept of “reading” in general and therefore the treatment of text and images in this sense can be described as both the “linguistics of the image” and the “iconology of text.”

Those in the information studies field will be heartened to know that online readers/spectators foster networks similar to that seen in previous studies. Posters interact with each other online (and offline) and through discussion and debate learn more about their chosen fandom. Whether it is the anonymous nature of an online forum, or some other characteristic, posters tend to invite various and differing opinions and are willing to change their minds if the opinion is well argued. The all-encompassing nature of websites like TheOneRing.net suggest that modern online fans go to great lengths to discuss, explore, and claim ownership of “their” story and the world it portrays.

V.B. Future Recommendations -- Netlytic

As the developer of Netlytic, A. Gruzd was extremely important to the success of the study. Netlytic is still under development; therefore problems with the interface and intermittent problems with Netlytic could be explained and corrected. One problem still

under consideration is the date display for the concept/term screen. Apparent in several of the screen shots throughout the thesis, the dates displayed are incorrect, and obviously so, as many of the dates have not yet happened or would not have happened, given the time frame of the data collection (e.g., 2011-11-16, see Figure 39.) Several aspects of the interface might be counterintuitive to some users, particularly the red box/white “x” for the “deletion of terms and the “Clear” button in Categories creation and analysis.

Another feature to get used to is the fact that the category visualization is based on exact match; if one is using many terms with variables (e.g., hobbit*** for hobbit, hobbits, and Hobbiton,) then the visualization will only be based on the exact match to “hobbit.”

For text analysis, Netlytic is quite flexible and offers the advantage of never truly clearing a term in the Categories creation process (though this can clutter the screen after repeated use.) One aspect of text analysis that should be explored further is how to combine categories using Boolean logic terms, e.g., “visualization” AND “agreement” AND “Jackson.” Another feature that would be immensely useful is to have the option of sub-categories (e.g., main categories “Good” and “Evil,” subcategory under “Good” would be Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, Gondor, Rohan, and under “Hobbits” would be all the terms associated with the Hobbits.) While the context of the terms is always immediately available and apparent there is always room to improve the initial search functions for both context and semantics. As both an advantage and a limitation, my use of Netlytic will contribute to the further development and refinement of Netlytic. Further qualifications of Netlytic and process of data analysis will be discussed below in the analysis section.

A few final recommendations concern the use of online communities as data. A limitation of using online posts (tweets, or blogs,) is that spelling tends to be ambiguous either because of the international nature of online communities or because posters tend not to edit their messages for spelling (noticing mistakes only after the message has been posted.) Spelling mistakes and alternate spellings were not common and did not appear to affect the results of this study in a meaningful way though other studies may find spelling characteristics interfere with analysis. Finally, poster interaction may affect the ways in which certain users post their messages, which may be seen not as a limitation, per se, but as a way to understand how fans interact online. Netlytic's network analysis tool can help comprehend and explain these interactions, which would make for interesting continued research for this study and future studies.

V.C. Future Directions

This thesis serves as a starting point for many various types of research and the implications for literature and film studies, geography, cognitive science, and information studies is both broad and deep. Netlytic, for one, will allow researchers in any field to benefit from knowledge attained through online social media. Furthermore, those fields most interested in public reaction will find Netlytic a boon to future research, as it has the potential to acquire, record, and analyze wider public opinion. Literature and film studies will find that fans and fan interaction with authors and filmmakers will continue to grow, therefore understanding that dynamic will continue to be paramount. The results of this study suggest future research in how fans interact with their chosen texts and films, as

well as how readers/spectators interact with film adaptations. Also of interest to those in the information studies field, the findings of this project intimate the extent to which fans will go to research, discuss, and debate the objects of their obsessions -- often gaining added insight to deeper meanings in the text and film through online conversations.

Geographers, who are always ready to find new ways of understanding and promoting geography and spatial awareness, may find that cognitive psychology and spatial mental image formation will have significant ramifications for that field. Cartographers and people interested in geospatial visualization may be heartened to learn how some TORn users used visual cues from the films to build their mental images of places from the text, suggesting an important connection between seeing and visualizing space and cognition.

Human geographers can learn from the findings the ways in which people ascribe meaning and emotion to place, particularly through the connections made between “place,” “environment,” and “atmosphere.” For cognitive psychologists, this study used an entirely different method than generally used in psychology; therefore it may provide insight for discovering new ways to approach the question of human spatial cognition.

Information studies experts may find the integration of ekphrastic and visual and cinematic images useful to further theories of mental image formation, cognition, and human information retrieval, storage, and processing. Foremost, the findings of this study suggest certain implications for interaction with varied media, particularly text and film. First, the theoretical prominence of visual images may be at times overstated; posters described reasserting and integrating ekphrastic and film-based spatial mental images (though admittedly not without some effort.) Second, filmic images do inspire

further mental envisioning. Several posters commented on “other rooms” in Meduseld and imagining the wider landscapes of places that intrigued them. Third, visual images may be very helpful in creating more fully formed mental images of place, especially with unfamiliar landscapes described in complex terms, since some posters describe using the film visuals to “build on.”. Ebooks may be more effective if film clips or stills of landscapes or complex structures (forts, mazes, etc..) could be accessed at points in a text containing heavily descriptive passages. Clips or stills could accompany any text-based instructions or directions as reinforcement -- something cartographers and Google Maps have already realized. The findings further suggest, however, that these images must be accurate to the text, in “essential meaning” and description, or risk inviting negative responses from the reader/spectator. Finally, information studies specialists will find the acquisition, research, and processing (through debate and sharing of information) of information in online communities interesting for future study. Though often fraught with other difficulties, online “conversations” have the benefit of time. Posters research, reflect, and revisit topics that otherwise might not have been investigated, thus gaining added insight and information about that topic. *The Lord of the Rings* may be unique in that it invites peculiarly dedicated fans -- and perhaps the same calibre of discussion and debate does not happen in many online forums -- but the findings of this study suggest online communication can be both socially and informationally rewarding.

Whether from technical, practical, or theoretical perspectives, this research speaks to a wide variety of fields. I drew upon literature, film, geography, art history, cognitive psychology and information studies, but the premise of the research and the data

collection and analysis can be applied to many more. Of the questions posed at the beginning of the thesis, only one question is left to answer: “Did Peter Jackson succeed in creating a cinematic adaptation of Tolkien’s work?” Given the breadth and depth of online discussion now ten years after the first cinematic release of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the resounding answer must be “yes!”

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Appendix A: List of Terms and Term Refinement

I. General Terms

chronotope - M.M. Bakhtin's idea that the meanings inherent in people, objects, events, and places in narratives naturally change in reference to time and place.

ekphrasis - the process of creating mental (or other types of) images from a text.

fan community - an online group of people sharing common interest; see **fandom**.

fandom - a collective of people organized socially around their shared appreciation of a pop culture object or objects (Baym, 2007).

fan/fans - a person/persons who is/are passionate about something, usually in the realm of popular culture.

ICTA - the Internet Community Text Analyzer - a tool developed by A. Gruzd for analyzing online information.

iconography - (**also, iconology**) the study of visual symbols and how their motifs are linked to larger allegorical meanings also based in time and place.

LOTR - common acronym for *The Lord of the Rings*.

LOTR_Book - the dataset compiled in the ICTA from the Reading Room message board posts.

LOTR_Movie - the dataset compiled in the ICTA from the Movie Discussion - LOTR message board posts (referred to as "the Movie Discussion Board".)

message board - also, forum, fora. Online webpage where guests and registered users can read, post, and respond to posts about any topic.

Movie Discussion Board - the message board (or forum) on TheOneRing.net website devoted to discussing Peter Jackson's trilogy. Also known on site as "The Movie Board," "Movie Board - LOTR," and "Movie Discussion - LOTR."

post(s) - an online comment "posted" to a message board. Usually posts can be read by the public, but responses must be made by a registered user of the site.

poster - a registered user who "posts" messages to an online message board or forum.

reader/spectator - someone who has both read the original story and seen the films, relating to film adaptations in particular.

Reading Room - the message board (or forum) on TheOneRing.net website devoted to discussing Tolkien's written works

TORn - common acronym for TheOneRing.net website, a fan website for all things Tolkien.

user - also, registered user. Someone who is a registered member of a website (often a fan website.) Information is volunteered by registered users who can then post comments or questions to a message board forum or fora.

II. Summary and Character and Place Names in *The Lord of the Rings* (spoiler alert!)

Middle-earth (or **Arda**) is the all-encompassing geographic setting for J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The story is two parts in one: the destruction of an evil **Ring** of power and the ushering in of a new Age of the world, dominated by humans (Men.) The Ring had been found by **Bilbo Baggins**, a Hobbit, who lived at **Bag End**. **Hobbits** are a race of beings in Middle-earth closely related to humans, but shorter of stature. After celebrating Bilbo's 111th birthday at the **Party Tree**, **Gandalf**, a wizard, advises Bilbo to give the ring to **Frodo Baggins**. Frodo later sets out from the **Shire** -- the home of the Hobbits, divided into **farthings**, -- with three companions: Samwise (**Sam**) Gamgee, Meriadoc (**Merry**) Brandybuck of **Buckland** and Peregrin (**Pippin**) Took on a quest to the human village of **Bree** to meet Gandalf. There, at the Inn of the **Prancing Pony**, the hobbits instead meet **Aragorn**, a.k.a. **Strider**, who is the last in the line of kings of Men, once thought to be lost. Aragorn leads the hobbits to **Weathertop** (**Amon Sul**) where they encounter the **Nazgul** (**Ringwraiths**) who are servants of the Ring's creator, **Sauron**. Pursued by the Nazgul, the five companions ford the river **Bruinen** and Frodo, who was wounded by an evil blade, is healed by **Elrond**, the Master of **Rivendell** (**Imladris**.) Elrond is half-elven, though most consider he and his daughter **Arwen** to be **Elvish** -- a race of immortal beings whose time in Middle-earth is ending. The hobbit companions are reunited with Gandalf and hear why he did not meet them earlier.

Gandalf had ridden to **Isengard**, where he sought the counsel of **Saruman**, the head of the order of wizards, who betrays the protagonists by switching allegiance to Sauron. He imprisoned Gandalf, but Gandalf was saved by Gwaihir, from the race of Eagles. Upon hearing of Saruman's betrayal, Elrond holds a Council of all the free people of Middle-earth to decide how to counter the growing threat and what is to be done with the Ring. At the Council, it is decided that the four hobbits, Gandalf, and Aragorn would be joined by three others: **Boromir**, son of **Denethor**, the steward of **Gondor**; **Legolas**, an elf of Mirkwood; and **Gimli**, a dwarf. **Dwarves** are a race of beings similar to humans (but like hobbits, shorter in stature) that seek to mine and smith precious metals and jewels. These nine companions form the **Fellowship** of the Ring.

The first obstacle the Fellowship encounters is the pass of **Caradhras** -- the way over the Misty Mountains. Through Saruman's efforts to turn the mountain against them, the Fellowship was forced to go through the mines of **Moria** -- the Dwarf city of **Khazad-dum** and passage under the mountain. Here they found disturbing news at the tomb of Gimli's cousin, **Balin**; that orcs and goblins had killed the dwarves living there. **Goblins** and **orcs** are races of evil beings bent on destruction and may be organized under a leader (like Sauron) or disorganized as in Moria. The Fellowship was attacked in Moria, but "saved" by a **Balrog** of Morgoth, an ancient

evil that lives in the depths of the mountain. In confrontation with the Balrog, Gandalf was lost. The remaining companions succeeded in reaching **Lothlorien** (or **Lorien**), the haven of **Galadriel** and the Elves of the Galadrim. The companions were taken to **Caras Galadhon**, Lothlorien's city in the trees, where they rested and were given provisions for the rest of their journey.

The Fellowship then traveled by boat down the river **Anduin** (the Great River), which flows from the north, past the kingdom of **Rohan**, to the **Argonath**, two statues guarding the passage between the **Eryn Muil** mountains into the kingdom of **Gondor**. Before the Falls of **Rauros**, the Fellowship is besieged by Saruman's half-goblin/half-orc **Uruk-hai** at **Parth Galen**; **Boromir** is killed and the Fellowship is broken. Frodo and Sam head across the Eryn Muil toward Mordor, and Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas pursue the uruk-hai who have taken Merry and Pippin.

Frodo and Sam trap **Gollum** -- the creature who possessed the Ring when Bilbo found it -- as he had been following them since Moria. Gollum guides them through the **Dead Marshes** and promises to take them to Sauron's realm (**Mordor**), where they will destroy the Ring in the volcano **Mount Doom (Orodruin)**. They first try the route to the **Black Gate** (the **Morannon**), but Sauron's massing armies of Men (**Easterlings** and **Haradrim**) block their entrance. They are caught by **Faramir**, Boromir's brother, in **Ithilien**, where Gollum enters the sacred **Forbidden Pool**. They convince Faramir of their quest and he gives them safe passage. Gollum then takes them on a perilous route past **Minas Morgul**, the fortress of the Nazgul, and through the great spider **Shelob**'s lair, where they lose Gollum, but Frodo is taken captive by orcs from the tower of **Cirith Ungol**. Sam rescues Frodo and they make the arduous journey to Mount Doom across the plains of **Gorgoroth**.

Merry and Pippin find their way to **Fangorn** Forest when the Uruk-hai who captured them were attacked by **Eomer** and an exiled company of horse-mounted **Rohirrim** (sometimes referred to as **Eorlingas**, "descendants of Eorl.") in Fangorn, they meet **Treebeard**, an Ent. **Ents** are a race of tree-like beings who shepherd the forest, particularly the **Huorns** (trees that are capable of movement.) With Treebeard's help, the Ents mount an attack on Saruman in his tower, **Orthanc**, at Isengard. Merry and Pippin are reunited with Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas at Isengard after the battle of Helm's Deep.

In searching for Merry and Pippin, Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas journey to Fangorn, only to find Gandalf brought back from his trial with the Balrog. The four set out for the city of **Edoras**, where they find **Theoden**, king of **Rohan**, at **Meduseld** (the **Golden Hall** of the king of Rohan.) Meanwhile, Saruman's army advances, destroying the villages in the **Westfold**, and Theoden, with the help of his niece **Eowyn**, move the people of the city of Edoras to the fortress of **Helm's Deep** at the **Hornburg**. The battle of Helm's Deep was nearly lost until the exiled

Eomer returns with Gandalf. The fleeing Uruk-hai were destroyed by Huorns, which had been mobilized by Treebeard and the Ents.

Gandalf and Pippin travel to **Minas Tirith**, the main city in the kingdom of Gondor, where they learn that the city of **Osgiliath** has fallen to Mordor's orcs, despite **Faramir's** best efforts. In the **Throne Room**, Gandalf and Pippin try to convince **Denethor**, the steward of Gondor, to call for aid and rally his troops to prepare for Sauron's attack, but Denethor suspects Gandalf wishes to replace him with the rightful heir to the throne (**Aragorn**.) As Sauron's armies advance, Pippin lights the signal **beacons**, which alert Rohan. Aragorn convinces Theoden to go to Gondor's aid, and the armies of Rohan are assembled at **Dunharrow**. Here, Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas travel to the **Dwimorberg**, the mountain containing the **Paths of the Dead**, to summon a cursed army of dead soldiers loyal to the heir to the throne of Gondor. They thwart the approaching **Corsairs (Black Ships)** that were sailing up the Anduin to attack Minas Tirith from the south.

The Battle of the **Pelennor Fields**, the plain surrounding Minas Tirith, was hard won, but Sauron was yet undefeated. Eowyn destroyed the Witch King (leader of the Nazgul,) but not before he killed Theoden. Having learned from Faramir that Frodo and Sam were on their way to Mordor, the remaining protagonists summon one last charge at the Black Gate to act as a diversion and to give the hobbits time to destroy the Ring and Sauron with it. Eventually Frodo and Sam climb Mount Doom and the Ring is accidentally destroyed in the volcano's fire in a final struggle with Gollum. As a result, Sauron, in his tower of **Barad-dur**, is destroyed and his armies scattered.

Aragorn is crowned King and marries Elrond's daughter Arwen, a New Age of the world was ushered in, and the hobbits set back for home. The hobbits meet again in the **Green Dragon** (their favourite local public house) before taking Bilbo to the **Grey Havens** (also called **Mithlond**,) an Elvish port for those traveling to the Blessed Realm. There, they meet Gandalf, Elrond, and Galadriel and they take both Frodo and Bilbo -- because they had both carried the Ring -- and sailed into the West.

III. Term Refinement in the ICTA: Steps taken to identify relevant terms and identify and eliminate irrelevant terms (LOTR_Movie dataset as an example.)

LOTR_Movie (3098 records)



Figure A.1. Top 30 terms, Yahoo! Extractor, LOTR_Movie dataset. (Note: numbers to the upper right of the words are estimated counts and differ substantially from the actual number of instances)

ICTA Yahoo!Extractor - Steps

1. Terms that were names/identifiers for users (e.g., “magpie” and “weaver”) or for user signatures were removed. Some signatures were merely added to the last line of the post and therefore the text analysis function did not recognize them as “signatures.” To remove a word from the list, click the red box with the white “x” to the right of the word (see Figure A.1 or A.4.)
2. As the Yahoo! Extractor finds unique words or phrases, i.e., not common words like “and,” “the,” etc., each term was examined by clicking on the term in the tag cloud (see below, Figure A.2.) Note that the numbers next to each term in the tag cloud reveal estimated counts, but that these estimates do not match the actual number.
3. Once all user names and signatures were identified and deleted, the results were recorded -- shown below (see Figures A.1 and A.4 for the top 30 terms and the top 100 terms.)
4. As evidenced by Figure A.2, one term (“elves”) may have several variants (“elves,” “elven,” also “Elvenhome.”) Choosing “exact match” would eliminate variants. For example, an exact match for the word “elves” reveals that 104 unique members used this term in 320 unique messages (526 instances overall.) In contrast, all variants returns 110 members, 462 messages, and 727 instances. Variants are chosen by ICTA (see below, Figure A.3).
5. To understand the words picked up in the analysis, the top 100 words were examined and categorized broadly into **actors/people** (specific people, characters, or groups of people that do not describe a world or culture,) **worlds/places** (worlds, cultures, specific places, or words

that elicited descriptions of worlds or places,) **“things”** (objects that either fell into no other category or could be categorized equally in more than one category,) **films/books** (words that dealt directly with the film or text,) and **visualization/emotion** (words describing visualization, an emotional state, or an interpretive state.) See below for the full list by category. Terms falling into worlds/places or visualization/emotion were used to form the basis for further analysis.

6. The process was repeated for the Reading Room dataset.

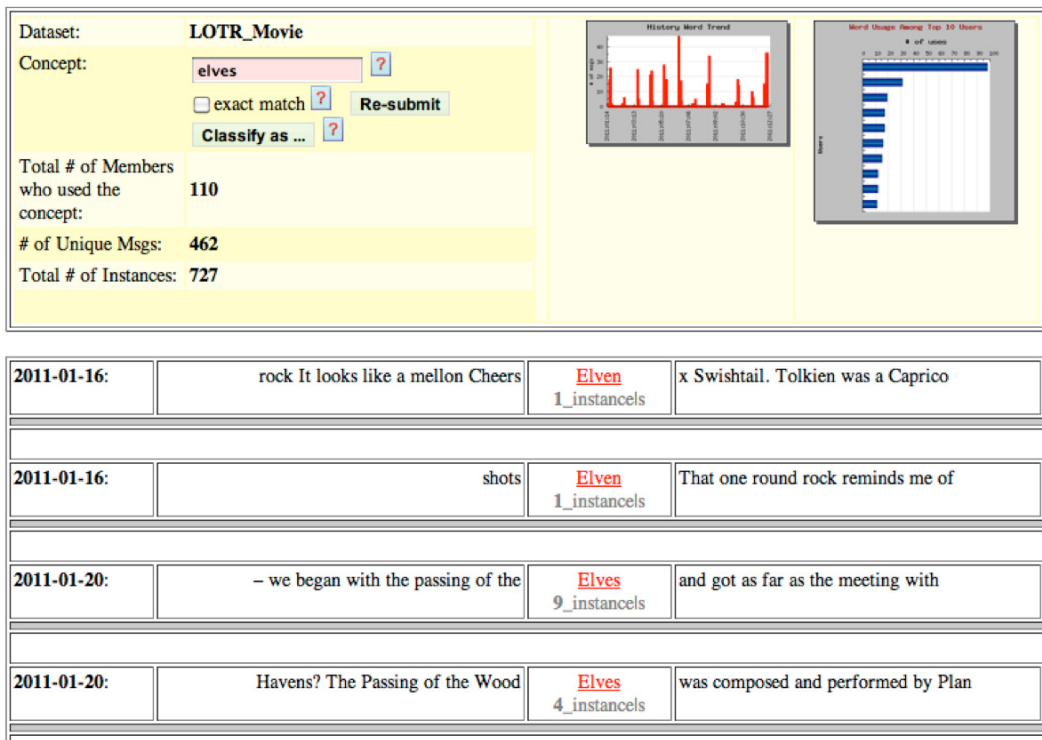


Figure A.2. Term (concept) page revealed by clicking on a word in the tag cloud

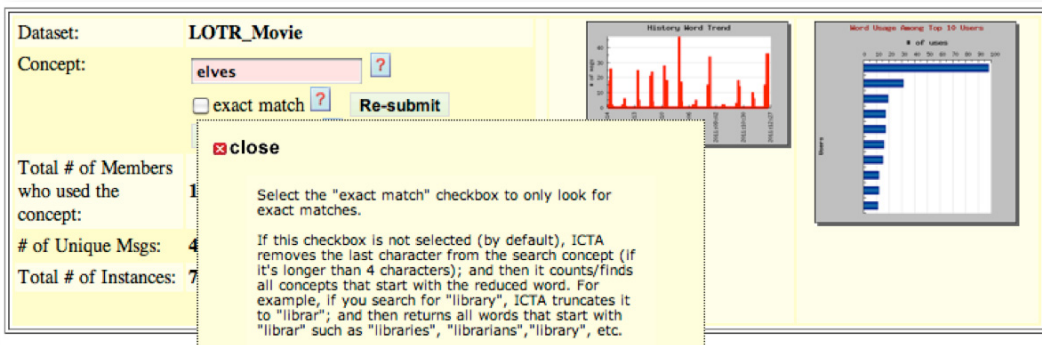


Figure A.3. How the ICTA creates term variants in the Yahoo! Extractor.



Figure A.4. Top 100, Yahoo! Extractor (LOTR_Movie dataset).

Local Extractor

1. The Local Extractor picks up roots of words and lists them in a tag cloud alphabetically while recording frequency of use. As expected, each root may have several variants, some of which are not related (e.g., “different” and “difficult.”)
2. The top 30 terms were examined and primary words recorded in order to understand the patterns formed by the Local Extractor (see lists below.)
3. Particular attention was given to those terms that match the words returned by the Yahoo! Extractor and those that would refer to worlds/places or visualization/emotion. These words would help inform further analysis.
4. The top 100 terms were also examined. Two obvious terms that appeared in the top 100 was “imag” and “imagi.” These roots returned the following words/numbers: **image/imagine/ imagination 106/482**. Other terms of interest include “looki” and “view.”
5. The process was repeated for the Reading Room dataset.

about¹⁹⁹⁸ ~~agai~~⁵¹⁵ ~~alli~~⁵⁵⁹ ~~back~~⁶¹⁰ ~~befo~~⁵¹³ book²⁰⁹⁷ ~~comm~~⁴⁷¹ ~~dalf~~⁷⁴⁹
~~diff~~⁵⁵⁰ ~~discussio~~⁶²⁶ ~~eadi~~⁷⁶⁶ ealli¹¹²⁰ ~~feel~~⁴⁸⁶ film¹⁸⁵⁴ ~~good~~⁷²⁸ ~~hese~~⁹¹⁴
hobbi¹¹²⁵ ~~hose~~⁸⁴³ hough¹⁶²⁸ ~~jackso~~⁵⁰⁹ ~~lace~~⁵⁵⁸ ~~ligh~~⁵⁵² ~~love~~¹⁰¹⁰ ~~made~~⁶⁶⁷
make¹⁰³³ ~~mome~~⁴⁸² movi²¹⁸³ ~~ough~~⁸⁷⁴ ~~show~~⁵³¹ ~~side~~⁴⁷²

Figure A.5. Top 30 terms, Local Extractor (LOTR_Movie dataset).

~~2009~~²¹¹ about¹⁹⁹⁸ ~~agai~~⁵¹⁵ ~~alli~~⁵⁵⁹ ~~almo~~¹⁹⁴ ~~back~~⁶¹⁰ ~~beaco~~²⁹³ ~~beau~~²⁷² ~~befo~~⁵¹³
~~begi~~²⁰⁶ ~~bilbo~~²⁰³ ~~black~~²²⁰ book²⁰⁹⁷ ~~call~~¹⁸⁹ ~~ched~~¹⁶⁸ ~~clea~~²³⁵ ~~close~~²²⁸ ~~comm~~⁴⁷¹
~~dalf~~⁷⁴⁹ ~~dalf~~¹⁸⁴ ~~dell~~¹⁷² ~~desc~~²⁰³ ~~desig~~²⁸⁵ ~~diff~~⁵⁵⁰ ~~discussio~~⁶²⁶ ~~eadi~~⁷⁶⁶ ~~ealiz~~¹⁹⁵
ealli¹¹²⁰ ~~caso~~²⁵⁸ ~~ecial~~³⁰⁰ ~~effec~~²¹⁶ ~~elli~~¹⁸⁴ ~~ememb~~⁴¹⁷ ~~eowi~~²⁰⁶ ~~eview~~²³⁵ ~~exam~~²⁰³ ~~face~~¹⁷¹
~~fall~~²⁰⁴ ~~feel~~⁴⁸⁶ ~~feeli~~¹⁷⁸ ~~fellowshi~~²¹⁶ ~~figh~~¹⁸⁹ film¹⁸⁵⁴ ~~galad~~²³⁸ ~~gollum~~³¹⁷ ~~good~~⁷²⁸
~~guess~~²⁵⁴ ~~havi~~²⁵⁹ ~~helm~~¹⁶⁷ ~~heod~~¹⁸⁵ ~~hese~~⁹¹⁴ hobbi¹¹²⁵ ~~home~~¹⁹⁹ ~~hose~~⁸⁴³
hough¹⁶²⁸ ~~ical~~⁴⁶⁷ ~~icula~~¹⁸¹ ~~idea~~²⁶² ~~iful~~²⁰⁵ ~~ilogi~~¹⁸⁷ ~~imag~~³⁵⁰ ~~imagi~~²⁹² ~~jackso~~⁵⁰⁹
~~lace~~⁵⁵⁸ ~~lead~~¹⁶⁶ ~~legola~~¹⁹² ~~life~~²⁹¹ ~~ligh~~⁵⁵² ~~live~~¹⁷⁹ ~~looki~~²⁶⁴ ~~love~~¹⁰¹⁰ ~~made~~⁶⁶⁷ ~~magic~~¹⁹⁸
make¹⁰³³ ~~maki~~²⁰⁶ ~~middl~~²⁶⁴ ~~middle-ea~~²⁵⁰ ~~migh~~⁴³⁷ ~~mome~~⁴⁸² movi²¹⁸³ ~~music~~³⁰⁵
~~obabl~~²⁶⁵ ~~oblem~~¹⁶² ~~oduc~~³⁵⁸ ~~ossibi~~²⁰⁹ ~~ough~~⁸⁷⁴ ~~seco~~²¹⁵ ~~seei~~²¹³ ~~seve~~¹⁷⁷ ~~show~~⁵³¹ ~~side~~⁴⁷²
~~small~~²²⁶ ~~somec~~²¹⁶ ~~sudd~~¹⁶⁷ ~~uall~~⁴³⁰ ~~view~~²⁷² ~~weav~~³⁴⁹ ~~websi~~¹⁷⁶ ~~week~~²³⁷ ~~you?~~¹⁶³

Figure A.6. Top100 terms, Local Extractor (LOTR_Movie dataset).

LOTR_Book -- Top 100 terms, Yahoo!Extractor (#members/#unique messages)

actors/people

bandits 3/6
 enemies 21/71
 frodo 88/751
 galadriel 47/312
 gandalf 81/521
 gimli 35/177
 good guys 20/47
 guardian 9/17
 protagonists 11/16
 saruman 43/213
 sauron 55/377
 spies 15/38
 theoden 22/86
 tolkien 131/1181
 travellers 16/29

worlds/places

anduin 18/70
 army 25/100
 barrow 28/78
 borders 27/87
 bree 32/142
 caves 28/76
 dike 12/15
 dwarves 47/205
 dunharrow 6/10
 edoras 16/37
 elves 72/440
 fortifications 14/28
 fortress 14/51
 gates 31/152
 geography 35/83
 glacier 3/5
 gondor (Gondolin) 62/293
 helm 23/82
 hobbit/The Hobbit 114/722

hobbits (same as hobbit?) 114/722
 hornburg 13/22
 huorns 8/15
 isen/isengard 26/95
 masonry 7/8
 middle earth 42/143
 noldor 19/48
 numenor 20/78
 old forest 20/81
 orcs 42/217
 orthanc 24/73
 rivendell 45/261
 rohan 45/188
 rohirrim 35/154
 secret passages 3/4
 shire 67/276
 summit (also summing) 10/32
 trees (could be vis/emo) 62/329

“things”
 arrows 18/42 - (could be worlds)
 birds 27/66 (could be worlds)
 crebain 8/12
 crows/crown/crowd 35/114
 eagles 22/60
 fate 25/108
 fish (also signature) 15/66
 grond 6/8
 horses 32/131 (could be worlds)
 losses 5/6
 moon 23/78
 muster 8/13 (could be worlds)
 palantir 15/57
 sails (also signature) 26/137
 snake (could be vis/emo) 9/17
 sword 32/138

wizard 35/137

films/books

lord of the rings (also signature) 38/453
 lotr 81/557
 trilogy 23/48
 two towers (could be worlds) 14/129

visualization/emotion

clouds 25/114 (could be worlds)
 critical importance (2/2?)
 depiction 14/28
 game 21/49
 heart/hear 81/565
 hubris 6/11
 imagery 14/31
 love (also Lovecraft) 81/464
 magic 46/228
 maps (could be worlds) 33/55
 mention (active) 67/282
 metaphors 21/58
 musings (also signature) 11/55
 peace 28/88 (could be “thing”)
 personalities 9/15
 population 10/27
 reply (also signature) 52/199
 shimmer 13/17
 slaughter 7/15
 struggle (active and noun) 31/78
 summons (?) 12/53
 teeth (could be world or “thing”) 13/31
 temptation 15/56

categories by J. Grek Martin

LOTR_Book -- Top 30 Terms from the ICTA Local Extractor

aragorn 72/454	made 77/420
back (background/backwards) 91/558	make 97/658
book 103/619	oint (0?)
discuss/discussions 65/674	ower (0?)
feel/feeling 78/411	read/Reading Room 115/999
find/finding 69/572	ring/ring's/ringbearer/ringwraiths 94/862
frodo 88/751	sauron 55/377
gandalf 81/521	story/storage/storm 93/617
gollum 39/187	thing/think/thinking 143/1351
good 90/657	thought/though 112/831
great 84/536	time/timeline/timeless 111/845
hobbit 114/722	tion (0?)
lace 6/9	tolkien 131/1181
long 93/714	work/working/workshops 83/476
lotr 81/557	
love 81/464	

LOTR_Movie -- Top 30 Terms from the ICTA Local Extractor

about 183/1140	hese (0?)
again/against 110/384	hobbit/Hobbit (book/film)/Hobbiton 124/707
Alliance/allies 14/27	hose (1?)
back/background 126/573	hough (4?)
before/beforehand 116/420	Jackson('s) 79/278
book/books, book/movie 188/1006	lace (1?)
comment/committed/common/commentaries/	light 85/387
communication 100/421	love/lovely/loveable/lover 143/669
dalf (0?)	made 133/496
difficult/different/differ 111/452	make/makers 144/755
discussion 69/576	moments 87/346
ead (0?)	movie 191/1066
ealli (0?)	ough (4?)
feel/feelings 120/457	show/showing/showcase/showdown 117/442
film/filmgoer/filmed/filmmaker 154/909	side/sidekick/sidelines 56/134
good/goodness/goodbye 148/629	

LOTR_Movie -- Top 100 terms, Yahoo!Extractor (#members/#unique messages)

actors/people	helmet 11/14	films 154/909
actors 39/95	gates 44/83 (Morannon)	fotr 92/276
aragorn 115/425	geography 21/25	lord of the rings 53/366
arwen 85/245	gondor 69/189	lotr 118/561
balrog 39/70	helm 75/167 (Helm's Deep - Elves at)	novel 38/72
bilbo 26/213	hobbit 124/705 (film)	prologue 37/67
christopher lee 12/16	hobbits (repeat of hobbit)	return of the king 29/62
denethor 57/148	middle earth 50/169	rotk 98/234
eowyn 47/121	minas 74/175	silmarillion 26/38
faramir 64/162	minas tirith 67/156	trilogy 65/162
frodo 127/544	mordor 61/115	two towers 34/80
gandalf 124/505	moria 45/95	visualization/emotion
gimli 58/105	mountains 58/143	anger 20/32 (?“angels”)
gollum 62/174	nazgul 37/63	appearance 31/46
interaction 10/13	new zealand 20/34	audience 45/118
liv tyler 26/31	orcs 49/87	dialogue 3670
legolas 69/136	rocks 37/81	emotion 44/92
peter jackson 44/90	rohan 46/95	heart 105/441 (?“hear”)
pippin 66/224	rohirrim 41/54	images 62/269
saruman 58/160	shire 74/257	imagination 29/44
sauron 80/253	stairs 39/71	love 143/669
servants 19/28	throne room 14/21	mistake 39/57
steward 33/49	uruk hai 10 (?1/1)	music 64/243
tolkien 122/755		no doubt 17/28
villain 21/33	“things”	omission 16/25
warriors 24/35	dragon 27/74	personality 12/19
witch king 17/22	horses 43/70	portrayal 14/21
worlds/places	flames 25/75	reply 86/207 (usernames)
armor 28/35	gold (Goldberry...)39/82	scenery 18/24
army 39/66	helms (repeat of helm)	shape 28/62
beacons 39/99	journey 39/197	tension 27/44
dwarves 46/177	films/books	trickster 8 (?0)
earth 110/426	appendices 38/82	
elves 110/462	fellowship of the ring 22/36	<i>categories by J. Grek Martin</i>
ford 28/39 (Bruinen)	filmmakers 36/77	

IV. Initial list of visualization terms created by Grek Martin.

envision* - (envision, envisioning, envisioned)

visuali* - (visualize, visualized, visualizes, visualizing; visualise, visualised, visualises, visualising)

imagin* - (imagine, imagined, imagines, imagining)

pictur* - (picture, pictured, pictures, picturing)

mental picture* - (mental picture, mental pictures)

in my head -

in my mind -

in my mind's eye -

the films - (used only in combination with other terms)

the text - (used only in combination with other terms)

The following terms are names for prominent locations appearing in both the books and the films.

The Shire or Hobbiton	Amon Hen	Shelob's Lair
Bree or Prancing Pony	Isengard	Dead Marshes
Weathertop or Amon Sul	Fangorn or Fangorn Forest	Eryn Muil
Buinen or River Bruinen	Rohan or Plains of Rohan	Mordor
Rivendell or Imladris	Westfold	Barad-Dur
Misty Mountains or Caradhras	Edoras	Black Gate or
Morannon		
Mines of Moria or Khazad-Dum	Meduseld or The Golden Hall	Grey Havens
or Mithlond		
Balin's Tomb	Minas Tirith	
Bridge of Khazad-Dum	Osgiliath	
Lorien or Lothlorien	Paths of the Dead	
Anduin or River Anduin	Minas Morgul	
Argonath	Cirith Ungol	
Parth Galen	Ithilien	

Appendix B. List of Threads from TORn

LOTR_Book Dataset

THREAD NAME	DATE	NOTES	KEYWORDS
Are Middle-Earth Cultures medieval?	2011-02-	geography	
The King of the Golden Hall: Places and Magic P	2011-02-	geography; book to movie comparisons	
Helm's Deep: Part 4: Wrap up	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Helm's Deep
Helm's Deep: Part 1: The beginning	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Helm's Deep
From 'Admirable' to 'Abominable': Sauron's tragic	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Farewell to Lorien: Part 4 The Big Goodbye	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
Farewell to Lorien: Part 3 Visit to the Supply Flet	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
Farewell to Lorien: Part 2 Did I say that Out Loud	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
Black Spider Web	2011-02-	geography	Shelob's Lair
Lothlorien 5 Here is the heart of Elvendom on Ear	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
Lothlorien 4 Alas for Lothlorien that I love	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
Lothlorien 3 you breathe so loud they could have s	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
Lothlorien 1 There lies his crown in water deep	2011-02-	geography	Lothlorien
The Bridge of Khazad-Dum: Just when you thoug	2011-02-	geography	Moria
A section in the book where the movie makes mor	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
What is the *fundamental* legend of The Lord of	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
My OH is finally reading THE books	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Many Meetings	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Did Tolkien ever explain what would happen if...	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Imladris: just a house, or a city? And, how multrac	2011-02-	geography	Rivendell
Why are there no 'towers of a distant city' on the r	2011-02-	geography	
LotRs & Feminism	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Were there other Bree's?	2011-02-	geography	
opinions?	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Book I, Chapter 11, "A Knife in the Dark": Are Bl	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Book I, Chapter 10, "Strider": You Will Meet a Ta	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
The Old Forest: A Silent Menace and a Noisy Res	2011-02-	geography	The Old Forest
I have been thinking this for a long time	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	Frodo and Bilbo in
Scariest moments in LotR	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
"Three Is Company" -- Let's go camping!	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
It's Tolkien Reading Day! Post your ABCs of Tolk	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Open Discussion Thread	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
The Hobbit Free Discussion: The Role of the Narr	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
10th Anniversary Celebration: A retrospective on t	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	original LOTR rev
A Short Rest--Part 4, The Last Homely Hous	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Rivendell
A Short Rest--Part 3, The Rivendell Elves	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Elvish "world"
A Short Rest--Part 1, The Approach to Riven	2011-02-	geography	Rivendell
LotR Free Discussion: The Appendices as movie s	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
LOTR Free Discussion: What chapters do you like	2011-02-	book to movie comparisons	
Mount Doom IV-- The End of All Things	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Orodruin
Mount Doom I-- Lightening the Load	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Orodruin
The Land of Shadow, part I -- "Abandon all hope,	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Mordor
The Tower of Cirith Ungol II: Welcome to Mordor	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Mordor
Battle of the Pelennor Fields part 4	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Pelennor Fields

THREAD NAME	DATE	NOTES	KEYWORDS
Ride of the Rohirrim 1: Orientation	2011-02-	visualization/representation	maps
The Siege of Gondor XI - - "Do you not know De	2011-02-	geography; book to movie c	Siege of Gondor
Minas Tirith I: The Beacons and the Arrival	2011-03-	geography; book to movie c	Beacons
Minas Tirith 0.5: Visualizing the City of the Kings	2011-03-	geography; book to movie c	Minas Tirith
Shelob's Lair II - A labyrinth of darkness	2011-03-	geography	Shelob's Lair
The Forbidden Pool, Part 2 -- Summer Stage, Act	2011-03-	geography	Forbidden Pool
The Forbidden Pool -- Part 1, Pool Party!	2011-03-	geography	Forbidden Pool
Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit Part I	2011-03-	geography	Ithilien
The Black Gate is Closed, I - locality, and a riddle	2011-03-	geography	Morannon
The Passage of the Marshes 4: Mapping the journe	2011-03-	geography	Dead Marshes
The Palantir IV: Pippin and the Palantir in Art	2011-03-	visualization/representation	
Chapter Discussion: Flotsam and Jetsam, 4 - The /	2011-03-	visualization/representation	nature
The Road to Isengard part 5	2011-03-	geography	Orthanc/Isengard
Chapter Discussion: Helm's Deep - Build 'em big	2011-03-	geography	Helm's Deep
King of the Golden Hall 2: Edoras	2011-03-	geography	Edoras
Treebeard — 1. A 'frightfully tree-ish' introductio	2011-03-	geography	Fangorn
The Riders of Rohan -- 7. "things that had been dr	2011-03-	geography	Rohan
TTT: The Departure of Boromir II	2011-03-	visualization/representation	Rauros
TTT: "The Departure of Boromir" I	2011-03-	book to movie comparisons	
Breaking of the Fellowship part 6	2011-03-	book to movie comparisons	
The Great River -- Behold the Argonath	2011-03-	geography	Argonath
The Great River -- Black Swans and other details	2011-03-	geography; book to movie c	Rauros
The Mirror of Galadriel 5 - Tolkien's Colour Scher	2011-03-	visualization/representation	
A Journey in the Dark IV: In Xanadu did Kubla-K	2011-03-	geography	Moria
A Journey in the Dark II: The Holly and the Slimy	2011-03-	geography	Hollin
Middle Earth...as Earth?	2011-03-	geography, visualization	
The Ring Goes South -- Part 8: The Last (Chapter	2011-03-	geography, visualization	
The Council of Elrond - 1. Introductions	2011-03-	geography	Rivendell
A Knife in the Dark 4. "My cuts, short or lon	2011-03-	geography, visualization	Bree
Strider 8. Proof	2011-03-	book to movie comparisons	
Fog on the Barrow-downs III: Barrows and Wight	2011-03-	visualization/representation	Barrow-wights
The Old Forest III: This is the forest prime-evil	2011-03-	geography	Old Forest
The Old Forest II: So long, farewell, auf wiederse	2011-03-	geography, visualization	Old Forest
The Old Forest I: Introduction and Wake-Up Call	2011-03-	geography, visualization	Shire
Ch 3. "Three is Company" - Pt 6: Not Another **	2011-03-	visualization/representation	Elvish "world"
LOTR chapter discussion: A Long Expected Party	2011-03-	visualization/representation	Hobbit "world"
LotR Discussion: The Maps	2011-03-	geography	maps
The "Narrow Stair" of Orthanc	2011-03-	geography, visualization	Orthanc/Isengard

LOTR_Movie Dataset

THREAD NAME	DATE	NOTES	KEYWORDS
Which start do you prefer of FOTR?	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
ROTK Geography? Where were the Rammas Ec	2011-01-1	geography	
The biggest mistake.	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
What did Christopher Tolkien think about the fil	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
The Big Silver Screen	2011-01-1	what scenes need to be on the big screen	
First viewing -continued.	2011-01-2	poster shares son's reaction to the films	
What would Tolkien have done differently?	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
First-viewer's report?	2011-01-2	poster shares son's reaction to the films	
Dissapointment at Pelennor Fields	2011-01-1	geography	Pelennor Fields
Little details that are exactly how you pictured th	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
Question towards purists: Which film do you pre	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
Pick one actor/actress	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons - focused on "look	
Screencap of the Day, 10.25.10 -- Denethor's dor	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Minas Tirith
What's Your Favourite Scene(s) from LOTR?	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
My thoughts about EE and TE FOTR	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
SCOD 8-16-10: Beacon of Eilenach	2011-01-2	geography	Beacons
SCOD 12/07/10: Minas Tirith	2011-01-1	geography	Minas Tirith
Imagine if...	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Do you have a pet peeve about some small detail	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
for movie-firsters who read the book: a book-firs	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
Whenever you feel nostalgic, which part of the tr	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
Is there a geologist in the house?	2011-01-1	geography	
PROPS Extra: Autumn in the Shire	2011-01-1	geography	Shire
Screencap of the Day!	2011-01-1	geography	Fangorn, Rohan
Literary Sauron's absence...	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Mordor
SCOD - The Road Goes Ever On	2011-01-1	geography	Mordor
SCOD ~ 14 July, 2009~ Argonath	2011-01-1	geography	Argonath
SCOD ~ Step up -- you're all about to meet the E	2011-01-1	geography	Lothlorien
SCOD - 13 July 2009 - Chamber of Mazarbul	2011-01-1	geography	Moria
PROPS 15/06/09 (belated): Rivendell Hospital V	2011-01-1	geography	Rivendell
PROPS - Grond!	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
SCOD - June 8: "Arwen Controversy"	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
FOTR EE Appendices Discussion ~~Designing l	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Lothlorien
FOTR EE Appendices Discussion ~~Designing l	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Moria
FOTR EE Appendices Discussion ~~Designing l	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Rivendell
FOTR EE AppendicesDiscussions ~~ Designing	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Bree
FOTR EE Appendices Discussion ~~Designing l	2011-01-1	geography; book to movie co	Hobbiton
PROPS 31/05/09: Inside the Hornburg	2011-01-1	geography	Helm's Deep
Question about the beacons sequence	2011-01-1	geography	Beacons
FOTR EE ~ Appendices Discussions ~ Middle-e	2011-01-1	geography	
PROPS 25/5/09 (belated): Dwarven Architecture	2011-01-2	geography	Moria
FOTR EE ~ Appendices Discussions ~ New Zea	2011-01-1	geography	Hobbiton
Screencap of the Day -- At the Inn of the Prancin	2011-01-1	geography	Bree
PROPS 03/05/09 Theodred's room	2011-01-1	geography	Rohan
SCOD-April 29 Death stalks the Shire	2011-01-1	geography	Shire
PROPS, April 25 - Welcome to Orthanc...	2011-01-1	geography	Orthanc/Isengard

THREAD NAME	DATE	NOTES	KEYWORDS
PROPS 19/04/09: The Throneroom at Minas Tirith	2011-01-1	geography	Minas Tirith
FOTR EE Appendices Discussion "Book to Screen"	2011-01-1	book to movie comparisons	
FOTR EE Appendices Discussion "Book to Screen"	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
PROPS, April 11, Easter Special: Life In the Shire	2011-01-2	geography	Shire
PROPS, April 4 : 2009 Elrond's study	2011-01-2	geography	Rivendell
Death Quote Quandry	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
PROPS 29/03/09: Impressions of Bree	2011-01-2	geography	Bree
Was the prologue in FOTR a mistake?	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Processing BSG through Jackson's LOTR.	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
PROPS 22/3/09: Gondorian State Archive	2011-01-2	geography	Minas Tirith
SCOD - the final week pt One - To the Grey Havens	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	Grey Havens/Minas Tirith
What Could Have Been - Tom Bombadil	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	Bombadil
SCOD - February 23: Exploding Eye	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	Mordor
Question for movie-firsters	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Your Favorite Move Representation	2011-01-2	visualization/representation	
Screenshot of the Day, for 1/21/09 At the Houses	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	Minas Tirith
1/16 SCOD: The Land of Mordor	2011-01-2	geography	Mordor
Grand Finale -- Random Ringer ROTK Reviews	2011-01-2	movie reviews	ROTK
Elves	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	Elvish "world"
MISC 12/20/08: Caradhras	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	Caradhras
Here they are, Random Ringer Reviews of The Two	2011-01-2	movie reviews	TTT
Thread for Random Ringer Reviews of FOTR...	2011-01-2	movie reviews	FOTR
Some fun questions for movie-firsters	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
FrontPage Poll Question: if you could change back	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
LOTR scenery...	2011-01-2	visualization/representation	
SCOD: Nov 3, 2008 "This Army."	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	The Dead
Scenes not included in the EEs.	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
What if Annatar had appeared to Aragorn?	2011-01-2	visualization/representation	
Arwen is dying	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	Elvish "world"
Observations on watching the movies (again)	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Gandalf and three Eagles	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
SCOD August 20 - The Morgul Vale Signal Goes	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	Morgul Vale
What are your complaints with PJ's adaptation?	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons; movie reviews	
SCOD - August 11 - TTT (The Two Thrones)	2011-01-2	geography	Minas Tirith
SCOD - The White Tree of Gondor.	2011-01-2	geography	Minas Tirith
Screenshot of the Day -- He means to murder us!	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
MISC A tour of Minas Tirith	2011-01-2	geography	Minas Tirith
Screenshot of the Day 06/18/08	2011-01-2	geography	Huorns
Can you see Mordor from Rohan?	2011-01-2	geography	distances in ME
SCOD - Osgiliath Burns!	2011-01-2	geography	Gondor
The Two Lord of the Rings - Book/Film Comparison	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
**Screenshot of the Day: May 7 -- help and hope	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	Elves at Helm's Deep
Screenshot of the Day: Welcome to Helm's Deep	2011-01-2	geography	Helm's Deep
Screenshot of the Day: Welcome to Ithilien.	2011-01-2	geography	Ithilien
**Screenshot of the Day for April 7: War and Love	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	epic/private space
SCOD - Surrounded by Riders!	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Screenshot of the Day -- January 13 -- Two of the	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	Rohan

THREAD NAME	DATE	NOTES	KEYWORDS
Movie Technical Discussion 1 - Book to Script	2011-01-2	film adaptations	
What did Peter J., add to the movies.....	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PROFESSOR! QTNA: WI	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
What did PJ add to the movies that should have t	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Did the screen writers read the books more than	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
RotK -- One of the 10 Worst Movie Endings?	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons;	movie reviews
Six years ago....	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
realism vs. fantasy....	2011-01-2	visualization/representation	
MISC 11/26/07: Blossom on the White Tree	2011-01-2	visualization/representation	"hope"
MISC 11/10/07: Sammath Naur	2011-01-2	geography	Mordor
QTNA: FOUR IS A CROWD	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie co	Shire
SCOD- Lothlórien: Tension on the talan	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie co	Lothlorien
LotR and "narrative tightness".	2011-01-2	film adaptations	
Screencap of the Day: "It had once been green ar	2011-01-2	geography	Orthanc/Isengard
MISC 7/7/07: The Argonath	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie co	Argonath
In the return of the king why are	2011-01-2	geography; book to movie comparisons	
Time	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	"time"
I have this strange obsession --	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	
Been thinking.	2011-01-2	book to movie comparisons	

Appendix C: Visualization Versus To Visualize: Categories, Tables and Netlytic Visualizations

I. Creating and Visualizing Categories using the ICTA

1. To create a new category, (like “visualization” in Figure C.3 below,) the name of the category can be typed in the box to the left of the “Add new category button” (see Figure C.2.) Once the category is created, clicking on the name will bring the user to the category level, where the user can begin adding terms to populate the category.
2. To populate the terms of this category, type the word into the box to the right of “Add a new word/phrase” and click the “Add term” button. Continue this process until all the desired words or phrases have been added. The ICTA offers hints (see Figure C.2 below) for words with various endings or multiple phrases.
3. To see what the data of a particular category looks like, (i.e., how many posts contained these words or phrases and in what context,) simply close the “Categories” screen and click the “Analyze” button under “Categories” on the main Text Analysis menu (see Figures C.4 and C.5.)
4. Once the ICTA has processed the data, it will offer the choice to clear the results or visualize them. To see the data graphically displayed, click the “Visualize” button.
5. The resulting screen will show all the chosen categories as multi-coloured boxes with the name of the categories within each box. The size of the boxes corresponds to the relative usage within the selected dataset.
6. Clicking on a category will return the breakdown of terms within that category, again displayed using multi-coloured boxes (see Figure C.6.) Clicking on a term in this screen will bring the user to the term/concept screen, where the context and full message can be viewed for each instance of use of that term or its variants.
7. To change datasets, choose the new dataset from the “Select Dataset” dropdown menu at the top of the “Step 3. Text Analysis” page of the ICTA.
8. Any changes to datasets or categories will require the user to clear the categories, reanalyze them, and re-visualize them. Click “Clear,” and “OK” for “Do you really want to remove the results of the previous analysis?” Click the “Analysis” button when it appears, and then “Visualize.”

NETLYTIC | Internet Community Text Analyzer [Report a Problem](#)

HOME | 1. IMPORT | 2. CLEAN | **3. TEXT ANALYSIS** | 4. NETWORK ANALYSIS | [HELP](#) | [CHANGE PASSWORD](#) | [LOG OUT](#)

<Previous Step | Next Step>

Select Dataset: LOTR_Movie [records:3098]

YAHOO! CONCEPT EXTRACTOR (DISCONTINUED FEATURE)		?
# of found Yahoo! terms:	4809	
# of unprocessed messages:	1	
Discontinued Feature Export Results Visualize		

LOCAL CONCEPT EXTRACTOR		?
# of found terms:	201078	
No new messages to process		
Clear Export Results Visualize		


CATEGORIES 		?
# instances of each category:	6391	
No new messages to process		
Clear Visualize		

Figure C.1. The ICTA Text Analysis screen.

[Add new category](#)

CATEGORIES:

- [AGREEMENT](#) ✕
- [BAD PLACE](#) [UNDELETE]
- [BOOK_FIRSTER](#) [UNDELETE]
- [CERTAINTY](#) [UNDELETE]
- [DISAGREEMENT](#) ✕
- [EVALUATION](#) ✕
- [GOOD PLACE](#) [UNDELETE]
- [MOVIE_FIRSTER](#) [UNDELETE]
- [OPINION](#) [UNDELETE]
- [POSITIVE](#) [UNDELETE]
- [REFERENCE](#) [UNDELETE]
- [SELF](#) [UNDELETE]
- [UNCERTAINTY](#) [UNDELETE]
- [US](#) [UNDELETE]
- [VISUALIZATION](#) ✕

Note:

*** (three stars) at the end of a word means that this word may have different endings. For example, "read***" will be equal to "read", "reads", "reading", "readings". (This functionality does not work for words inside a phrase)

* (one star) between words in a phrase is a placeholder for "any word". For example, "from * post" will be equal to "from my post", "from his post", and "from Nick's post".

agreement ↑

Add a new word/phrase [Add Term](#)

- [agree](#) ✕
- [agree * jackson](#) ✕
- [agree***](#) ✕
- [awesome](#) ✕
- [good idea](#) ✕
- [good ideas](#) ✕
- [good point***](#) ✕
- [great](#) ✕
- [happy](#) ✕
- [I **** agree***](#) ✕
- [i also](#) ✕
- [i too](#) ✕
- [like***](#) ✕
- [love***](#) ✕
- [thank***](#) ✕
- [thinking the same thing](#) ✕
- [tolkien * agree](#) ✕
- [well said](#) ✕
- [yes](#) ✕

Figure C.2. The “Categories” page of the ICTA, showing the modified pre-existing category “agreement.” Other pre-existing categories are “certainty,” “evaluation,” “opinion,” “positive,” “reference,” “self,” “uncertainty,” and “us.”

visualization ↑

Add a new word/phrase Add Term

- [appear***](#) ✕
- [depict***](#) ✕
- [describe***](#) ✕
- [discuss***](#) ✕
- [envision***](#) ✕
- [feel***](#) ✕
- [find***](#) ✕
- [image***](#) ✕
- [imagin***](#) ✕
- [in my brain](#) ✕
- [in my head](#) ✕
- [in my mind](#) ✕
- [look***](#) ✕
- [made](#) ✕
- [make***](#) ✕
- [map***](#) ✕
- [mental](#) ✕
- [mind'e eye \[UNDELETE\]](#)
- [mind's eye](#) ✕
- [moment***](#) ✕
- [paint***](#) ✕
- [pictor***](#) ✕
- [picture***](#) ✕
- [portray***](#) ✕
- [scenery](#) ✕
- [see***](#) ✕
- [shape***](#) ✕
- [show***](#) ✕
- [struggle***](#) ✕
- [think***](#) ✕
- [thought](#) ✕
- [view***](#) ✕
- [vision***](#) ✕
- [visuali***](#) ✕
- [work***](#) ✕

Figure C.3. Visualization: a user-created and user-defined category. This image shows all the terms in the first composition of the “Visualization” category and, as well, a “deleted” term.



CATEGORIES 		
# instances of each category:	0	
# of unprocessed messages:	3098	
Analyze		
↓ See more processing options		

Figure C.4. “Visualization” ready to be analyzed.



Figure C.5. “Visualization” ready to be visualized.

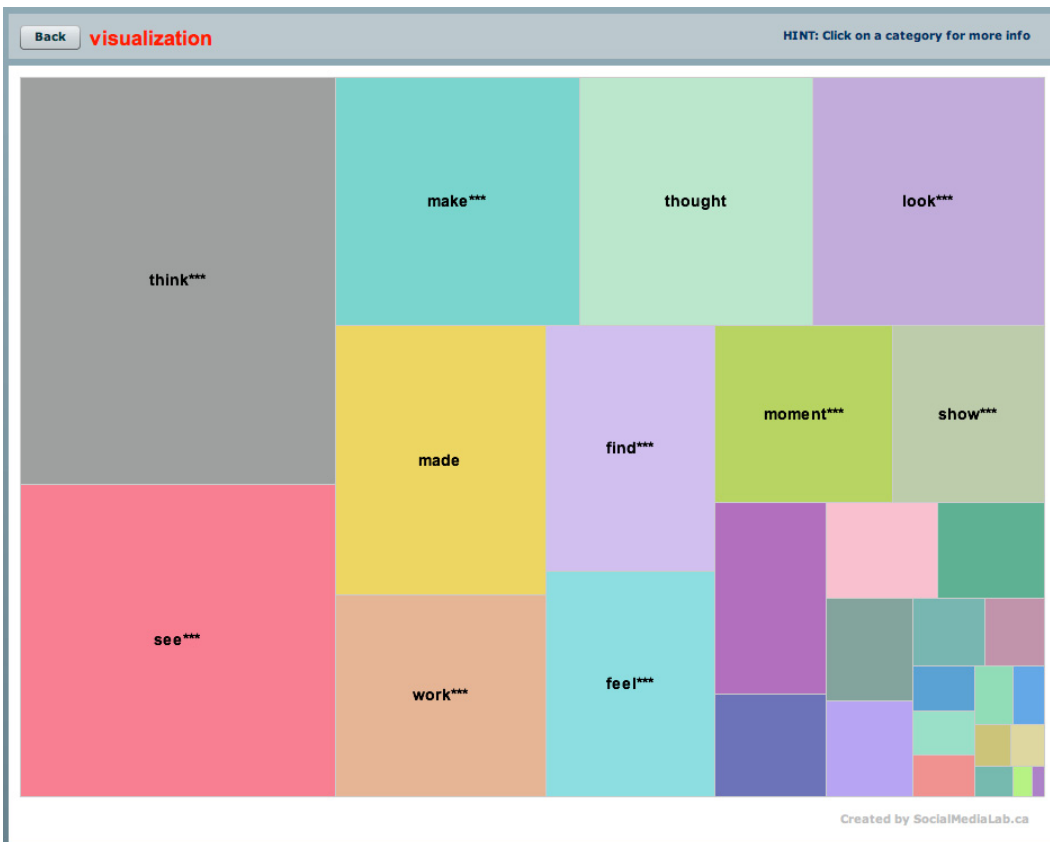


Figure C.6. A visual breakdown of terms within the category “Visualization” from the LOTR_Movie dataset. There were 6391 instances of terms used (out of 3098 records.)

II. “Visualization” versus “Visualize” -- First Attempt

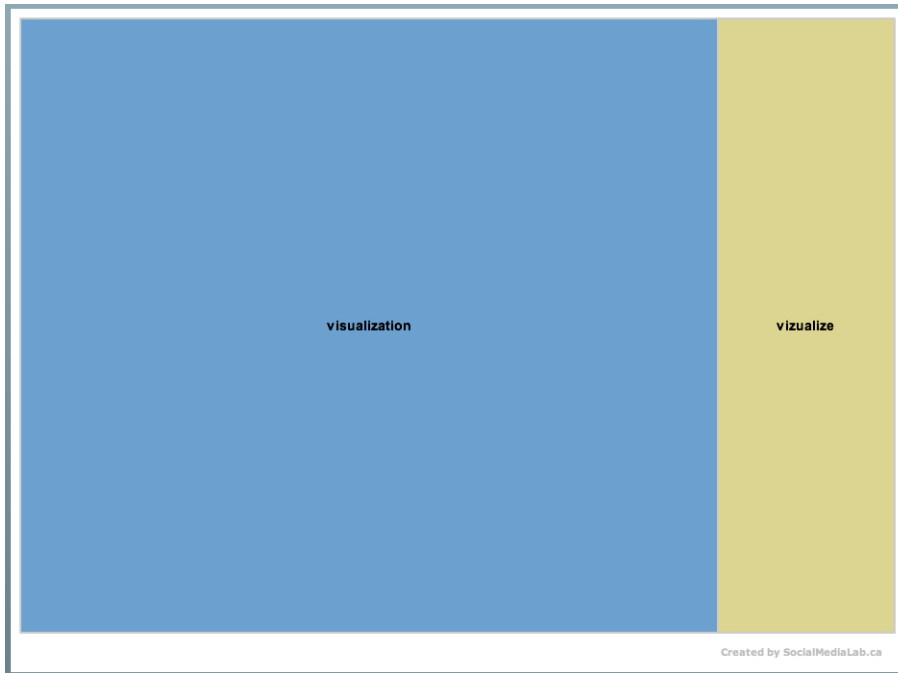


Figure C.7. LOTR_Book (6196 “Visualization” v. 1571 ”Visualize”)

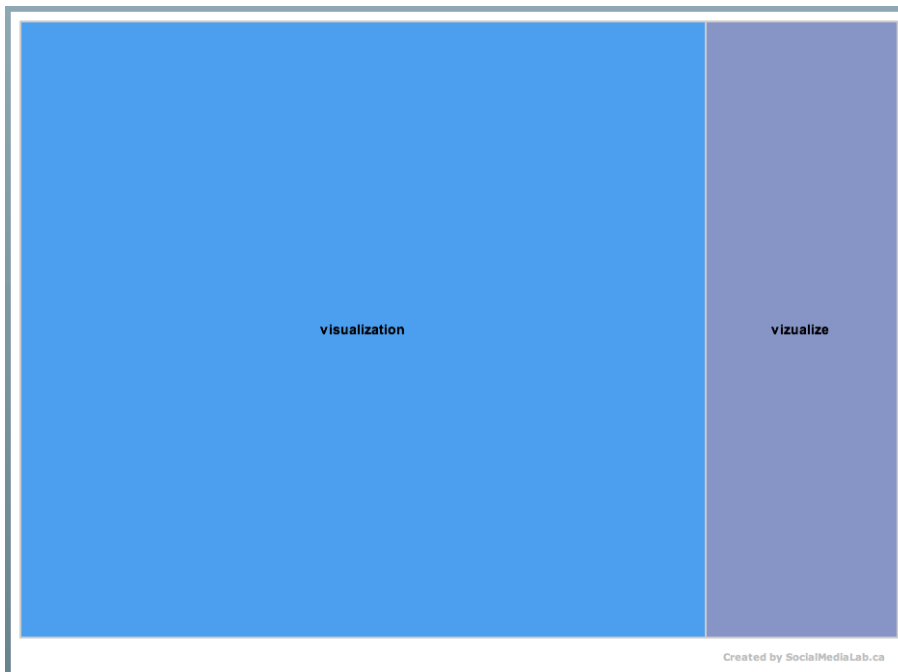


Figure C.8. LOTR_Movie (6392 “Visualization” v. 1793 “Visualize”)

Table C.1. “Visualize” terms from the LOTR_Book dataset, first attempt, with comments

word/phrase	#instances	notes
I ** think	811	Varies; mostly about scenes from the book and whether the films conformed to the books (I do not think the geography is meant..., I think the professor wouldn't have liked it, I think they used the glade for transport...)
I ** see	230	Varies; ocular vision (I don't see any village smithy in this scene), understanding (I don't see this as magic), and mental imagery (I can't really see the army corps of orcs...)
I ** find	154	context varies; some non-Tolkien related, others relating to mental imagery (I find it more moving here than in the film, I find it a lovely image...)
I thought	115	similar to I ** think; more emphasis on mental imagery than LOTR_Movie
I ** imagine	89	used reference to envisioning scenes -- not exclusively, but more so than LOTR_Movie
I found	63	similar to I ** find. See quote from Inferno below.
I saw	40	in context of seeing the films (I saw the films first, When I saw TT...); also non-Tolkien references
it ** made	33	usually in reference to something made in the story (I had an image it was made of stone, it made Sam weep, etc.)
I ** picture***	32	almost all pertained to mental imagery (I pictured Elrond's home, I still don't picture a village); some pertained to actual pictures (I love this picture of Sam)
I ** envision***	17 (5)	all pertained to mental imagery
I imagined	8	almost all pertained to mental imagery
I ** visuali***	8	(did not show up in visualization)

Table C.2. “Visualize” terms from the LOTR_Movie dataset, first attempt, with comments

word/phrase	#instances	notes
I ** think	858	Varies; mostly about scenes and whether the films conformed to the books (When I look at the stairs in Moria, I don't think about their practicality..., I still think they [the filmmakers] should have tried...); some non-book/film references
I ** see	247	Varies; ocular vision (I see the films), understanding (I see what you mean), and mental imagery (So when I see “surrounded by Riders”...)
I thought	206	similar to I ** think;
I saw	128	almost exclusively in context of seeing the films (I saw the films first, When I saw TT...)
I ** find	115	Varies; many non-visualization references, though there are some (I find the Prancing Pony fascinating..., I find the geography of Middle-earth confusing...)
I ** imagine	83	generally in reference to envisioning scenes, though not exclusively. Some negative/positive responses connotations are reversed (e.g. I cannot imagine them doing this without Lothlorien, I can't point to a film whose look is that I imagine LOTR to be)
it ** made	67	also evaluative; (it made it feel real, it made more sense, etc.)
I found	58	similar to I ** find, overall less so than in LOTR_Book
I imagined	19	similar to I ** imagine
I ** picture***	29	all pertained to mental imagery*
I ** envision***	6 (1)	all pertained to mental imagery
I ** visuali***	4	(did not show up in visualization)

*e.g., “I ** picture***” produced 29 instances, where all of the posts contained reference to mental imagery of scenes or characters -- 17 of which pertained to scenes/landscapes (not characters).

instances found: 565

2011-01-20	I try to make the two	work	together for something
2011-01-20	I know it's a lot of	work	to write up these
2011-01-20	I understand how it	works	on me - but on others?
2011-01-20	came from; but it cannot	work	within The Lord of the
2011-01-20	Alan Lee and John Howe's	work	to accept it as the way
2011-01-20	interior design - the	work	done by designers and
2011-01-20	background noise when I	work	from home or clean but
2011-01-20	lighting, music, etc. --	work	together to make it a
2011-01-20	in the book, yet it	works	there because it gives
2011-01-20	grow here again. What	works	for me here is not only
2011-01-20	who created these great	works	. I was prepared for the
2011-01-20	without the Incredible	work	of Andy Serkis as
2011-01-21	me at least, they both	work	. Like others, I also
2011-01-22	too. It certainly	works	for me! The screencap
2011-01-22	about how all of this	works	and hope that you would
2011-01-22	because well. It	works	! It's an art form that

about things! QuoteI have often complained that Saruman's complexity was diluted in the movies, and perhaps I was wrong to project my ideas to this scene. Was I? I don't think so. For two reasons. One, I appreciate and love the movies in many ways. But the book is, imo, superior and when I have to make a choice on which form of art to either conjure up or allow to take precedence, it's almost always the book. It's more satisfying for me. I try to make the two **work** together for something greater than the parts (since the audio visual component of the movies helps me 'get' the story better) rather than allowing the two spar for a position of 'better' when they don't agree with each other by discarding what doesn't **work** (usually from the movie) and substituting (usually from the book) what does. Two, although I appreciate a detached, academic examination of Tolkien's **work**, I just as much (well.. probably more) appreciate

Close

Figure C.9. An example of “work” as reference to visualization and evaluation. (Magpie, January 2, 2011).

III. “Visualization” versus “Visualize” (after refinement of categories)

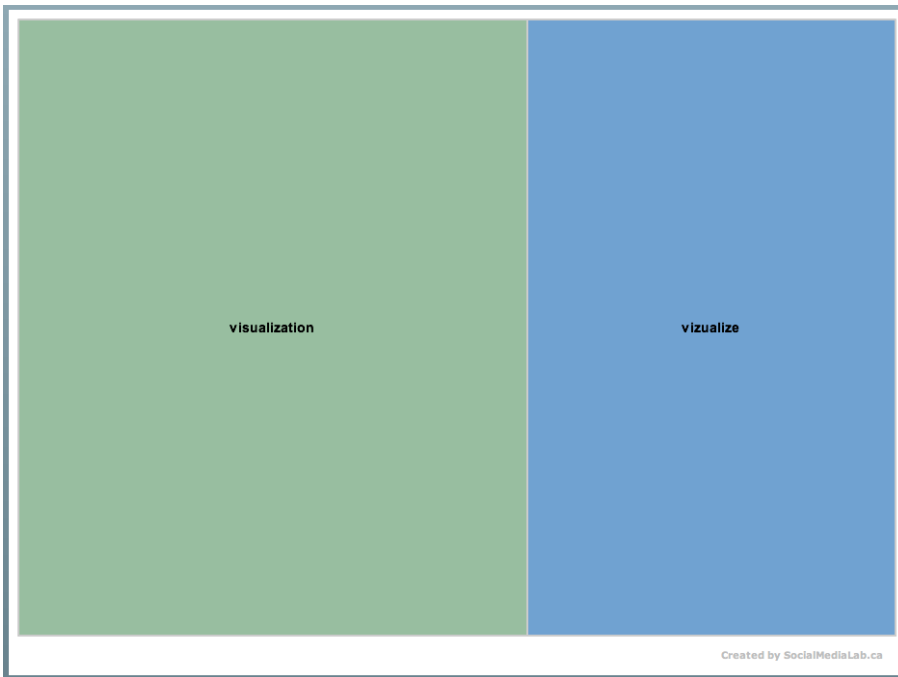


Figure C.10. LOTR_Book (2258 “Visualization” v. 1637 “Visualize”)

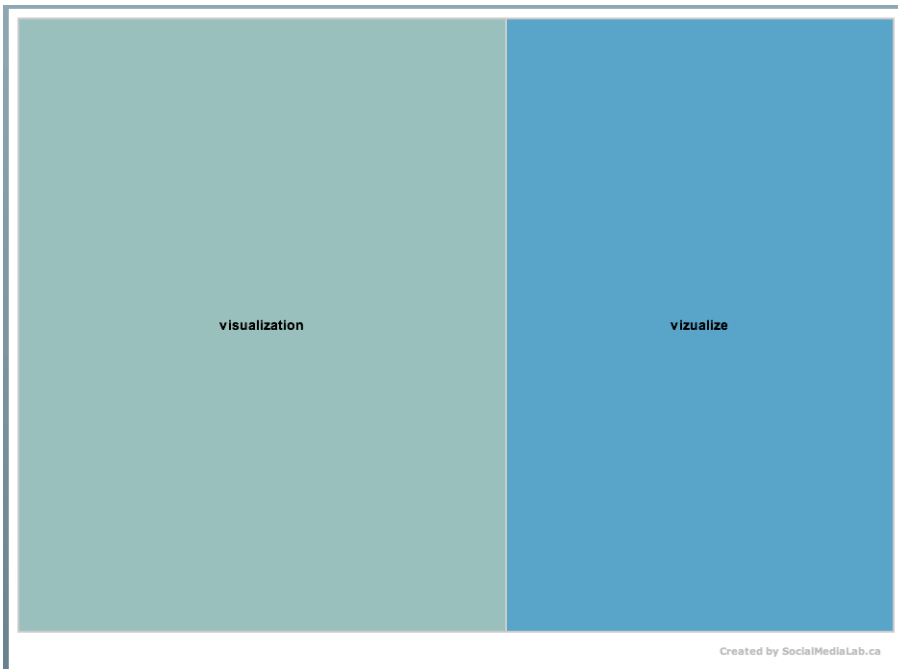


Figure C.11. LOTR_Movie (2362 “Visualization” v. 1877 “Visualize”)

Table C.3. “Visualization” final category showing exact match and total number of instances. (LOTR_Book dataset = 2658 records, LOTR_Movie dataset = 3098 records.)

LOTR_Book 2258 (3819)*	term	LOTR_Movie 2362 (4174)*
317 (593)	look***	500 (861)
316 (476)	work***	367 (565)
295 (330)	moment***	272 (345)
224 (258)	description***	40 (57)
185 (246)	view***	99 (245)
180 (237)	scene***	526 (688)
130 (387)	image***	185 (479)
110 (145)	picture***	94 (173)
102 (290)	appear***	72 (207)
91 (266)	describe***	24 (111)
80 (92)	vision***	77 (93)
60 (78)	struggle***	13 (33)
41 (120)	represent***	15 (78)
36	mental	22
34	in my mind	19
15 (61)	depict***	5 (36)
13 (32)	envision***	3 (17)
11 (69)	portray***	16 (76)
10	in my head	12
8 (69)	paints***	1 (57)

* numbers refer to “exact match base term” (“number of instances with variations”). This situation is due to terms with variable endings (ending in ***)

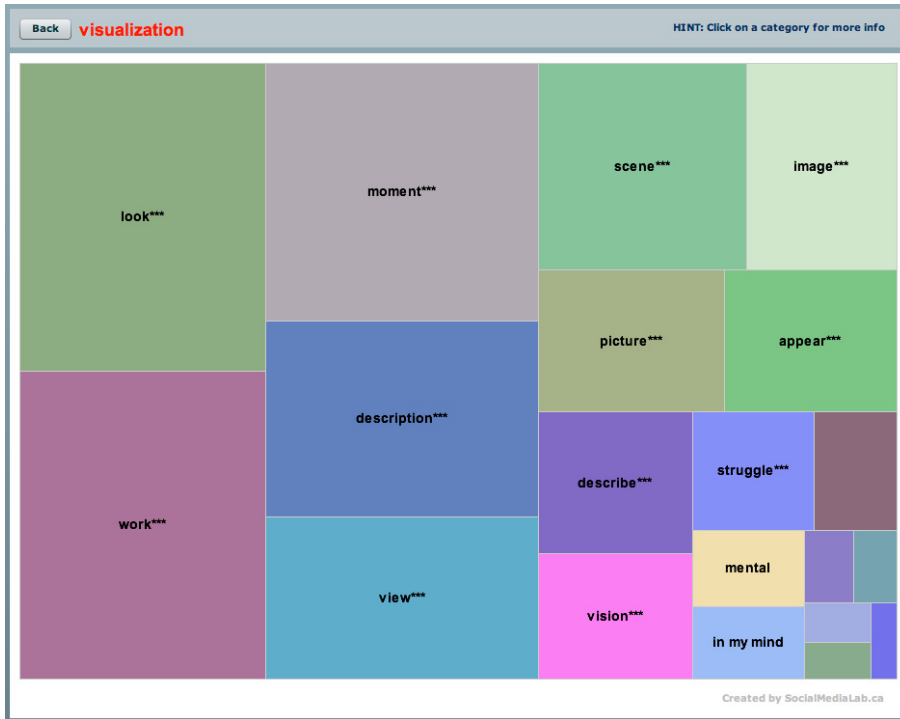


Figure C.12. LOTR_Book: “Visualization” categories

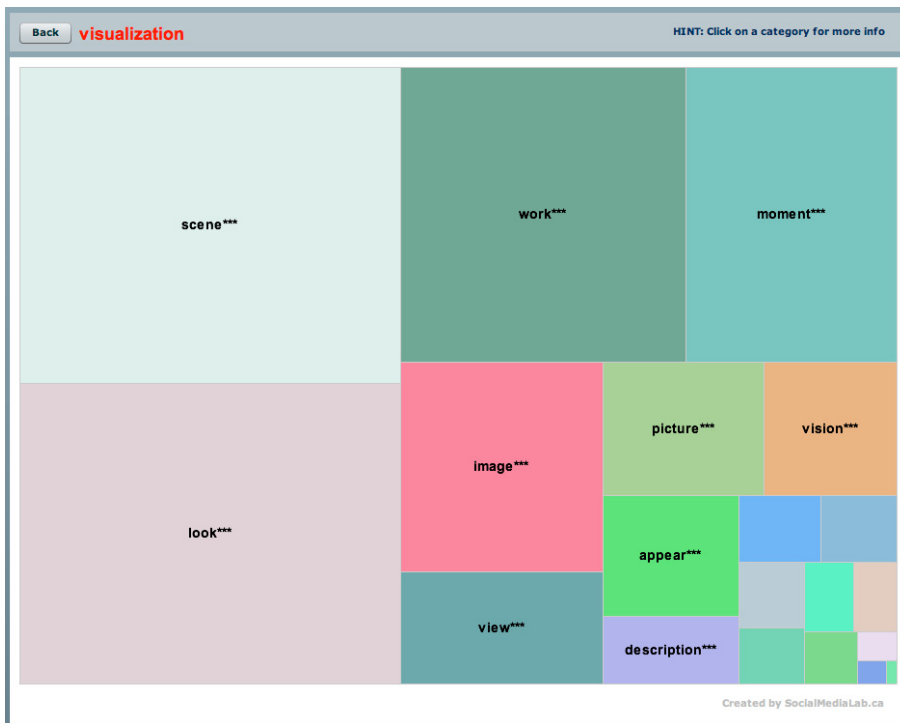


Figure C.13. LOTR_Movie: “Visualization” categories

Table C.4. “Visualize” final category showing exact match and total number of instances.
(LOTR_Book dataset = 2658 records, LOTR_Movie dataset = 3098 records.)

LOTR_Book 1637 (1678)*	term	LOTR_Movie 1877 (1929)*
811	I ** think	858
230	I ** see	247
154	I ** find	115
115	I thought	206
89 (104)	I ** imagine***	83 (111)
63	I found	58
46	makes me	56
40	I saw	128
33	it ** made	67
23 (32)	I ** picture***	11 (29)
23	made me	44
5 (10)	I ** interpret***	3 (4)
5 (17)	I ** envision***	1 (6)

* exact match (actual number of instances). This situation is due to terms with variable endings (ending in ***)

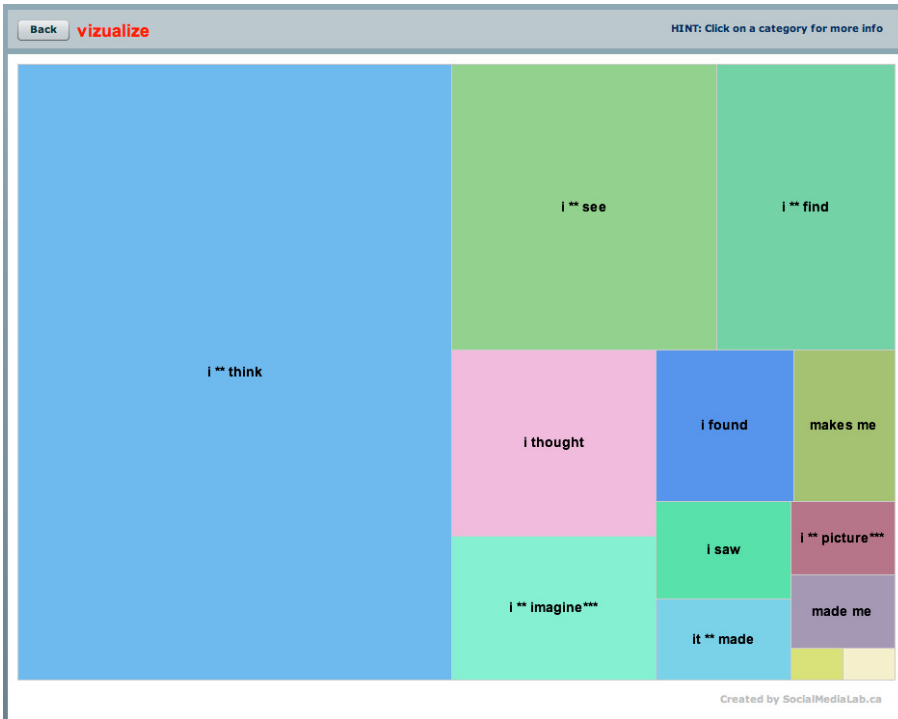


Figure C.14. LOTR_Book: “Visualize” categories

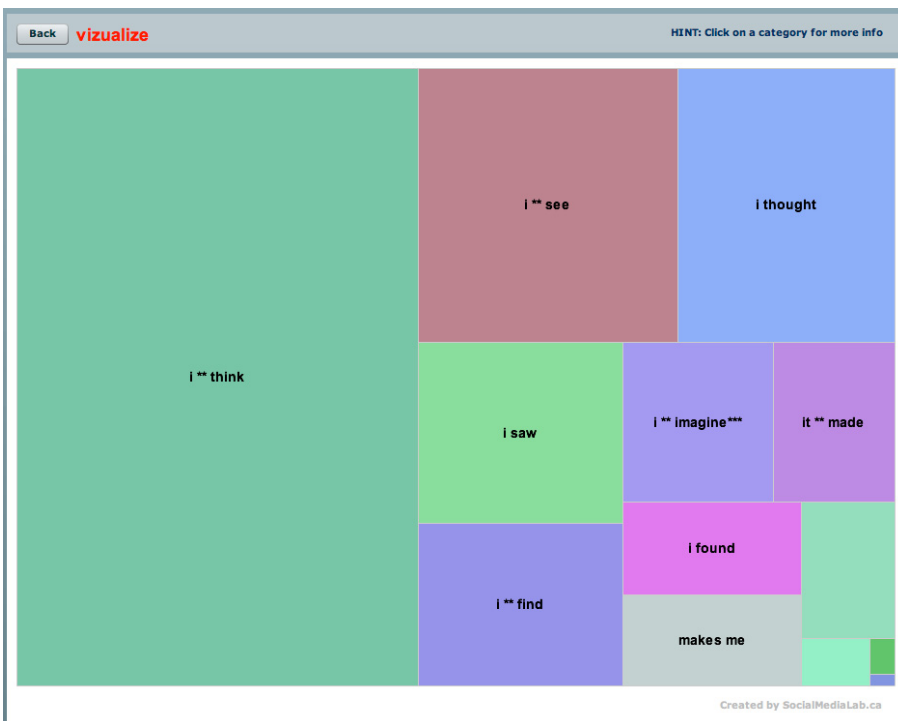


Figure C.15. LOTR_Movie: “Visualize” categories

Appendix D: Place in *The Lord of the Rings*: Tables and ICTA Visualizations

Table D.1. Specific places in *The Lord of the Rings*, by category.

LOTR_Book 5402 (6152)	place (category)	LOTR_Movie 3660 (4383)
1132 (1189)	elves	662 (803)
1128 (1313)	mordor	616 (706)
777 (1086)	hobbits	757 (1034)
672 (679)	gondor	585 (605)
591	rohan	371
312 (312)	other good	171 (171)
276 (443)	dwarves	200 (371)
262 (267)	isengard	151 (162)
253 (272)	other evil	148 (160)

I. Category and Specific Place Visualizations and Term Lists for the LOTR_Book Dataset

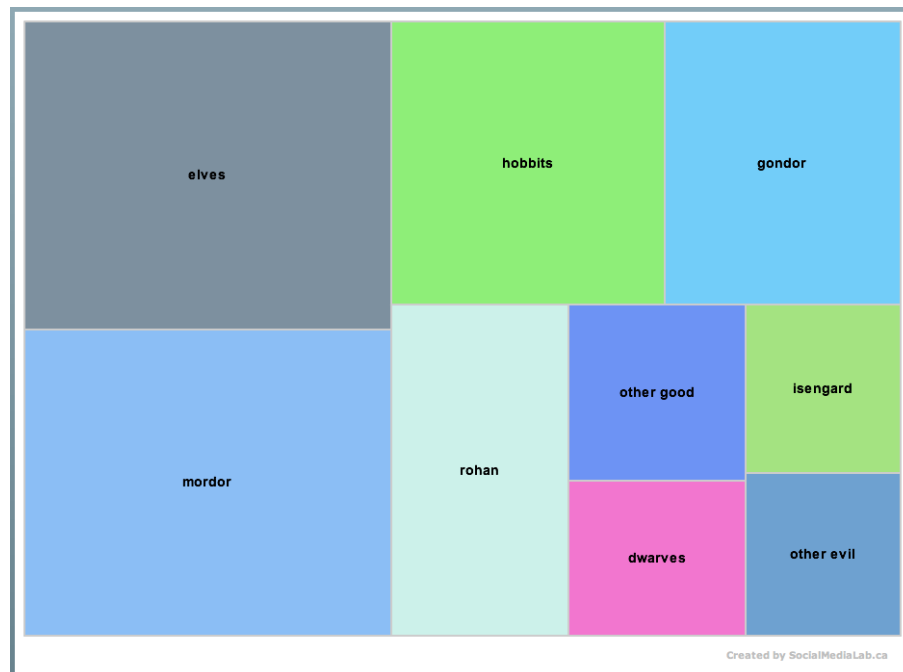
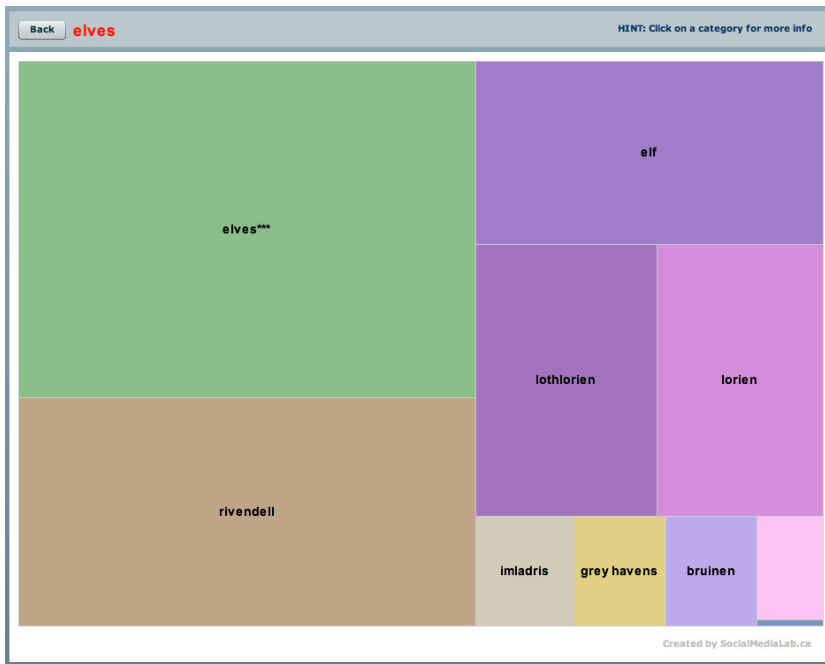
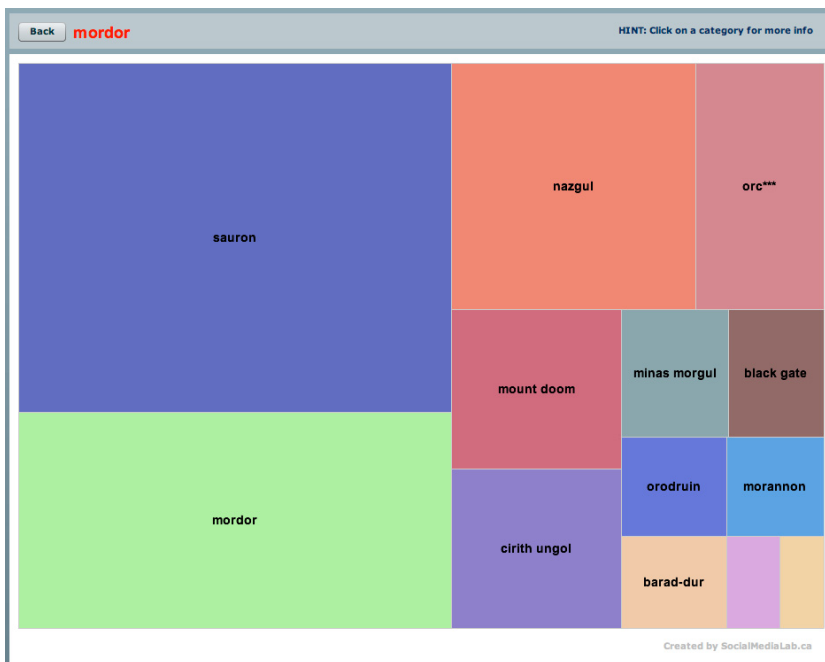


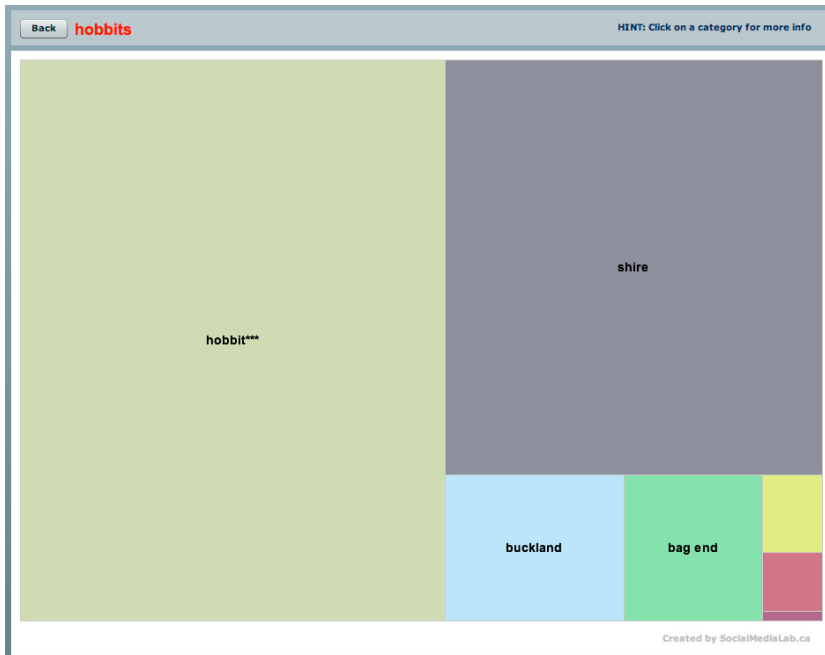
Figure D.1. Category breakdown for specific places (LOTR_Book 5402, (6152) instances.)



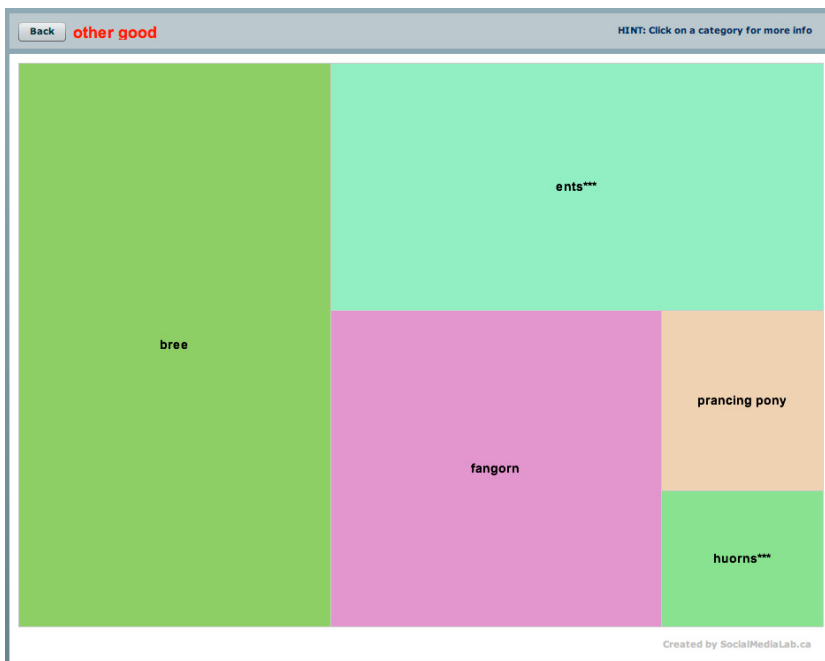
bruinen 25, caras galadhon 17, elf 159, elves*** 383(440), grey havens 25, imladris 27, lorien 112, lothlorien 123, mithlond 1, rivendell 260



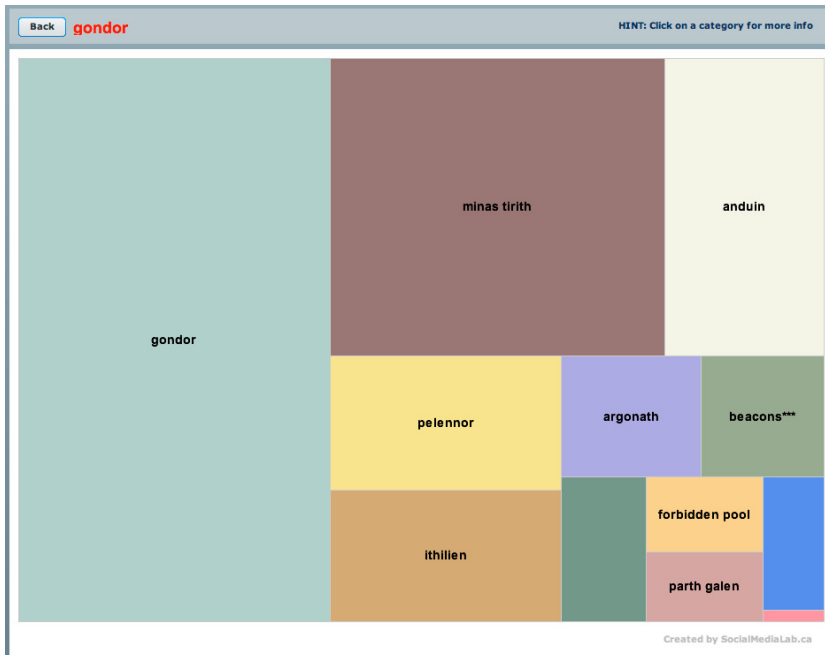
barad-dur 24, black gate 30, cirith ungol 67, gorgoroth 10, minas morgul 34, morannon 24, mordor 232, mount doom 67, nazgul 149, orc*** 78 (245), orodruin 26, ringwraith*** 12 (30), sauron 375



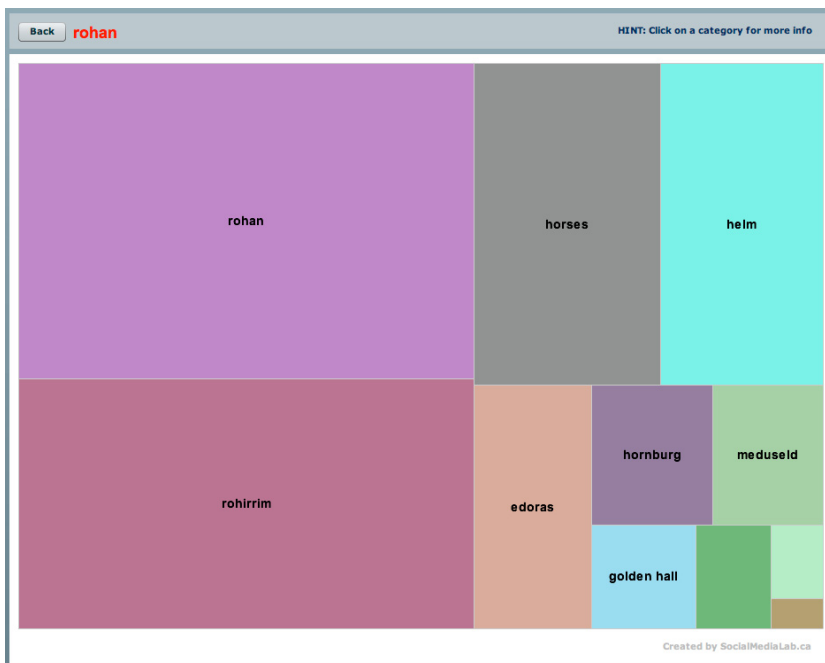
bag end 35, buckland 45, farthing 1, green dragon 8, hobbit*** 412 (721), party tree 6, shire 270



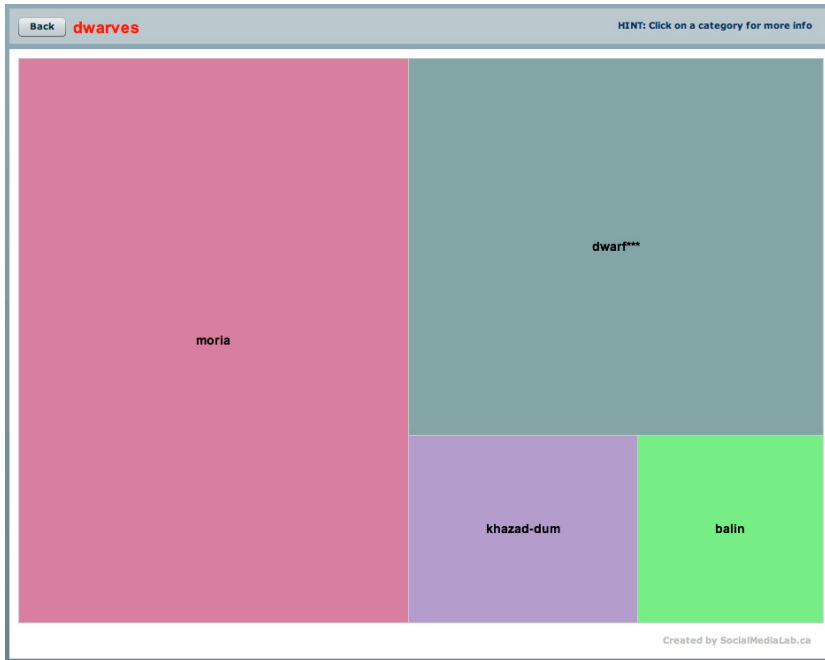
ent 27, ents*** 84, fangorn 72, huorns*** 15, treebeard 84



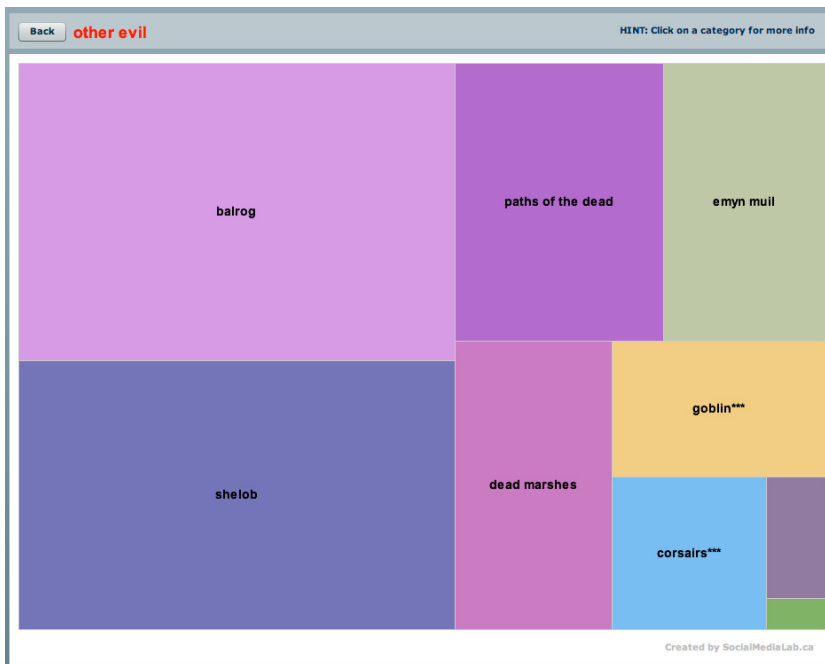
anduin 70, argonath 25, beacons*** 22(29), forbidden pool 13, gondor 260, gondorian 12, ithilien 45, minas tirith 148, osgiliath 18, parth galen 12, peleonnor 46, throne room 1



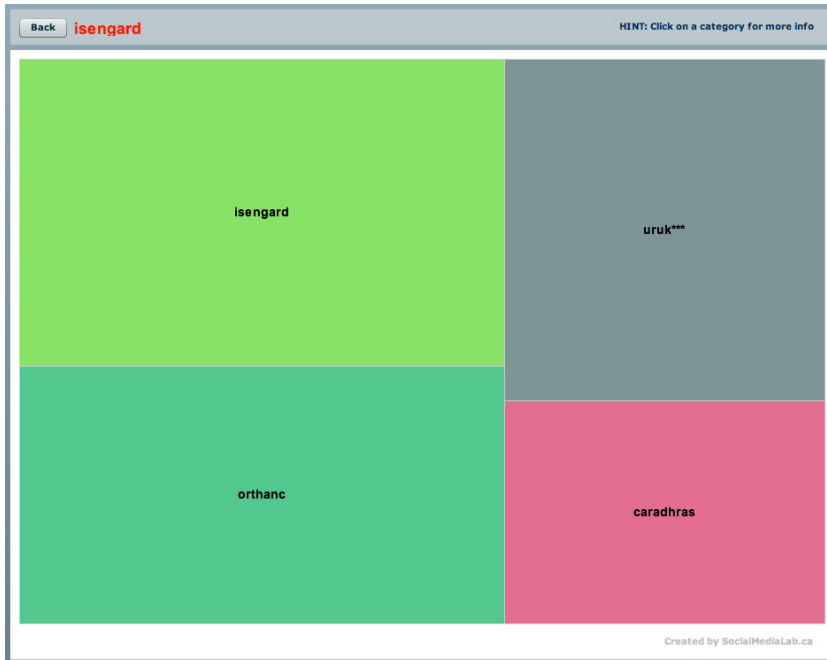
dunharrow 10, edoras 37, eorlingas 2, golden hall 14, helm 68, hornburg 22, horses 78, meduseld 20, rohan 187, rohirrim 148, westfold 5



balin 21, dwarf*** 95(252), khazad-dum 26, moria 134



balrog 72, black ships 4, corsairs*** 13, dead marshes 25, dwimorberg 1, emyn muil 25, goblin*** 16(35), paths of the dead 32, shelob 65



caradhras 41, isengard 86, orthanc 72, uruk*** 63(68)

II. Category and Specific Place Visualizations and Term Lists for the LOTR_Movie Dataset

Dataset

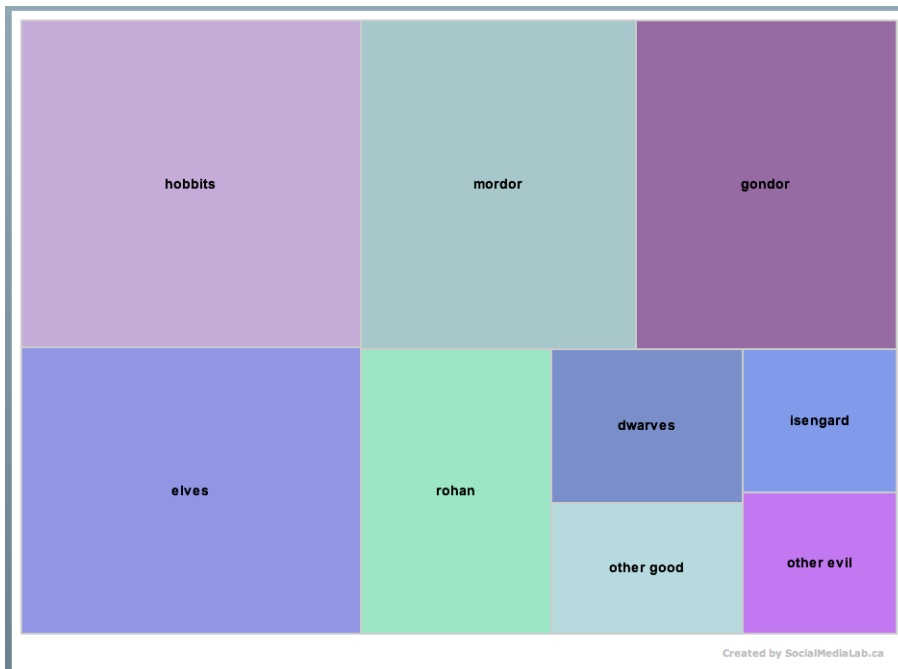
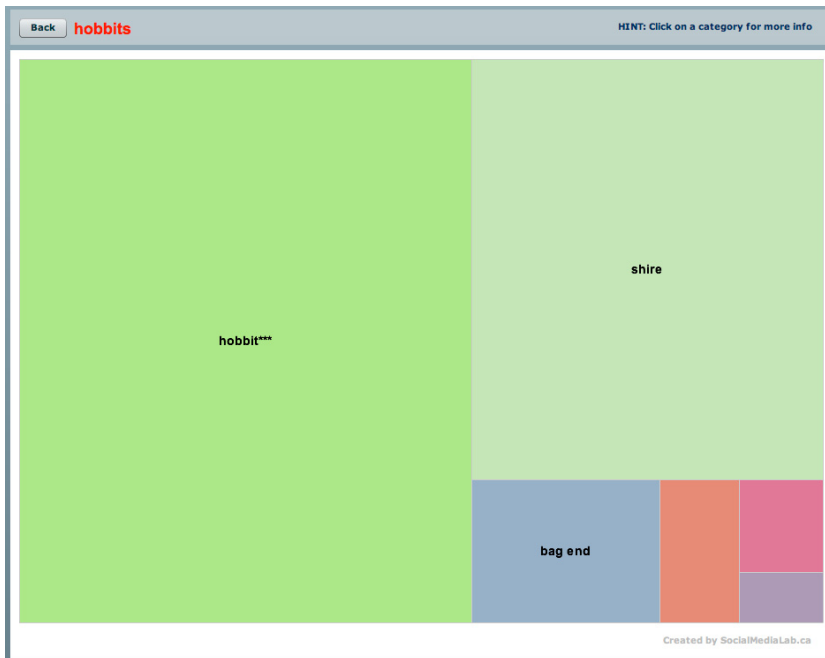
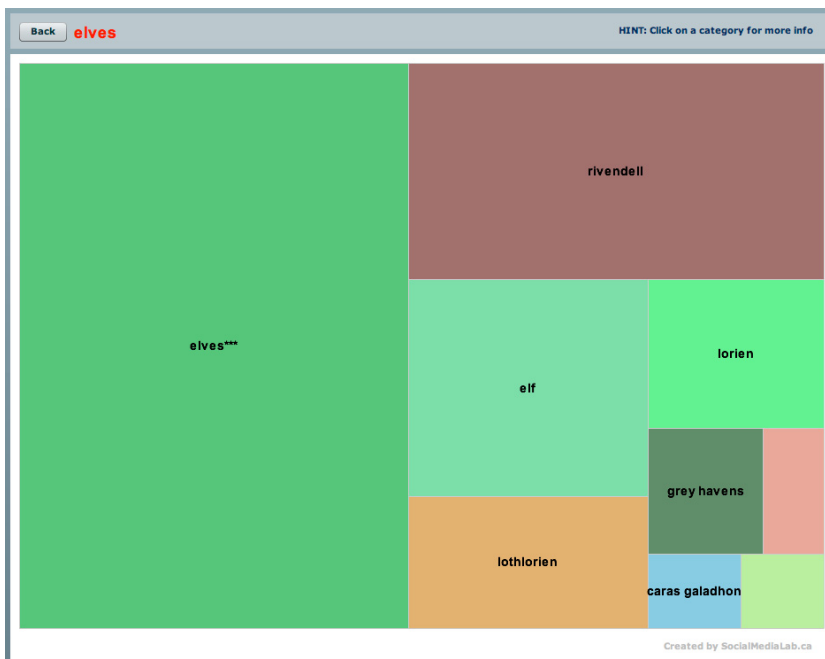


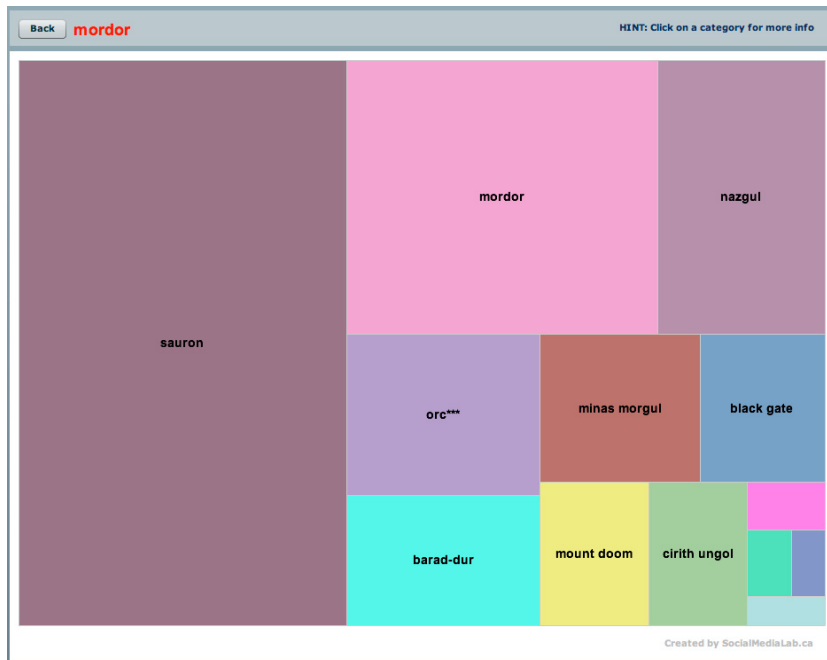
Figure D.2. Category breakdown for specific places (LOTR_Movie, 3660 (4383) instances.)



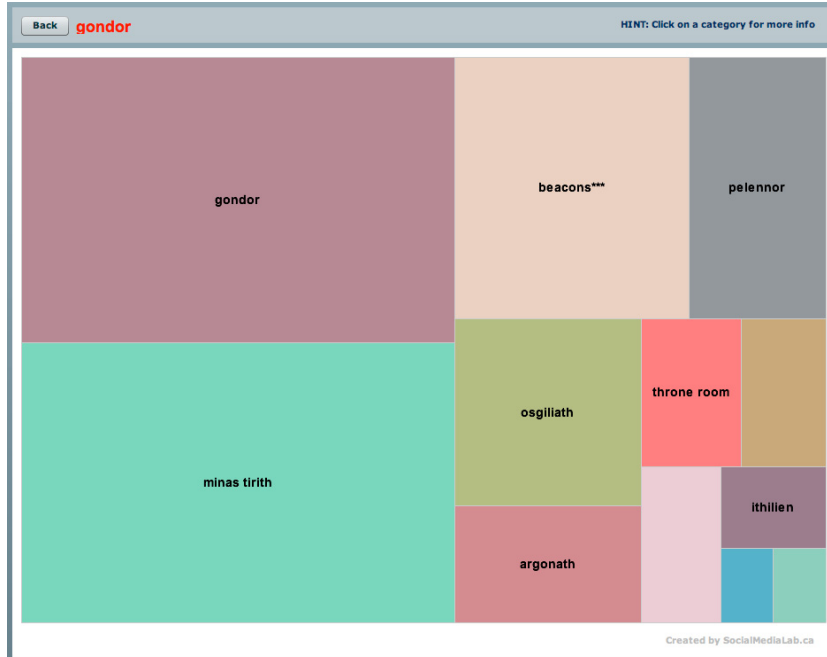
bag end 45, buckland 7, farthing 0, green dragon 19, hobbit*** 426(703), party tree 13, shire 247



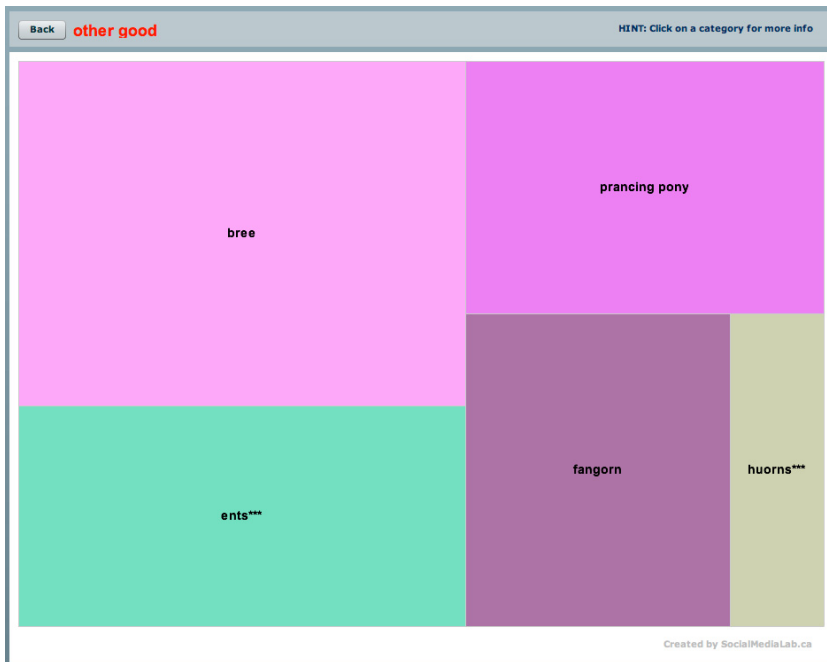
bruinen 11, caras galadhon 10, elf 76, elves*** 320(461), grey havens 21, imladris 9, lorien 38, lothlorien 46, mithlond 0, rivendell 131



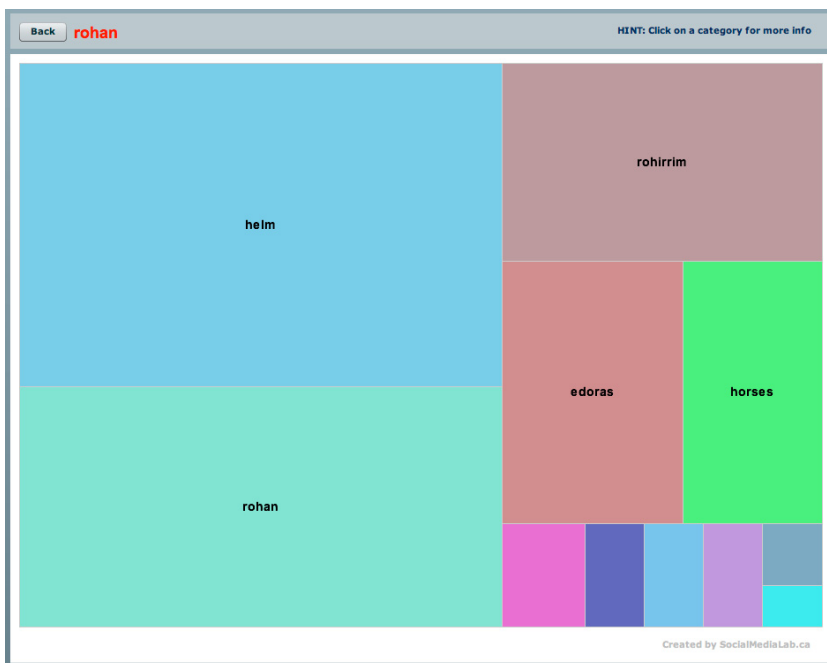
barad-dur 34, black gate 25, cirith ungol 19, gorgoroth 3, minas morgul 32, morannon 5, mordor 115, mount doom 21, nazgul 62, orc*** 42(122), orodruin 3, ringwraith*** 4(14) sauron 251



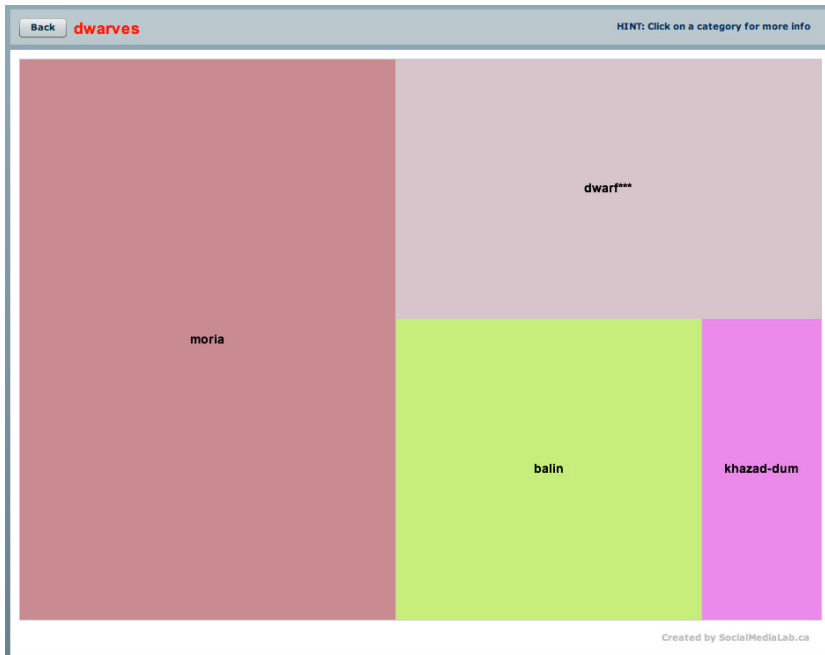
anduin 16, argonath 28, beacons*** 79(99), forbidden pool 5, gondor 159, gondorian 16, ithilien 11, minas tirith 156, osgiliath 45, parth galen 5, pelennor 46, throne room 19



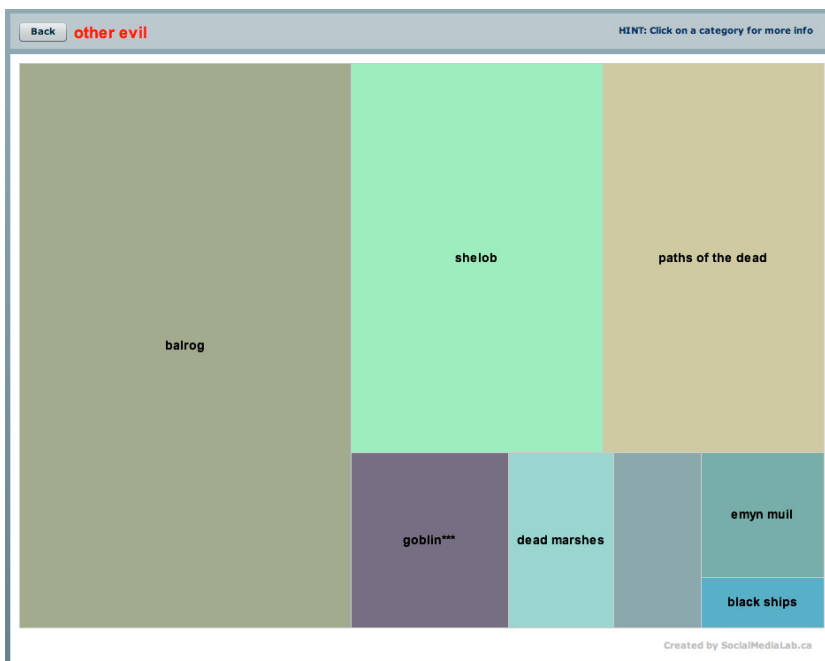
ent 9, ents*** 37, fangorn 31, huorns*** 11, treebeard 40



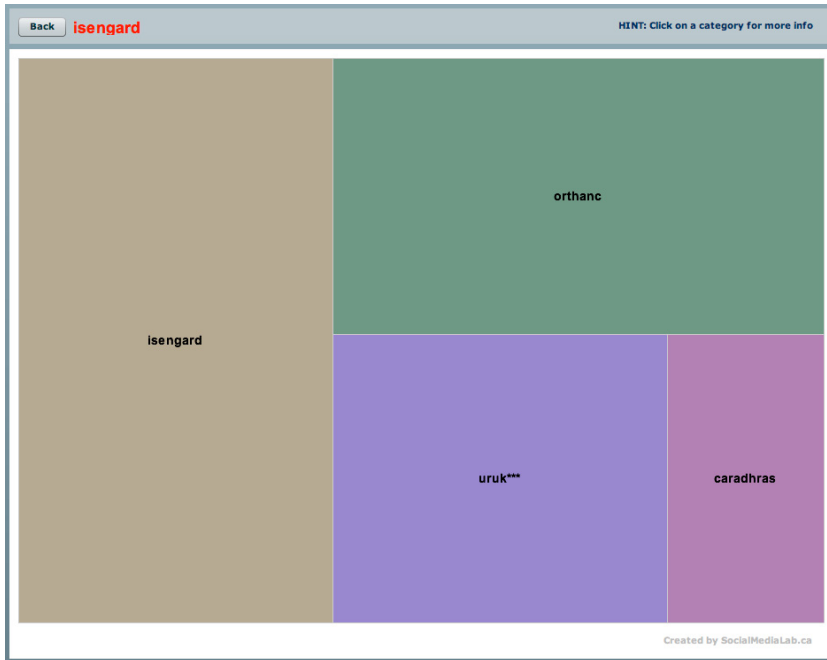
dunharrow 5, edoras 39, eorlingas 3, golden hall 5, helm 128, hornburg 5, horses 30, meduseld 7, rohan 95, rohirrim 52, westfold 2



balin 41, dwarf*** 49(220), khazad-dum 16, moria 94



balrog 61, black ships 2, corsairs*** 5(7), dead marshes 6, dwimorberg 0, emyn muil 5, goblin*** 9(19), paths of the dead 28, shelob 32



caradhras 15, isengard 59, orthanc 45, uruk*** 32(43)

Appendix E: Poster Comments from the Reading Room

The following comments were posted to TheOneRing.net Reading Room message forum at the following URL: <http://newboards.theonering.net/forum/gforum/perl/gforum.cgi?forum=9>
Emphasis, in red, Grek Martin.

Visualizing Middle-earth

Legolas versus Gimli : who can kill more movie extras?

2. The head count game between Legolas and Gimli Does anyone know if this happens in real world wars? "I shot three Germans today, Fred. What's your count? Five? Oh, dang, I lose today." I wonder how invented/realistic it is. Snipers and pilots are generally the only people who count their kills, often for propaganda reasons or for the awarding of medals /rank. Certainly those like Vassily Zaitsev (USSR, WW2) or Manfred von Richtofen (Germany, WW1) liked to count just how many. Tank commanders also count how many they've destroyed, if only to estimate how much ammo they have left. The first up-close look we've had of Orcs has already taken place in the Uruk-hai chapter. While the Orcs there were not cuddly, they did exhibit personalities and no longer were masses of nondescript non-humans to slaughter. For that reason, some people are troubled by the counting game as soulless, an excess beyond the necessity of killing in battle. I'm not sure myself. What do others think? (And how would it be if they'd counted Dunlendings' heads instead?) That is an interesting issue- did Gimli and Legolas count Men among their dead, or just Orcs? Maybe Gimli cheated and killed 41 Dunderlings and one orc while Legolas shot 41 Orcs? As Gimli was defending the wall though, he probably killed Orcs methinks. Though Theoden's army is outnumbered, did anyone ever doubt the outcome of the battle, i.e., could we have lost our heroes? Or do readers commonly expect that there will be losses and great danger, but the protagonists will come through it all to continue the story? Are the mentions of the passages that lead from the caves to the hills a teaser to make us think that there will be a general slaughter but some will escape that way, or just more details Tolkien likes to add to his geography? (The secret passages to escape from slaughter--if it had happened--are reminiscent of Gondolin, but Tolkien wouldn't expect readers to make that connection when the trilogy was published.) There has to be a link from Dunharrow to the Hornburg, otherwise being a mountain refuge is kind of pointless. The mentions of the passages are part of strategy, luckily not necessary to be used. The Fellowship escape Khazad-dum through the back door, but Gandalf ends up taking the vertical tour up to the summit of the mountain- an excuse for Tolkien to make us see what is down there and up there, surely. It is certainly a dangerous situation and the gang has to make sure there's some kind of escape route. Isengard has no escape route at all, which is

probably why there's an impenetrable tower instead! 4. We've had a fair amount of exposure to the Rohirrim in Book III, as much or more than we'll see of Gondorians. How do they strike you personally: you like them, dislike them, or are indifferent? How does your reaction to them compare to your opinion of Elves and hobbits? I suppose I should throw Dwarves in there too, though we only encounter two living ones in the trilogy. The Rohirrim are painted as good people, but alien to everyone in the Fellowship, like they were when they just arrived from the North. They're rustic and prefer singing to writing and they are masters of all things horse. In Gondor everyone is rather well mannered and proper and no one is openly suspicious of Gandalf and co apart from the Steward- a different kind of unease. The Rohirrim are plain-spoken and often too honest, but that's just how they are. There are no politics like in Gondor, and what's more the Rohirrim are (pretty much) homogenous racially and politically, unlike the factions and fiefs of Gondor. When Eomer says "Men of the Mark" you get the feeling he really is talking about everyone, unlike Boromir or Faramir who might refer to "Men of Minas Tirith" as certain groups of people like themselves, and not the coastal people or even uncle Imrahil and the Healers. The Hobbits get along with the Rohirrim precisely because they are similar- Northern people who have settled elsewhere in antiquity, yet carrying long traditions and characteristics- including an endearing simplicity in things, farming and learning lore through oral tradition. They are also mutually suspicious of Elves, though it's more out of ignorance than actual malice and Hobbits are more open to Elves than the Rohirrim. Merry endears himself to Theoden by being very eloquent -something the singers of the Rohirrim can appreciate. The Elves might have ignored the Rohirrim as well- if Aragorn is correct, the Rohirrim kind of act like "the children of Men before the Dark Years", something Elves might dearly miss. Gondor is a lost cause, given it's Numenorean history, so the Rohirrim might be good company for the odd Elvish wanderer who remembers the House of Hador, their ancestors.

PhantomS. (2011, February 26). Legolas versus Gimli : who can kill more movie extras?

Edoras, Rohirrim and Goths...

The Rohirrim were supposed to be similar to Goths, who were a predominantly Horse worshipping people who did live in cities (especially after their settlements in Italy and Spain). **The movie looked ALMOST exactly how I imagined them and their architecture (the architecture more than their wardrobe).** The only thing that I felt was lacking in their architecture was the use of just a little more stone, and that some of the woodwork would have been more polished (and sturdy, even though it looked plenty sturdy). Also, there were other settlements (cities) in Rohan, Auldberg being one of them (where Æ%omer is from), which was supposed to be just as big as Edoras, and was the capital of the Eastfold. There was supposed to be a similar, but smaller, city/

town someplace in the Westfold, but the Westfold had more small settlements and was the breadbasket of Rohan (thus Saruman's choice of attacking it first). The Westfold was also far more populated than the Eastfold (even though that population was more disbursed), which would explain why Gandalf and Co. didn't meet anyone on the way to Edoras as they were traveling through the Eastfold from Fangorn.

MatthewB. (2011, February 16). Edoras, Rohirrim and Goths... .

Magic? I do not know what you mean by that...

QuoteI'm going to try a non-chronological approach to this chapter...Nice idea! QuoteGandalf has been there before, and Aragorn has been there in his youth as Thorongil, so is this description just for Gimli's benefit? Why not say, "Legolas, tell Gimli what you see." ? Good point. Gandalf and Aragorn might be assumed to be familiar with this landscape and therefore blasÅ© about it. Yet I'm not sure they are. Maybe they too love to hear the details of what Legolas can see - so much more than they can see with their own eyes. It's a kind of "Google Earth" view - being able to take in the great sweep of the landscape while also being able to zoom in on the details. I remember long before there was a Google Earth seeing a short film called "Powers of Ten" that started with planet Earth and then gradually zoomed in to a single scene. It seemed stunning at the time - and it must have been memorable since I still recall it! - but we have become rather blasÅ© about this ability since then. I don't think Gandalf and Aragorn are blasÅ© though - I think they appreciate the beauty of the land enough that they are keen to experience this scene again through Legolas' eyes. No "been there, done that" for them! (But of course the description is really for us, the reader - and Gimli is still mostly our viewpoint in this chapter.) QuoteI don't want to cross over to the movies often, but if you read the books first, how well did the movie's depiction of Edoras coincide with how you had imagined it? (For me, it was the closest book-movie match of all.)I suppose because Edoras was based so closely on a real medieval building-type, it was the easiest to make "accurate". And also the one we readers could probably imagine most accurately in the first place. The closest book-movie match for me was the Doors of Durin, for which I hadn't had imagine at all while reading, since Tolkien drew them for us! QuoteHow does Edoras compare with Minas Tirith, the only other royal capital of Men that we'll encounter? I'm thinking we can compare the strategic placement, the architectural sophistication, the topographical setting, and first impressions. Also, is this what you expect for the capital of horse herders? Should these people live in tents as nomads instead?It's an Anglo-Saxon village and mead-hall compared to a Greek or Roman city. The difference in sophistication is huge in terms of architectural skill. But the Golden Hall has a vivacity and artistic vigour that Minas Tirith lacks. MT might have been great once, but I think you get the impression that the people living

there now have lost their conviction. Besides this central village, the impression is that there are small homesteads (as in "rick, cot and tree") scattered throughout Rohan. I can't see them being tent-dwelling people, although I can imagine them using tents when out for a few days herding their horses or whatever they do... QuoteEasy quiz: outside Edoras and inside the Golden Hall, Tolkien indicates his love of history wherever he takes us. What does he describe in each place that harkens to the past? Can you think of any place we visit where he leaves out a historical reminder? Hmm. I'm stumped. **Are you talking about the burial mounds, the wall hangings and such? I don't really see them as indicating Tolkien's "love of history", but as an integral part of showing how people and places are formed by their past - by their stories. I can't think of a place without a historical reminder** - do you mean in this chapter? I hope you'll give us a hint...

QuoteSimilarly, does Tolkien ever neglect his love of water? Edoras has both an external and an internal stream. Like Minas Tirith, it has a spring at its summit. In case you haven't had enough horse imagery yet, the spring issues from the mouth of a horse. The Shire, Rivendell, Khazad-dum, Lorien: they all had rivers and lakes figure prominently in their descriptions. It wasn't long ago we were boating down the Anduin. Flip some chapters ahead and you'll see how the Ents defeat Saruman with a river. Is there ever a place (except Mordor) where water is far away and unimportant? Again I'd quibble over this being about Tolkien and his "love of water". Water is life - it's at the heart of all kinds of legends and beliefs. Water has always been imbued with power and magic - since it's so essential to us. It's hard for us to see it in the modern world, but in the past you could only live near running water - Edoras has to have its own stream or it would be useless as a settlement, especially if there are potential enemies about who could cut you off from your source of water. Ancient people understood the power of water - we often forget it now, until some great storm or flood comes along and reminds us forcefully of our hubris... QuoteSpeaking of water, why do Gandalf and the others ford a stream to reach Edoras? Isn't a royal capital worthy of a bridge? If everyone goes on horseback, who needs a bridge to cross a stream? Don't forget that the Rohirrim only build in wood, and that a mountain stream can change drastically in volume over the seasons. A wooden bridge might be washed away in a flood, so perhaps a properly-kept ford was more practical. And "royal capital" sounds a bit too grand for Edoras. It's not a city, after all, just a fortified village where the king's hall stands. QuoteOutside Edoras, there is no mention of any human habitation: no outlying farms, no herds of horses and their riders, nothing. Gandalf and the others don't encounter a single person until they reach the city gates. Why is that? We heard about farms and such in the Riders of Rohan chapter. It seems that many have fled to outlying areas because of the threat from Saruman (as we see in the movie with those burning huts and the fleeing children). I don't think the majority of the people ever set foot in Edoras - Rohan is big and the people are scattered. That's why the village seems so quiet - there's more safety in the outer reaches of the land, perhaps. QuoteHave we seen this much magic in a

single chapter before? Gandalf is impressive here, but I wouldn't call much of it "magic" - less so than in the film, anyway. Quote1. He plays some kind of "Jedi trick" on the guard at the main gate who hasn't been very cooperative. Dunno. That seems like ordinary persuasiveness to me. The man answers slowly, but he doesn't just agree to do what Gandalf says - he's thinking this through for himself, and goes on to ask for more information before he's willing to pass along their request to the next level. Quote2. Once he smuggles his staff inside the Golden Hall, there's a roll of thunder and the sun is blotted out, yet the Wizard alone remains illuminated. That could just be a storm! The Wizard is the only one in white, so of course he'd stand out if the hall suddenly grew dark... (I'm not saying it is just a storm, mind you - just that it's not as "magical" as it might appear. Not magical like the scene in the movie, where there's no other possible explanation except for "magic".) Quote3. When Grima annoys him during this display of power, there was "a flash as if lightning had cloven the roof" and Grima is flattened. Probably lucky to be alive. There's a storm going on. There's a stroke of lightning. Grima doesn't appear to be hurt, just frightened from thinking the lightning was going to hit him. Frodo and Sam fall flat out of fear during lightning strikes later. Quote4. Gandalf heals Theoden, undoing Grima's/Saruman's spells of decrepitude. But not by magic. He only uses words of wisdom to do it - including telling Theoden about the great Quest that may lead to hope for his own people. QuoteIs this Narya at work, rekindling Theoden's heart and soul? That's a nice thought. Quote5. At the end of the chapter, Gandalf reveals himself again as the White Rider, "his white robes shone dazzling in the sun." That wasn't just a good laundry job with bleach, since it aroused the soldiers to cheer for him. Image is everything! Here's the whole description: "Then suddenly he threw back his grey cloak, and cast aside his hat, and leaped to horseback. He wore no helm nor mail. His snowy hair flew free in the wind, his white robes shone dazzling in the sun." That's a great bit of theatre! And Aragorn joins in to get the full reaction they're after: "Behold the White Rider!" cried Aragorn". Now that's how you get soldiers to cheer for you! QuoteHow much has new Gandalf changed? To me, he seems to have changed mostly in his willingness to stand out and be visible, instead of working behind the scenes. That's why I compared the change to that of Strider to Aragorn in an earlier thread. He's still very much the same character, but he's changed the way he presents himself to the world.

FarFromHome. (2011, February 16). Magic? I do not know what you mean by that... .

Thank you [excerpt]

Thank you for your long and thoughtful post! Between you and me, yes, I agree, Middle-Earth indeed is medieval. But I like to take the opposing view and make people actually give arguments why some things are how we automatically think they are. I can't but agree with you about the

sense of wilderness and untamed wonders. However, I'd like to emphasize something you only quickly passed by: that there's more than just the one flavour. Middle-Earth we're talking about here is more than just the North-Western Middle-Earth at the end of the Third Age. What's in it's immediate nearby is also crucial. The the west, to the east, to the south, we meet kind of landscape and people like we'd expect in pseudo-medieval, pseudo-European world. There's fleeting images of faraway exotic countries, of course morally and culturally inferior but yet somehow fascianating, there's the ever selfrepeating flood of wild nomads coming from the eastern plains, the wild people of the cold north... And this goes beyond mere physical borders and distances. Medieval "chaos" and wilderness didn't come staight out of some primeval Stone Age primitiveness. (Well, here in Finland it sort of did, but anyway...) ...
 Faenoriel (2011, February 6). Thank you.

Proper geography

Yeah, that was one inaccuracy of the movies. I guess they truncated distances (i.e. from Hobbiton to Bree; from the Shire to Orthanc) in order to speed the storytelling, but a novice to Tolkien's world would definitely think things were closer together than the author envisioned, or even drew in his maps. A 'Google Middle Earth' would be a chance for Pete and his crew to redeem themselves on that score!

Raldo_Widefurrow. (2010, September 15). Proper geography.

We, the readers, get to decide what we want there [excerpt]

I don't think Tolkien so much resisted anyone using the map for sub-creation so much as he was more interested in developing his world in other ways. He was interested in languages and lineages and history, and developed the world in that sense; the inner workings of trade routes, or the economical details of the countries of Middle-earth, interested him much less, if we base it on what he developed. Does that mean he would utterly protest to his readers using maps to fill in the blank parts of Middle-earth? Absolutely not. Why would he have left so many unknowns and hints if he was opposed to it? The casual readers looking simply for a good book, as Tolkien pointed out, will enjoy the story and neglect the Appendices. Those of us who want more? We can create more. And with the 21st century and the invention of the internet, this ability to create and share our thoughts, our opinions, and our creations in the large playground of Arda is more possible than ever before, and we can do it not only as individuals, but as large groups with large projects, both for profit and for love. While there are a few things that I would like to have as

"canon" and know for sure, for the most part I love what we have and what we have to our disposal for our imaginations. ...

Ainu Laire. (2010, September 12). We, the readers, get to decide what we want there.

Yes, for what it's worth.

As with the orcs, I was trying to avoid using hobbit-reported dialogue to "convey the Mordor point of view". In his notes "On Translation" in LotR Appendix F, Tolkien reveals that he has actually bowdlerized the Orcs' talk: their language was actually more degraded and filthy than I have shown it. I do not suppose that any will wish for a closer rendering, So can we be sure that Pippin, in his horror, gave us the exact phrases and full conversation of his interview? As FarFromHome warns, perhaps Sauron was in fact more understated and polite! Anyway I agree that Sauron's language to Pippin - as given - is pretty banal. But note that the content of the conversation is nevertheless quite evil: Pippin is dehumanized to an "it", and is a "dainty" to be consumed slowly and with pleasure. And Pippin is shown to have been nearly psychologically destroyed just by being in the mental presence of the Dark Lord. Obviously Sauron does not communicate simply with (un)spoken language. So what exactly would "scary" or "diabolical" language be like? This is always a problem with villainy among the upper-crust: it's their deeds, not their speech, that must be evil, or else they wouldn't be upper-crust. Later, of course, via the Morgul-lord and the Mouth of Sauron we do get better, and pretty scary, descriptions of what happens to Sauron's prisoners. **I think Tolkien was reluctant to be too detailed about Mordor and Sauron, too soon in the book, since nothing terrifies like the unhindered imagination** (as Frodo exclaims to Gildor in the Woody End). Perhaps you could find some examples of Morgoth's dialogue in The Silmarillion that you find scary - and we could compare how he speaks to how Sauron speaks in this instance.

squire (2010, September 2). Yes, for what it's worth.

Nicely put. In Jackson's defense,

it is hard to make a movie of LotR and still retain the ambiguity of the written word. But Jackson did not really try to maintain ambiguity; for better or for worse, he made his choices explicit, even where it meant diverging from the letter of the book. **In many cases I like his choices, but where I don't, it is really difficult for me to forget my own choices that I made when I read the story. That doesn't always mean that Jackson's choices were "wrong"; there's enough ambiguity in the book to encompass many of Jackson's choices.** For example, when I read the end of the book I always found a smile on my face, and never focused on Sam's point of view. So although you are

correct that from Sam's point of view there was no sun, that didn't occur to me until we read the passage very closely. Then I discovered that others felt differently about the ending, and saw it as more sad than happy. So Jackson's choice isn't exactly wrong, any more than your alternative is wrong; both are encompassed by Tolkien's ambiguity, which allows the reader to make choices. Jackson, though, doesn't allow as many choices, perhaps because it just doesn't work as well in film, or perhaps because he just isn't that kind of director.

Curious. (2010, June 27). Nicely put. In Jackson's defense,.

Book 3 Chapter 8: The Road to Isengard. Led by Idril Celebrindal [excerpt]

... They [Ents] are such different creatures altogether, it is very hard - Frodo Hoy to get an "accurate" vision of them in my imagination. Additionally, the Bashki version interrupts my free-form fantasizing. That is one of my only regrets about the PJ project, btw. No matter how well done, after I view his films, they will influence my mind's eye picture of Middle Earth. ...

Inferno. (2009, April 26). Book 3 Chapter 8: The Road to Isengard. Led by Idril Celebrindal.

Book 1 Chapter 7: In The House of Tom Bombadil. Led by Aelric [excerpt]

...Rivendell is largely about preserving memories of the glorious elven past. Lorien, through the power of Galadriel's Ring, preserves, displaced in time, that past itself as a present reality. The elves of Rivendell remember their past; those of Lorien are actually living that past....

Inferno. (2009, April 26). Book 1 Chapter 7: In The House of Tom Bombadil. Led by Aelric.

I think there is lots of material in the Appendices

I have mentioned too many times perhaps what I would love to see in a movie, be it a bridge one or a completely new one, but a few to mention here: Gandalf's adventures and the White Council, Gollum's hunt, Aragorn and Arwen's story, also I agree with Darkstone there were great pieces not used in the trilogy and I would love to see Bombadil and the travelling adventure to Bree.

However, I would prefer a bridge film based on these or even better - a couple of bridge films to turn all the movies into a consistent flow. It is true there is not much dialogue and a lot will have to be invented and written by the script writers but we saw quite of invented dialogue in LOTR too and I don't find it bad. There were some strange decisions but overall, I think the team is well prepared to go for some extensive writing

simplyaven. (2009, March 19). I think there is lots of material in the Appendices.

This is kind of like trying to decide

which Narnia book is my favorite (which I've never been able to do either.) Different parts of LotR speak to very different parts of me. **The part that wants Escape and Consolation really enjoys the lighthearted hobbit stuff:** the view of Woodhall through the trees of Woody End, the bath at Crickhollow, the gifts left at Bag End with tags on them, the ring-a-dong-dillo of Tom Bombadil and the mushrooms at Maggot's farm. When I was thirteen the emerging young woman in me fell in love with Aragorn and Faramir and Eowyn, and also Frodo and Gandalf, the beautiful heroic people. At that time my favorite chapters were probably 'Strider' and 'Window on the West'. As I've grown older, I still love them, but I've come to love Sam's fidelity. As a girl, I could hardly bear to read the part about Mount Doom, because **the dry agony of the landscape was so painful**, but now Sam's beauty shines through those scenes. And I've always loved the Eucatastrophe scenes, the horns of Rohan blowing, the standard of Gondor breaking on Aragorn's ship, the Easter-like waking in Ithilien after the Ring is destroyed. **I've also always loved the landscapes, the 'dryad loveliness' of Ithilien, the peaceful valley of Rivendell, the wooded walks in the Shire, the lanterns on the Party Tree.** Least favorite? Well, it took me a long time to read the Council of Elrond with any pleasure, though it's more interesting now that I'm older. And the battle scenes also took me a long time to really read. **As a girl I skimmed through Helm's Deep, and didn't have a clear image of the rescuing army showing up under Erkenbrand until after I saw the movie of TTT (!)**, though I always loved the appearance of the huorns. And the climbing of Mount Doom always seemed to go on and on and on and on, even though when I actually looked, it was only a few pages. I don't know that the previous discussion has changed my mind, exactly. **All the times the RR has gone through LotR, I've learned to see things I've never noticed before, in all my readings. Sador's amazing post in this very thread is a case in point. He helps me see more about the Council of Elrond than I ever did before.**

Aunt Dora Baggins. (2009, March 17). This is kind of like trying to decide.

The Passage of the Marshes 4: Mapping the journey

I have to admit that I'm not the kind of reader who pours over maps to follow along with the characters' journey or who cares about questions like how many days does it take to go so many miles. I'm happy just to have a general sense of the lay of the land and the name of the next place on the road (perhaps this explains why I always get lost at the Kalamazoo conference). However, in looking at Tolkien's drafts for this chapter in HoMe, I realized that I was taking a lot of his painstaking work on chronology and geography for granted. **So I wanted to spend some time thinking more carefully about geography, landscapes, and the timing of the journey in this**

chapter, and hopefully those of you who love looking at maps or working out the dates of the journey can contribute your views on the subject. maps In the Tolkien Encyclopedia entry on "Maps," Alice Campbell states: "the map allows the entire story to be recalled at a glance, producing a rich tapestry of associations....the map automatically recalls the story's whole physical and emotional space." I find this an intriguing idea that makes me think that I should pay more attention to maps. How do you use maps in your reading of the text? How does the LotR map contribute to your understanding of this chapter? Does it help you to imagine the scenes being described? Tolkien said in Letter #144: "I wisely started with a map, and made the story fit." If you read Christopher Tolkien's account of Tolkien's first LotR map, however, you'll find that not only was the story made to fit the map, but the map was also revised to fit the story as it developed (HoMe Vol. 7, The Treason of Isengard, chapter 15). I can't begin to summarize all of the changes detailed in HoMe, but perhaps it's enough to know that in an earlier version the lands are placed in this order: mouth of the Wetwang, "No Man's Land," and the Dead Marshes. In later maps, the Wetwang and the Dead Marshes are continuous. In HoMe volume 8, Christopher Tolkien explains that the Dead Marshes were moved south-west into what had been labelled No Man's Land in an earlier map in order to ensure that the company had to cross the marshes to get to the pass to Mordor. Christopher Tolkien notes that "no map later than that of 1943 shows No Man's Land (Noman-lands, Nomenlands, Nomen's Land)" – but he does point out that the "arid moors" of the final text, called "Noman-lands" in the story, come after the Dead Marshes and lie before the pass into Mordor. How does having a map influence the way in which descriptions of these lands are written? Do you get a clear sense of the different places being described in this chapter without looking at a map? Are the Dead Marshes part of No Man's Land? sketches A map is one way to visualize the journey. Tolkien also sketched places as he was writing. If you have HoMe volume 8, you can see various sketches of Kirith Ungol (as it was spelled early on) that Tolkien sketched as he was writing this chapter. These are very basic sketches; each is like a cross-section of the terrain, working out where the pass into Mordor would be and placing the Cirith Ungol pass beside it. (Originally, Tolkien had planned to make "Kirith Ungol" the main gate into Mordor.) Although these sketches consist of only a few wobbly lines, they are part of the evidence that Tolkien had a strong visual imagination, working out in drawings and sketches what he was going to describe in words. Tolkien didn't paint the Dead Marshes, but do you see evidence in any of the landscape descriptions of a painter's imagination? chronology Christopher Tolkien includes in HoMe volume 8 a redrawn map indicating the chronology of Frodo's journey, originally drawn by his father. Christopher explains that in an earlier draft, on the morning after the hobbits see the dead faces, they are surprised to find that the mountains are now "no more than a dozen miles away." However, "due to considerations of geography and chronology" Tolkien in a later draft adds two more nights to the journey after the hobbits see the dead faces.

There may be good reasons of geography and chronology to add the two nights, but are there good literary reasons for prolonging the journey? Do the two extra nights add new and essential elements to the story? description We often talk about Middle-earth as a character in itself and point out Tolkien's love of landscape description. Here's your chance to consider the descriptive passages. What are your favourite landscape descriptions in this chapter? You might also want to consider this chicken-and-egg type of question: Do you think that the description of landscape is coloured by the characters' feelings, or are their feelings coloured by the landscape? ...

Modtheow. (2008, July 3). The Passage of the Marshes 4: Mapping the journey.

In real life, Tolkien was a pessimist.

I don't think Tolkien believed that the trees could fight back in the Primary World as they do in LotR; I think that was his fantasy, which he clearly distinguished from reality. Nor do I think that Tolkien believed hobbit-like creatures could defeat evil in the Primary World as they do in LotR, or that evil in its arrogance would overlook threats from trees or hobbits. Again, this is Tolkien's fantasy. Similarly, in Tolkien's fantasy domination requires the expenditure of vast amounts of spiritual energy which Morgoth pours into Middle-earth, Sauron pours into his Ring, and Saruman pours into -- well, I'm not sure where he pours it. Perhaps Saruman pours it into a lesser ring. But at any rate, he seems to have poured it somewhere. But that is, again, Tolkien's fantasy. That doesn't mean the same rules apply to the Primary World, where evil is, perhaps, much more mundane. Oddly, Tolkien was so reactionary that he had something in common with leftist hippies; he loved trees. But Tolkien's environmentalism grew out of a deep conservatism and distrust of the modern world. On most social issues, he had little in common with the youth of the late 1960s who embraced his book. I'm not sure LotR has an environmental message, although many readers find such a message in it, because I'm not sure Tolkien held out any hope for his beloved trees. And I'm also not sure that Tolkien loved real wilderness. The trees of Tolkien's world seem best when well tended by ents or elves or hobbits, and for the most part uninhabited by wild animals.

Curious. (2008, June 5). In real life, Tolkien was a pessimist.

Treebeard — 1. A 'frightfully tree-ish' introduction [excerpt]

...Fangorn, as both a character and a place. Too, we've seen the idea of the larger-than-life character who really embodies the whole sense of a place before, and in connection with forests, no less – Tom Bombadil in the Old Forest, and Galadriel in Lothlórien. Surely, these are not coincidences – ...

visualweasel. (2008, April 28). Treebeard — 1. A 'frightfully tree-ish' introduction.

Resistance is floral! [excerpt]

... Treebeard makes a more explicit reference to Lorien later in the chapter. How similar, and how different are the two woods? Fangorn is a forest, Lorien is a garden. Galadriel is an Entwife at heart. It's basically wild anarchy versus regimented fascism. ...

Darkstone. (2008, April 8). Resistance is floral!

Rauros is a pretty impassable roadblock (well, riverblock)

You mean that the statues are hollow and contain archer towers and the like? I would think that those fortresses would be on the cliffs up above. As for getting through here, the Falls of Rauros are a pretty good stopping point. Even Lórien couldn't sail an army into Gondor over those falls. The fortresses are Amon Hen and Amon Lhaw.

Beren IV. (2008, March 31). Rauros is a pretty impassable roadblock (well, riverblock).

I have to confess... [excerpt]

I did think of Lydney Park myself, but I'd forgotten the name of it, and didn't have time to look anything up before I posted! So I hoped someone would come along and add some information about that.... The Lydney Park experience surely must have been added to the "soup" from which Tolkien's fiction was brewed (to mix Shippey's and Tolkien's own metaphors!)...

FarFromHome. (2008, February 25). I have to confess...

That quote

about the stones keeps making me think about a place-name down the slope from the Real World inspiration for the mountains of Moria. Not Hollin, but Hostenstein---"fetch stone". Of course, I also think about another place nearby called Wargistal---which looks like a variant spelling of the word for "strangler" + "valley"...though no reports of tentacled monsters appeared after the flooding in the Grindelwald,Switzerland area..... (\

Eowyn of Penns Woods. (2008, February 25). That quote.

Interesting, but...

What you said was quite interesting Kallasilya, but I believe if one tries to extend Tolkien's Middle Earth to our contemporary geography would do harm to Middle Earth itself. I read in Brian Rosebury's "Tolkien: a Cultural Phenomenon" that it was not acceptable for Tolkien that some critics related LOTR to the World Wars or the Cold War. So if we try to do so and connect Mordor to the Middle East, I think professor wouldn't have liked it. Rosebury said the protagonist of LOTR is Middle Earth itself, so if we are to have any faith in Middle Earth, it does not have to be in its practical applicability to our own world. It should be a faith only in Middle Earth and all that is in it.

Ashkan1984. (2008, February 22). Interesting, but... .

Helm's Deep: Part 1: The Build-up [excerpt]

... 7. Description of Hornburg and the rest: did anyone else struggle to picture this in their mind, even after rereading it? I never got how it all fit together until I saw the movie.

CuriousG. (2008, February 21). Helm's Deep: Part 1: The Build-up

Large families, time, and cultural suicide

Historical medieval people did have high childhood death rates, but they weren't that high - as you say, 30 to 50 % is about correct. If your average family has four to eight children, half of whom die, you still have a (very!) positive population growth rate! The average lifespan of a medieval person who made it to age 20 was 60. With infant death rates factored in, it's more like 40. Yeah, childbirth was dangerous, but most women still survived it. The peoples of Middle Earth do seem to be in a state of more-or-less continual low-key warfare throughout the Third Age, but with punctuations: the warfare consists of occasional raiding, only rarely with big battles. The timeline does indicate a series of major dieoffs of people, but there is a problem with invoking these to explain the lack of population growth. The Great Plague was over 200 years before the Wainriders. That's six generations or so - plenty of time to increase the population by as much as a factor of 10. The Great Dearth is likewise hundreds of years after the most recent major incident. Gondor is a special case, which I will come to momentarily. But the people who would be settling Hollin would not be Gondorian anyway: they would be Dunlandings, Breelanders, and possibly Hobbits. The latter two certainly are living quite peacefully, and have been with only minor interruptions, since the Great Plague - which was more than a millennium ago by the time of the War of the Ring. You would think that even with background levels of pestilence and famine, they would still be plenty numerous to expand outward. The Hobbits are doing just that, actually: they founded Hobbiton from Bree, and then Buckland from Hobbiton,

and now villages crop up all over the Shire. **This is what one would expect most of Middle Earth to look like - unless there are some population control mechanisms of un-Earth-like power and character.** One of these seems to exist in Gondor, which I am now coming back to. The very clear implication of the narration in Minas Tirith is that the Gondorians are basically committing cultural suicide. They have lost interest in procreation, and so do not reproduce deliberately, and they seem also to have lost interest in sex, and so do not reproduce accidentally (or serendipitously) as well. As a result, Minas Tirith is full of empty houses, mainly because the childless lords mused on heraldry or brewed elixers instead of taking (or seeing to) their wives. I can't think of any civilization in Earth history that has done this (although I can think of one religious group that has). Admittedly, the Japanese may be trying it now, albeit with a different mechanism! But I'm quite certain that Third Age Gondor did not have or use birth control the way that modern affluent nations like Japan do. The other problem here is, of course, the Wainriders. Tolkien does not imply that the sexes are truly equal in war in any of his races, except possibly the Dwarves. Most of the Wainraider warriors are men, not women. The limiting factor in human population growth is more likely to be the number of women than the number of men, because a single man can take multiple wives if his society is pinched (the reverse can also happen, but reproduction is usually limited by the females' physiology, not the males'). What, then, did the Gondorians do to the women of the Wainriders? Did they massacre them? I don't see Tolkien saying 'yes' here...

Beren IV. (2008, February 20). Large families, time, and cultural suicide.

Film connections

I know this is a reading room, but I'd like to say that I found it interesting that the film-makers saw the Italy-Gondor parallel as well, and a lot of the design of Minas Tirith is Italian based, i.e. the arches with alternating black and white stones. Are there any other parallels?

Kallasilya. (2008, February 20). Film connections.

Not that kind of desert.

All the references to Sauron's campaign in Eregion in the Second Age (in LotR annals, Unfinished Tales, and Of the Rings of Power) agree that the land was devastated: "laid waste" is used several times, as is ruined and destroyed. I read this to mean that all human/elven settlements and fields were burned (and maybe 'cursed' for what that's worth). I couldn't find your word "desert", though it may well be there; if so, I suggest that it is used in its sense of "deserted" and "lifeless", rather than to evoke our traditional idea of desert as a treeless sandy (or snowy)

waste. In other words, Eregion would certainly still have trees and growing things in the 4500 years that followed Sauron's war with the Elves of Hollin. My sense of the landscape is that it is elevated: i.e., it is kind of plateau or highlands immediately to the west of the mountains. Perhaps the vegetation on the exposed heights is more like scrub or heath, but in the valleys and ravines I at least would expect healthy if hardy woods - the entire area seems to me to be a southern extension of the Ettenmoor country that the hobbits and Strider skirt on their way to Rivendell. The windiness, if it needs to be explained beyond the dramatic purpose that certainly called it into being, would not be because "deserts are windy" in the Saharan or Nevadan or Chilean sense. It would more likely be from a confluence of the mountains to the east, the highlands they are hiking along, and the riverine lowlands to the west, heating and cooling at different rates as the winter sun rises and sets each day.

squire. (2008, February 19). Not that kind of desert.

More Observations

Tolkien stated that the stories of *The Hobbit* and the *LOTR* take place in the north-west of Middle Earth equivalent to the coastlands of Europe and the north shores of the Mediterranean. Tolkien then fixed some of the primary locations in the book by stating you could place Hobbiton and Rivendell at the latitude of Oxford, then Minas Tirith some 600 miles south would be of the latitude of Florence Italy (a place he had vacationed and loved). The mouth of the Anduin and Pelagir would be in Turkey at the location of the ancient city of Troy. I know that this link: <http://strangemaps.files.wordpress.com/2007/06/middle-earth.jpg> shows Middle Earth and Europe in a rather weird, but fun way. Also, I've seen a map in the *Middle Earth for Dummies* that aligns the coasts with Middle Earth and that can be found here at : <http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/id-2287.html> I don't think you can really say anywhere in Europe is Middle Earth exactly, outside of the latitude that Tolkien gave in his letter above. The rest is pure speculation, but fun speculation! I know one thing that I have had fun with my son at times is saying what this location looks like in *LOTR* as we come across new areas while traveling, or new locations while hiking. I think I look for my own Weathertops, my own Rivendell's, my own Lorien's, my own Fangorn Forests with the Misty Mountains and my own Ithilien's in the area where I live. I think Tolkien would have liked that. I'm sure Treebeard would.

ArathornJax. (2008, February 19) More observations.

The Council of Elrond - 1. Introductions

Welcome to this week's discussion of the chapter The Council of Elrond! At the end of the last chapter, we left Frodo going off to get some sleep after his first evening up since arriving in Rivendell. We come in again early the following morning, as Frodo wakes feeling "refreshed and well", and looking out at daybreak in Rivendell for the first time. We get a short description of Rivendell as it looks to Frodo on this autumn morning. He walked along the terraces above the loud-flowing Bruinen and watched the pale, cool sun rise above the far mountains, and shine down. Slanting through the thin silver mist Do you find it fanciful or accurate? **What kind of place is this? Is it a magical neverland or does it make you visualise a real place?** How about this? Is it always autumn in Rivendell? "the dew upon the yellow leaves was glimmering, and the woven nets of gossamer twinkled on every bush..."

FarFromHome. (2008, February 4). The Council of Elrond - 1. Introductions.

Coming in a little late

I think it's interesting that in Tolkien's world, everything is to some extent morally polarized. The chirping insects that keep Frodo and his friends awake aren't merely crickets, or even cricketlike -- they're specifically "evil relatives of the cricket". But the only evidence of "evil" that we're given is that they're annoying our heroes. (Am I the only person who still wants to scoop up Sean Bean's voice and lick it off a spoon like chocolate sauce?)

Cactus Wren. (2008, January 19). Coming in a little late.

Well I was starting further North

by placing the Shire in Lancashire! But actually, I agree with Curious that there are many places in England that correspond well with the places described in LotR. I doubt that Tolkien made any attempt to map the hobbits' journey onto the real topography of England, but instead I think he mixed and matched to suit his purposes. There are standing stones, barrow mounds, bogs and marshes, ruined Roman and medieval buildings, ancient roads and bridges, coaching-houses, smallholdings, and pretty much everything else described in LotR somewhere in England. There are probably lots of places with clusters of many of these things. **One of the strengths of LotR, really, is that it is so generic - that the places aren't unique but rather are familiar places made unfamiliar by the new setting, so that afterwards we see our surroundings with fresh eyes.** Thirty-odd years ago, when my husband and I were driving through the coalfields of South Wales (closed since then) on the way to our honeymoon destination, I remember us deciding that this must have been Mordor - or at least the slagheaps at the Black Gate. It's all in there somewhere!

FarFromHome. (2008, January 16). Well I was starting further North.

If we identify the Shire

with a different bit of England that Tolkien knew - the part of Lancashire where the Bucklebury Ferry might have been - then Bree could be somewhere like Skipton and the hilly country beyond would be the Yorkshire Dales. There is a "Greenway" running North-South along the line of the Pennine hills (the Pennine Way). Parts of it follow an old Roman road, much as the Greenway follows an ancient road of the old kingdom.

FarFromHome. (2008, January 16). If we identify the Shire.

"Seek for the sword that was broken..."

in Imladris it dwells." Perhaps that's a bit of further evidence to back up your theory that the shards are normally kept in Rivendell (I haven't looked to see if it's in the timeline, but Faramir's dream must have occurred well before the current episode). I subscribe to the school of thought that says that Aragorn is carrying Narsil because this is a momentous occasion - in fact when Strider pulls out his broken sword, it must be the first time that Narsil and the Ring have been in such close confrontation since the fatal moment when Sauron was defeated. **I had never realized just how closely and physically the Sword and the Ring are connected until those iconic repeated movie shots of the fateful moment sank into my brain.** The Sword captured the Ring, but the Ring shattered the Sword, and eventually, through Isildur's downfall, also shattered the line of Kings that the sword represents. So perhaps it's not surprising that Aragorn carries the sword to his fateful first meeting with the Ring. On the level of storytelling, this is one place where Tolkien's love of keeping things mysterious works against the power of the moment. Strider drawing a broken sword looks rather silly, but in fact it's a moment of great meaning. On the other hand, this gives us a very satisfying example of how something can look silly at first sight, yet be quite different once you know the background. We mostly see Aragorn through the hobbits' eyes, and so, like them, we have to revisit our impressions each time we learn more about him. Like them, we'll eventually understand that he's "gold", even though we see no sign of "glitter" right now!. FarFromHome. (2008, January 12). "Seek for the sword that was broken... .

"A very foolish thing to think" [excerpt]

Okay. I feel I have to rise to the defense of the "tra-la-lally Elves" in The Hobbit. I think the elves in Rivendell were just acting silly to tease the dwarves and Bilbo. It's well known that the relationship between Elves and Dwarves for centuries could be described, at best, as an annoyed toleration. Tolkien even says: "Dwarves don't get on well with them. Even decent enough

dwarves like Thorin and his friends think them foolish (which is a very foolish thing to think), or get annoyed with them. For some elves tease them and laugh at them, and most of all at their beards." This teasing is very evident in their song's lyrics: "O! Where are you going with beards all a-wagging?" As well as jests such as, "Don't dip your beard in the foam, father! It is long enough without watering it." Gandalf finally has to put an end to the teasing with, "Hush, hush! Good People! and good night! Valleys have ears and some elves have over merry tongues. Good night!" Perhaps a little alcohol had something to do with those "over merry tongues"? The point is that Tolkien even comes right out and tells us that we shouldn't think the elves are silly and foolish people just because they are acting silly at the moment. So, I don't really see Gildor and the other elves that Frodo meets as being unrecognizable from those of *The Hobbit*. After all, they too indulge in a little bit of teasing with Frodo. Here's what I don't understand: **In reading LOTR and The Silmarillion, we see elves being happy, sad, angry, wrathful, treacherous, prideful, noble, faithful, and the list goes on and on. So, why is it so difficult to imagine that elves can also be merry and joyful? I, for one, would gladly give the gold-crowns right off of my teeth to hear Lady Galadriel laugh. Somewhere along the line, everyone started envisioning elves to be just like Vulcans from Star Trek. Yes, elves are very old and very wise, but I don't see them as only exhibiting cold, clear, logic without emotions like Vulcans. ...**

Kdgard. (2007, November 10). "A very foolish thing to think".

Discussion: Tolkien's use of colour in *The Lord of the Rings*

The Mirror of Galadriel 5 - Tolkien's Colour Scheme [excerpt]

(or Why Elves Don't Do Chartreuse) ... Miller concludes: "Color functions throughout the trilogy as a marker of identity, as a visual leit motif establishing atmosphere and delineating theme, as a means of expressing the highest emotions, and as an external sign of inner moral and spiritual condition." That sounds right to me, but I'm wondering what people would think of this statement: "The limited palette of pure hues that Tolkien provided paints Middle-earth in primary sensations, avoiding the subtleties and nuances which inevitably would be evoked by using a profusion of tints, shades, and tones, the subtleties and nuances which color the Primary World. " Do you agree that Tolkien's world avoids subtleties and nuances? Should the Elves have painted their dwellings chartreuse or worn turquoise cloaks? Tolkien doesn't use the same limited palette in his own drawings and paintings, does he? Why would he literally paint in one way and paint word-pictures in another way? We often talk about how detailed Tolkien is in his descriptions. Does his simple palette help us imagine what is being described? Has Miller missed any colour

references that you can think of? What about other illustrators? How do they handle Tolkien's limited palette?

Modtheow. (2008, March 15). The Mirror of Galadriel 5 - Tolkien's Colour Scheme.

The Rainbow of our Imaginations [excerpt]

... I think that Tolkien does not intend to portray a world of limited colors, but deliberately limits his words to the most general color-terms applicable, so that our own imaginations will fill in the blanks. Your green might be chartreuse, mine might be teal. A green forest might twinkle with [every?] kind of green possible--but we have to participate in perceiving the possibilities. I do not think that Tolkien desires a passive audience, but rather an audience who dives in and explores, and sees the colors for themselves. This would complement his rejection of allegory in favor of applicability. He restrains his color descriptions to make them more applicable. ...

Dreamdeer. (2008, March 15). The Rainbow of our Imaginations.

A Green Sun

I agree that Tolkien paints a charming picture made out of natural colours; in fact, (and this is a point from Miriam Y. Miller's article), even though Tolkien defines a successful Secondary World as one "inside which the green sun will be credible," he sticks to a natural-looking sun and trees and mountains and waters. No unnatural-looking green suns in Middle-earth. I wonder why not. Surely other fantasy writers would create the equivalents of green suns; aren't they successful in creating believable secondary worlds? Even the mallorn-trees in Lothlorien seem to be close enough to our trees not to seem to be too unnatural.

Modtheow. (2008, March 16). A Green Sun.

Very interesting discussion back then [excerpt]

...In any case, here is an excerpt from Stanislaus's post that I like: "The quotation from Tolkien suggests that he intends not to show any particular hill, but the Idea of a hill, a primal, archetypal Hill, of which the rests are pale copies....The idea of a hill is not the abstraction of many hills, which contains only the most salient features of them. To the contrary, it is the source of all the hills, and is much richer than all of them taken together." I think this same kind of idea could be applied to what Tolkien says about primary colours and to the way that he uses them in LotR. ...

Modtheow. (2008, March 18). Very interesting discussion back then.

Discussion: Book/Film differences in the Pelennor Fields -- Sunrise/Sunset

Battle of the Pelennor Fields part 4 [excerpt]

... Eomer clearly sees the ships. He rallies his men for a last stand, reciting a verse, the last line of which is as follows: "Now for wrath, now for ruin and a red nightfall!" I hate to get into a movie discussion, but do you think that line is more effective at sunrise leading a charge, or at sunset making a last stand? ...

Milady. (2008, October 11). Battle of the Pelennor Fields part 4.

M*A*S*H Middle Earth style [excerpt]

... Sunset, of course. The later stages of the battle were seriously botched in the movie, IMO. The mumakil were wonderful, though. Too bad the horses showed no fear of them. ...

Elizabeth. (2008, October 11). M*A*S*H Middle Earth style.

My thoughts [excerpt]

... More effective at sunset, but who knows what logistics demanded a shift to sunrise?...

Dreamdeer. (2008, October 12). My thoughts.

PF part 4 [excerpt]

... Wow! Is it really about the be sunset/nightfall? The lines do sum up the entire day don't they -- began at sunrise and may be ending it here at day's end. Was a great film moment but does fit here in the book. ...

batik. (2008, October 12). PF part 4.

Well [excerpt]

... In ancient times nightfall usually meant an end to battle. Back then leaders needed to see their units to guide them. When they couldn't see things the entire situation went to pieces. Units would get lost and wander around looking for the enemy all night. Friendly units would accidentally start fighting each other. Nightfall was usually a time for rest, to eat, to tend to the wounded, to gather up stragglers, to entrench positions, to repair equipment, and, if necessary, to retreat. Not that night engagements didn't happen, but when they did, it was extremely chaotic. And when dawn came both forces would be scattered hither and yon, and everyone would be dead tired. So they'd use up all the next day resting and reorganizing anyhow. It usually just wasn't smart to fight at night back then unless there was an overwhelming reason to do so, and even then an intelligent commander would think twice. ...

Darkstone. (2008, October 14). Well.

Discussion: Elrond's House - *the first post contains questions, the subsequent posts contain answers to those questions*

****A Short Rest**--Part 4, The Last Homely House** [excerpt]

... What is it about Rivendell that makes so many of us choose it as a place in Middle-earth that we would most want to live (often second only to the Shire in polls)? When you read *The Hobbit* (as opposed to *LOTR*), do you envision Rivendell more as a single house, or as a settlement or village with many buildings? Do you envision the same thing when you read *LOTR*? How, if at all, should the movie-makers for *The Hobbit* movie make Rivendell different from how it appeared in the *LOTR* movies? In Letter #131, Tolkien says that Elrond's house "represents Lore—the preservation in reverent memory of all tradition concerning the good, wise, and beautiful. It is not a scene of action but of reflection. Thus it is a place visited on the way to all deeds, or 'adventures'." Is this a valid description of the Rivendell we visit in *The Hobbit*, or is this more influenced by *LOTR* (which Tolkien had written by the time of this letter)? Is a place of reflection necessary on all adventures? If so, why? ...

Menelwyn. (2009, April 8). ****A Short Rest**--Part 4, The Last Homely House**.

R & R... [excerpt]

... On my first reading--for some reason I pictured Elrond's *home* being separated from Rivendell (with grounds and buildings) by a little distance (where on earth did that thought come from???--did I misread and see Last Lonely House). Now, (with plenty of film-influence) I see Rivendell as home of the Elves. Quote How, if at all, should the movie-makers for *The Hobbit* movie make Rivendell different from how it appeared in the *LOTR* movies? Well now, since we don't get a physical description that really opposes what we saw in the films--does anything have to be different? ...

batik. (2009, April 9). **R & R...** .

My thoughts [excerpt]

... Yes. One extremely large, rambly building, or many buildings more or less interconnected into one, sprawling like lace around courtyards, gardens, terraces, and nature-interfaces. How, if at all, should the movie-makers for *The Hobbit* movie make Rivendell different from how it appeared in the *LOTR* movies? Same architecture, only in Spring, literally and figuratively. Blossoms blowing into the rooms rather than old leaves. A merrier place, where the threat of evil seems far and dim. But definitely the same place in a different mood. ...

Dreamdeer. (2009, April 9). **My thoughts**.

Thoughts. [excerpts]

... It's more welcoming than Lothlorien, and more idyllic than the Lonely Mountain or Rohan or Gondor. Perhaps because Elrond was Half-elven, it seems built for visitors as well as for elves. And of course Bilbo retired there, which is a great recommendation, because the readers identify with the hobbits. ...

... When I read the version of *The Hobbit* with Tolkien illustrations, I visualize a single, if large, house, which is pretty much what he drew. Without the benefit of that illustration, I'm not sure what to visualize based on the text of *The Hobbit*. The Last Homely House does imply that it is a house, not a village. *The Hobbit* also reveals that many of the elves plan to camp under the stars. How many of the elves in the valley actually sleep in Elrond's house, on a mattress? Not many, I would guess. ...

LotR gives us a few more details about the dining hall and the Hall of Fire, especially (which is similar to Beorn's dwelling in *The Hobbit*, if the description is closely examined). But it could still be one large, extended house. I still don't picture a village, and I still think many of the elves could be permanent campers who do not sleep in Elrond's house. Elrond's house is like the lodge at a national park, I think, where most of the visitors do not stay at the lodge. ...

...The movie-makers are probably stuck with what Jackson created, and that's not a bad vision, although it wasn't Tolkien's. I prefer the similarities between Elrond's Hall of Fire, Beorn's home, and Meduseld, all based upon the great hall in *Beowulf*. But it might be jarring to change what Jackson put in his movies. ...

Curious. (2009, April 9). Thoughts.

Proto-Aragorn? [excerpts]

... The library. And the nightly tra-la-lallying contests in the Hall of Fire. ... As a ranch house with various outlying buildings like a stable, a workshop, a bunkhouse, a smokehouse, storage sheds, and a guest cottage or two. ... Yes, only more a caravansary. Later we'll learn that Rivendell was a haven for refugees, and even was bypassed and besieged by Sauron ala Bastogne. So it could be considered like a Masada-like complex, only in a valley instead of on a plateau. ... In the LOTR movies it was set as Elvish Autumn. In *The Hobbit* movie it should be Elvish Midsummer. ...

Darkstone. (2009, April 10). Proto-Aragorn?

A Swiss cruise ship? [excerpts]

... Your point that LotR actually quotes *The Hobbit* is another indicator of just how strong the parallels are meant to be here. I think, within the story, that this applies better to Rivendell in *The Hobbit* than it does in the LotR – where Lothlorien's attractions seem to be equal, if not superior, to Rivendell's. I'm intrigued by the inclusion of "work" in the list of what seems like unbridled

hedonism. I don't know about anyone else, but I've always wanted to live in Gondor, where there are hints of cosmopolitanism, conflict, and excitement. I cannot abide the thought of an endless vacation or retirement. The Shire is a kind of rural but work-free paradise which even Tolkien admits is boring - and except for the blessed availability of "work", according to this list Rivendell is a cruise ship oddly aground in a Swiss ravine. If I remember, later commentators (or was it Tolkien himself) who compared Rivendell not to an Elvish paradise, but to a kind of proto-university, devoted to study and preservation of knowledge. That interests me, but it doesn't really come through in The Hobbit's version. ...

... "Last Homely House" means House, singular, as I read it. However, as far as buildings go, I'd assume that the Great House where Elrond lived was like the Great House on an English estate, with plenty of outbuildings to support the agricultural activities that supply the place with food. Such places were like villages in size and complexity, but without the freeholding economy we find in English or American villages. An unpleasant but accurate parallel in American life would be an antebellum plantation, right down to the happily singing simpletons in the outlying fields - but without, needless to say, any hint of slavery in the Tolkien version! LotR does not expand on The Hobbit's description, physically, as far as I remember. ...

... As others have commented, this is one setting that should probably stay the same. I agree that the seasonal change - midsummer in The Hobbit, compared to late fall in LotR - is enough to establish the necessary change of tone. It comes right from the books and reflects Tolkien's intention as well, I'd guess! This is just one of many examples of why The Hobbit movie must be made with the expectation that it will, in time, be viewed first, before the trilogy. This generation of non-book fans will just have to wrench their heads around the indisputable fact that The Hobbit comes first, and that it's LotR that varies from The Hobbit, rather than the other way round. ...
squire. (2009, April 16). A Swiss cruise ship?

Types of posts in the Readings Room: Examples

[Agreement and Disagreement in the Reading Room]

Yes.

From Letter 107 (1946; i.e. prior to the publication of LOTR): "Gandalf... [should be drawn as] the Odinic wanderer that I think of." I think most (though clearly not all) of us agree that Tolkien was influenced by a variety of sources. It makes his work all the richer, IMHO. ...

Kimi. (2008, February 21). Yes.

Bratman never named his top six. [excerpt]

...Taken all together, I completely agree that the discussions are better on TORN and some other message boards. Finally, while the qualities of Jackson's films have often been discussed on the Mythsoc list, opinions are split, if tending to go against the movies. That particular discussion began when one member stated as a point of general agreement that "Jackson made an attempt to honor the feelings and themes of the book". You agree, obviously, but there's no reason that everyone must do so. ...

N.E. Brigand (2009, March 19). Bratman never named his top six.

[The following post is an example of one of the longer posts taken from the Reading Room. Spaces and paragraphs have been preserved to facilitate comprehension.]

Book 3 chapter 7: Helm's Deep. Led by glaze.

Lord of the Rings : Book 3, Chapter 7

Helm's Deep

A Discussion Led by Glaze

Book III, Chapter VII: Doubt - glaze

Hello All and welcome: I have just returned from St. Louis, where I saw my beloved Cardinals put the hurt on the Atlanta Braves by a score of 10-4. Driving back from St.Louis to Chicago last night, I had some thoughts on the makeup in the characters in these books. Specifically, the difference between the attitudes of the most accessible characters (the Hobbits) and the more remote characters, especially Aragorn. I am not faulting Aragorn, he is a richly drawn character, especially considering some of the monstrosities we have had to endure from hacks such as Jordan and Brooks. However, the man never seems to have had a moment of self-doubt in his life. Even at moments such as at Helm's Deep or at the Morannon, where he and his allies are outnumbered terribly, he never seems to have the fears that plague others. This makes him a very hard character to identify with, especially compared with people such as Frodo, Merry, Sam, Pippin, even Gimli and Legolas. They all have their moments of fear, of resignation of defeat. But Aragorn goes along. He is not blithe to the danger he is in, but it seems that he never doubts that he will win. Everyone else, even Gandalf, has moments where he is terribly nervous. What does this say about Aragorn or conversely, about Tolkien and his style? I welcome your comments.

Aragorn is a perfect knight - Mirven

Honestly, I didn't like Aragorn, when I read LOTR for the first time...I found him a bit unrealistic, just like a machine, with its only target in beating the enemies and becoming a king...Now, he

became one of my favorite characters, but I still find him too strong for living in such hard times. Aragorn is a hero taken straight from epic stories about King Arthur, Beowulf, etc, just a perfect knight, that appeared in almost every legend, to show that courage, honesty and other values did still exist and the evil wouldn't ever be glorified...

While I have always liked Aragorn a lot, - Hmpf

I've never identified with anyone but the hobbits. Most of the other characters are just a little bit too noble to identify with.

Hobbits are the real heroes - Mirven

You're right, hobbits are down-to-earth, but strong just like we, humans, are! Who did manage to destroy the ring and finish the quest? Not the fearless Aragorn, or the proud Boromir, but two plain hobbits, who loved to eat and had never seen an armoured knight before their journey.

It's interesting, that none of the great and noble warriors, even not Gandalf, decided to bring the Ring to Mt Doom and destroy it. I think Tolkien wants to say, that it doesn't really matter, who are we, when it comes to heroism - the situation makes us able to do things we've never imagined before. It doesn't also mean, that only the noble and strong ones are determined to be real heroes, for there's even more strength in an honest, kind heart....

What about on Amon Hen - Adaneth

Just before the death of Boromir when he says "Everything I do goes amiss."? He seemed rather doubtful there. And when he has to decide during the chase after Merry and Pippin whether or not to run at night, he seems uncertain as to which is the right choice. Or after Gandalf's death when he realizes that he must lead the fellowship, which tears him because he wants to go to Minas Tirith, and also because he doesn't know what road Gandalf wanted to take. Or how about when he was afraid to enter Moria? I think you are mistaken in saying that he had no self-doubt. But he was also raised among elves and as a fighting man. There is very little that he hasn't succeeded at, so why shouldn't he feel confident. The best example of his self-doubt is after he becomes king and before he finds the white tree. He asks Gandalf how he can be sure of everything coming to fulfilment. Even after he had done everything required of him, he was still doubtful as to whether or not he would get Arwen.

Just my thoughts.

Adaneth

Exactly! - Nienor

The scenes at Parth Galen, at the end of Fellowship and beginning of The Two Towers, are a turning point for Aragorn. He has tried to lead the Company but it's too much even for him, and here it breaks up around him. "I am not Gandalf..." I always feel extremely sorry for him at this point, one of his most approachable moments, as you can tell from the large number of his lines I can remember without looking them up! "Vain was Gandalf's trust in me" "It is I that have failed"

"What is to be done now?" and especially "An ill fate is on me this day and all that I do goes amiss!" "And now may I make a right choice and change the evil fate of this unhappy day." In choosing to follow the Orcs and being convinced that this IS the right choice (and his reasoning makes sense) he is to some extent freed from the burden of anxiety about the Company, which is now finished, and about Frodo and Sam. "The fate of the Bearer is in my hands no longer."

Aragorn, like Frodo, had a choice to make at Parth Galen: the Company was always going to split basically between Mordor and Minas Tirith and it was right for both Frodo and Aragorn to go the ways they did. After this Aragorn has renewed and increasing confidence, but only because he got through this real crisis of self-doubt... I think so, anyway. I have found the computer room at university, as you notice, though work hasn't started properly yet so I may not have any MORE time... Thanks so much to everyone who wished me well!

It says that Aragorn is a crusader - Daddy Duck

He believes he is right and the idea that he will fail is simply impossible. I have met real people like this (Navy Seals) and they are terrifying to be around. I suspect that JRR met a few along the way and modeled Aragorn after them. "Only fools go where angels fear to tread" Cool and calm on the surface, kicking like hell underneath

Possibly. - glaze

I know that I would be scared to death to be around Aragorn. Either you are an enemy and he is attempting to turn you into a shish-kebab on the end of Anduril, or he is your buddy and he is convincing you that it isn't that bad of an idea to go and attack Mordor with seven thousand men. Whatever. Give me Sam anyday. At least he has the concept of his own mortality, and if he knows the quest is hopeless, he is honest about it.

Shish-kabobs on Anduril? My word, that's funny... *giggle* - Elemmírë

LOL - Hmpf

>>or he is your buddy and he is convincing you that it isn't that bad of an idea to go and attack Mordor with seven thousand men. Poor Aragorn. He's not *that* bad, is he??? ;-)

Book III, Chapter VII, Helms Deep Battle and layout. - glaze

One thing that I have always found confusing in this chapter is the actual geography of Helm's Deep. The White Mountains run East-West. To my understanding, the Deep is a bay or gorge in the mountains. To my mind, this gorge should run North-South. However, Tolkien speaks of the Deeping Wall running North-South ACROSS the gorge. If that is true, then the gorge itself runs East-West. But that in itself seems to fly in the face of the geography of the White Mountains.

The only answer, to my mind, is that the gorge turns as it goes deeper into the mountain range. Or am I just nuts?

The layout of Helm's Deep - Banizar Galpsi

First of all, I never saw the dyke and/or wall at Helm's Deep being a circle, as depicted on that map website (cool site though it is). That makes it look like a miniature Minas Tirith. This is not at all the image I got from the books and do not think there is anything that implies it is on the side of the gorge and not the end, or that there is anything ring like about the set up of Helm's Deep. I saw the dyke and wall running ACROSS the width of the whole gorge, which by the time you got to the deepest part would not be all that wide. The entrance to the caves would be at the direct end of the gorge, not off to one side before you got to the end. Of course the wall might turn or veer here and there, which would allow Aragorn to see the gate from the wall more easily etc. It is also possible that he did not have to see the actual gate to know there was a large press of foes their just from the din of battle coming from the gate and the large number of foes massing in that direction.

I did not quite see it laid out like the depiction in the Atlas, or the painting by the Hilderbrandts, though I think they got it closer to my personal vision than any other view.

The Atlas can't be quite right - Gorel

I just wanted to be point out that the Atlas by Fonstad can't be quite right, in case anyone is using it as a reference. Fonstad depicts the outer court as having a circular wall which is interrupted by the cliffs from about the 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock positions. She places the postern door at about 12 (north), the Great Gate at about 2, and the Deeping Wall extends south from about the 6 o'clock position. However, Eomer and Aragorn notice the gates are in danger from the Deeping Wall. In Fonstad's arrangement their view would have been blocked by almost the whole burg.

Some very helpful maps - Blue Wizard

are at this site.

Thanks, for giving us that link again. - GaladrielTX

My befuddled self has bookmarked it this time.

Those maps are really, really cool! - Elemmírë

And very helpful, too. They're so detailed! - do you know, Blue, who drew them up? Christopher Tolkien, or the website's designer?

Thanks, Blue! - septembrist

I was hoping someone might have a site with maps. It is quite helpful and duly bookmarked for future reference.

That's a cool site, Blue! - Eomund's Daughter

...and very helpful! I just bookmarked it for future use. :-)

In the Altas of Middle Earth - Bard

The mountains run from NW to SE. The gorge starts of running SW and then bends south. I think this is what it is. I'll check it up when I am at home. "Bard is not lost!" he cried. "He dived from

Esgaroth, when the enemy was slain. I am Bard, of the line of Girion; I am the slayer of the dragon!"

The White Mountains. - Rhudainor

A mountain range isn't a straight line, but full of twists and tweaks and juts (if that's English words!) and The White Mountains could very well run North-South for a while, so that the gorge runs East-West. And I agree with Kimi on the overall geography.

I haven't got my "Atlas of Middle-earth" here - Kimi

But judging by the map at the end of LOTR, the White Mountains curve towards their western end, running North-West to South-East. So the Deeping Wall could indeed run North-South. I think the gorge probably does change direction slightly as it goes deeper into the mountains, curving from SE-NW towards West-East.

Book III, Chapter VII: Gimli and Legolas - glaze

I do not know how many of you managed to slog your way all the way through my mammoth post of last night, where I brought up several points regarding this chapter. On the advice on Annael, I am trying to break it down into several digestible bits. One of the favorite parts, for all posters it seems, is the interplay between Gimli and Legolas in this chapter. It is my opinion that the difference in the attitudes between the two are indicative of the differences between the two races, Elf and Dwarf. Gimli seems to enjoy the battle. At one point he states how, "This is more to my liking." He is speaking about drawing near to the White Mountains as they ride from Edoras, but in my opinion, he could be speaking about the battle as well. Apart from his affection for Galadriel, Gimli is a simple sort, and his zest for life and living is nowhere more evident in this chapter, where at one point he shouts the number of his casualties BEFORE he kills the Orc who completes his tally. Legolas, on the other hand, is more depressed about the whole thing. He is unhappy about being near the mountains, and decries the lack of archers. he plays his part valiantly, and takes part in the game with Gimli, but one senses that he is rather remote from the entire situation, as most Elves have been remote from Middle-Earth in the Third Age. He shows little of the zeal that Gimli does in the battle. Comments like "that is but a few leaves in a forest" do little to dispel this feeling. What do you think?

Legolas seems lonely & homesick here. - Annael

I think he feels more isolated and far from home than Gimli does. Also - this is a new thought - perhaps the reason why he began to spend more time with Gimli at Lothlorien was because he didn't feel all that at home with the High-Elves of Lorien either. He and Gimli were both strangers in a strange land. At Helm's Deep he was even farther out of his element, while Gimli at least felt at home in the mountains. Legolas perks up when he gets to be under trees again and meets Treebeard. I assume he does go home again after the war is over and Aragorn is crowned &

married, and he and Gimli visit the Caves and Fangorn as they promised each other. He would want to report to his father what's happened, and Gimli must have gone back to the Lonely Mountain. But I suspect they both found that "you can't go home again" and returned to Minas Tirith as soon as they could.

Good observation :)> - Steve D

You're mostly on target... - Eomund's Daughter

...it's shown throughout the text up to this point that Legolas is, by virtue of being an Elf, slightly removed from the proceedings even as he participates in them. (The nature of Elvish sleep and dreams even illustrates this.) He's clearly more in love with the woodlands and finds dwellings of dwarves and men in stone uncomfortable. That being said...I think that he does get a little "into" the competition with Gimli, and that it serves as a (further) bonding element between these two very different characters.

bonding - Gorel

We get to see lots of bonding in this chapter, between Legolas and Gimli and between Aragorn and Eomer. In both cases it's the shared experience of battle that brings them closer.

Book III, Chapter VII; Starting some discussions, and a response to Ron Austin. - glaze

I hope to post some provocative threads in the next few days regarding the "Helm's Deep" Chapter. But regarding the correction that Ron gave me regarding the Huorns, where he stated that they "camr on their own", I cannot agree. In Chapter IX, "Flotsam and Jetsam", Pippin describes how Gandalf came to Isengard after the Ents had taken it over. Gandalf asks for Treebeard's help and says how he has "ten thousand Orcs to manage" Treebeard, later in the Chapter, says how, "Huorns will help." I can't help but assume that Gandalf asked Treebeard for help at the Deep, and that Treebeard sent the Huorns. What does everyone else think?

Gandalf showed up at Isengard after the Ents had destroyed it ... - Ron Austin

The Hurons had already split off and headed after the Orc Army before Gandalf showed up.

Yes, that is true, but... - glaze

What is the motivation for the Huorns to do that before Gandalf showed up? Yes, they hated the Orcs, and Saruman, for what had been done to Fangorn, but how would they even know where the Orcs were? And why would Gandalf show up, practically beg Treebeard for help, and act happy afterward, if Treebeard did not do anything to help? In my opinion, The Huorns were in the reargaurd of the attack on Isengard, ready for use if the Ents had failed. Since the Ents did not have to actually fight against the Orcs, evil Men, etc. who were housed in Isengard, but rather flooded the place, the Huorns were not needed. So when Gandalf showed up asking for assisyance at Helm's Deep, Treebeard sent the Huorns to aid the cause of the Rohirrim. That explains Treebeards rather cryptic comment, "Huorns will help." that he made to Merry and Pippin after Gandalf had left Isengard.

the Ents decide to attack Saruman during the Ent Moot - Ron Austin

Treebeard and the Ents are at the gates of Isengard when Saruman's Army leaves to attack Helm's Deep and some of the Ents and the forest of Hurons follow the Orc Army. Gandalf shows up at Isengard after the Ents have cornered Saruman in the Tower of Orthanc. Gandalf fills in Treebeard on what is happening and they decide to flood Isengard to keep Saruman from escaping then Gandalf is off to gather the scattered remnants of the army of Westfold.

I can tell that we disagree about the timing of this issue. - glaze

But my belief is that the Ents decide to flood Isengard well before Gandalf shows up, and that the Huorn (and Ent) force goes after the Orcs at Gandalfs' urging, and not on their own. This can be backed up by a careful reading of Book III, Chapter IX (Flotsam and Jetsam) where Pippin describes the activities of the Ents in the flooding of Isengard, especially the "...rending, tearing noise of work going on inside. Ents and Huorns were digging great pits and trenches, making great pools and dams, gathering all the waters of the Isen and every other spring and stream that they could find." This all occurs BEFORE Gandalf shows up (which would lead you to the belief that the flooding was in no way precipitated by Gandalf). And when Gandalf does show up, he speaks of having, "...ten thousand Orcs to handle." I doubt that he would have said this if the Huorns were already on their way to Helm's Deep. It is my opinion that he knew that the Ents were going to go to Isengard and whale on Saruman (see Chapter 5) and went there to ask for help. I agree tht the Ents decide to go after Saruman at Entmoot, and that Gandalf helps regroup the army of Westfold and brings Erkenbrand to the Deep in the nick of time (to coin an original phrase). However, to suggest that the Huorns and the Ents went after the Orc army independently is to turn a blind eye to the way the story is written.

I am in no way intending to be insulting, but merely reading the work as written. If you can find backup for your opinions in the written material, I will shut up.

I will try again - Ron Austin

In next weeks chapter " The Road to Isengard"

Chapter 8 pages 148 and 149:

Then they all gazed at Gandalf with still greater wonder. Some glanced darkly at the wood, and passed their hands over their brows, as if they thought their eyes saw otherwise than his.

Gandalf laughed long and merrily. "The trees?" he said. "Nay,

I see the wood as plainly as do you. But that is no deed of mine.

It is a thing beyond the council of the wise. Better than my design,

and better even than my hope the event has proved" I propose that we put off this question till next week when we actually discuss chapter 8.

I think that it's pretty clear... - Eomund's Daughter

...as we find out after the fact, that the Huorns arrived (a) in Treebeard's following when the Ents first marched, and (b) that they assisted the Rohirrim (and really themselves) as a result of Gandalf's visit to Treebeard. I think it's right there in the text, as you noted.

Yes, I doubt that they just decided to go on their own. - Annael

But I need to check the later chapters to see what Merry & Pippin said about it. As I recall they said that the Huorns followed them to Isengard, but didn't participate in the attack, instead moved off somewhere else. I can't remember if the Huorns left before Gandalf came to Isengard the first time, though.

I think you're right, Glaze - Kimi

That exchange in "Flotsam and Jetsam" does seem to imply that Treebeard sent the Huorns in response to Gandalf's request for help in "managing" ten thousand orcs.

Book III, Chapter VII: almost cinematic - Gorel

Now that the upcoming movies are often on my mind, I was struck by how cinematically visual this chapter is. Tolkien moves the reader's point of view precisely from the coomb up to the fortress, where the scene of the coming action is described so we can later orient ourselves. He then builds the tension by revealing the hordes of orcs only by their torches in the night, and the fall of the dike only by sound, carefully concealing the true size and nature of their army to let our imaginations run wild. And then he unleashes the full horror of the situation with a lightning strike which suddenly makes the monster visible.

And my memories of this chapter are always full of powerful imagery. There's the rain and lightning, and Theoden in his doubt silhouetted against the tower window, the white fire of Anduril, and the blasting fire of Saruman, and Gandalf shining as he appears over the hill. And probably my favorite image: "and the men of the Mark amazed looked out, as it seemed to them, upon a great field of dark corn, tossed by a tempest of war, and every ear glinted with barbed light."

All in all I'd say this scene was almost written to be adapted to film.

Yes and No - specific and vague - Banizar Galpsi

Yes, he has very specific imagery that does seem like the way a movie would show things. But he also is vague about the exact layout, and the specifics of all the "extras". But in many of these kinds of things he is vague on purpose I believe so that the reader may paint in their own geography. This is one of the things I find most impressive about the books on a whole. So many times in later life have I gone back to the text and realized just how little he does say and how much of my oh, so very specific images of Lorien or Moria or Helm's Deep, etc. was actually invented in my own head. He gave me just enough to spark my own brain into inventing my own Middle Earth. Somehow the author used just the right amount of hints and partially filling in the

scenic stuff to ultimately join with the reader's own noggin in making it much more detailed and expansive than one person could have come up with on their own. This to me is the genius of Tolkien in action.

For me, he did what he needed to - Gorel

I think it's possible Tolkien didn't even have as good a map of Helm's Deep as we do. He linked the pieces of his stage together well enough to understand and enjoy the action. I certainly didn't waste any time the first few times I read it wondering where that postern door was! It was too exciting. But I understood there was a rock with a tower at the entrance to a gorge, and a wall extending from it across the gorge, with a stream flowing under it at one point, etc. It's not enough information to draw a map, but it's enough to paint your own picture of the action (as you pointed out). But when I said cinematic I didn't mean that Tolkien provided all the details necessary for a film maker to construct a set. I meant the way he establishes the scene and moves the reader's point of view, and the emphasis on visual techniques to add drama to the scene. For instance, an unseen menace in the dark, revealed suddenly by a lightning strike. It just seems like a director could make storyboards very easily from the text.

For the spatially challenged: - GaladrielTX

Interesting that Gorel comments on the wealth of visual description in this chapter. Tolkien does spend a lot of time with description. Yet I've read it many times, and I don't think I've ever figured out exactly where everything lies in relation to everything else. I've had this problem with other Tolkien battles, too, like the Pelennor. Perhaps it's because I'm not fond of battle scenes and don't concentrate enough, or perhaps there's just something about the way he presents it verbally that I can't relate to. Does anyone else have this problem?

GTX, I have the same problem. - Elemmírë

and I, too, think it might be because I am seriously spatially challenged and probably don't concentrate hard enough on where everything is. Helm's Deep's layout has always confused me, so I read for the descriptions of what the characters are doing and how they interact. The one-upmanship of Gimli and Legolas delights me, and I worry over the safety of the other main characters. Where they are is somewhat beyond me, lest I had a map, which I don't. I'll be curious to see it in the films - and how much this section of the film colors my later readings of the chapter.

Same problem here. - septembrist

I still have a hard time figuring out the layout at Helm's Deep. And I have not seen any maps to help me out.

I have no problem with Pelennor though.

I agree with both of you: - Rhudainor

It is a stunning chapter and one of my favorites, but the geography of the Deeping Coomb and the

layout of Hornburg can be a bit hard to visualize. Until I succeeded in finding a very detailed strategic map of the battle, both in regards to the fortress, the wall, and so forth. Unfortunately I don't know how to enclose a file from my harddisk to these messages. I mean, there is no URL-link to write.

Yes, me too, GTX. - Kimi

I never really got a clear picture of how Helm's Deep "works" until I got the Karen Wynn Fonstad "Atlas of Middle-earth". It also gave me a clear picture of where Cirith Ungol and Minas Morgul are in relation to each other. Mr Kimi, on the other hand, had no trouble envisaging Helm's Deep etc. And yes, I can read maps very well.

Extra credit Helm's Deep question - Gorel

How do you get horses up into the Deep behind the wall? Do they take the stairs?

Panto horses? - Kimi

A la Ian McKellen's latest report. "In a long file they led their horses up the ramp and passed within the gates of the Hornburg." So there's a ramp as well as stairs. I do have trouble picturing all this, though. I need that Atlas.

Hahahaha! - GaladrielTX

Maybe I should look into buying that atlas. Pictures would help. (I feel the need to save face here: I, too, can read maps.)

That's the ramp to the gates from the outside - Gorel

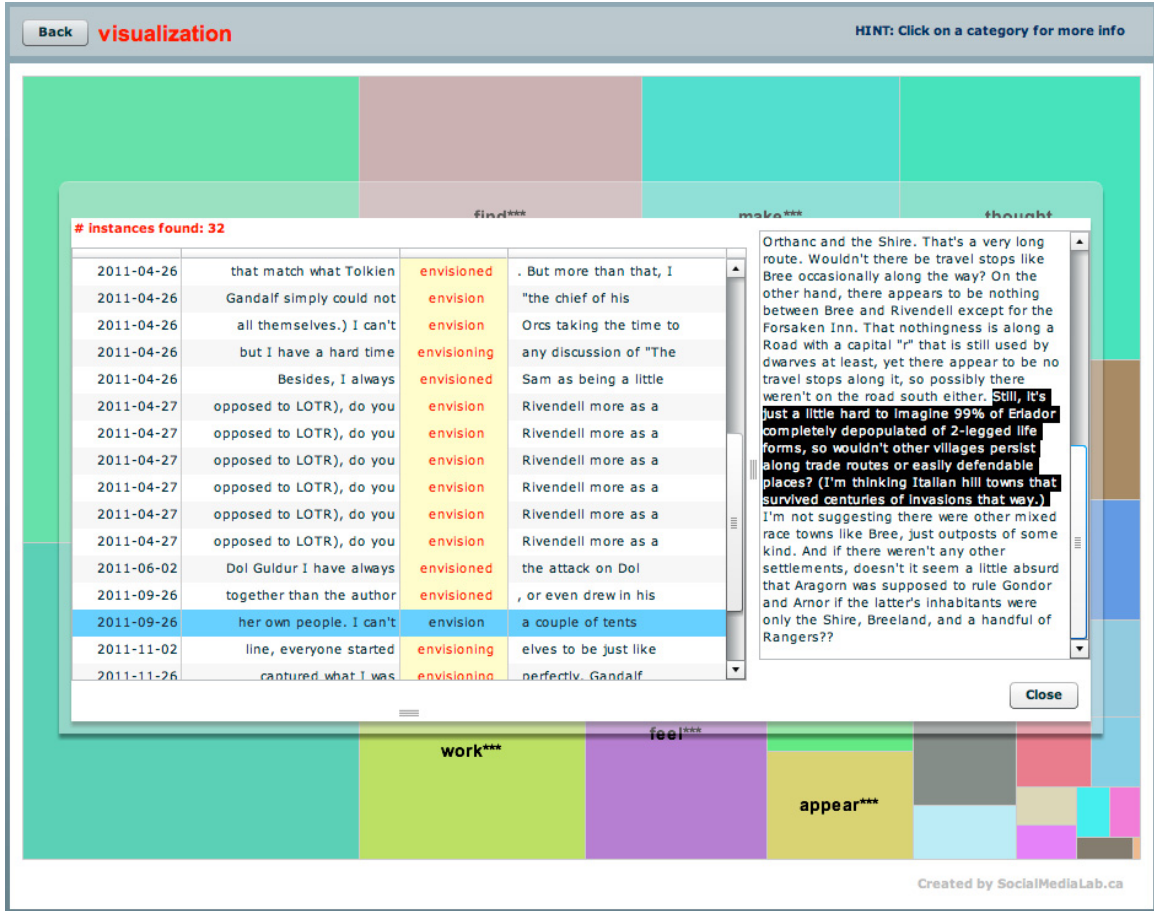
The Gates open on the outer court. But then there are stairs from the outer court down to the Deeping Wall, and another set down from the outer court to the floor of the Deep behind the wall (where Aragorn trips before a mysterious boulder chucker saves him). "The horses were led far up the Deep under such guard as could be spared." These are the guards and horses later menaced by the first orcs to crawl through the culvert.

It's hard to imagine they would want to lead the horses down the stairs, so I think Tolkien overlooked this. It's not important, just a curiosity.

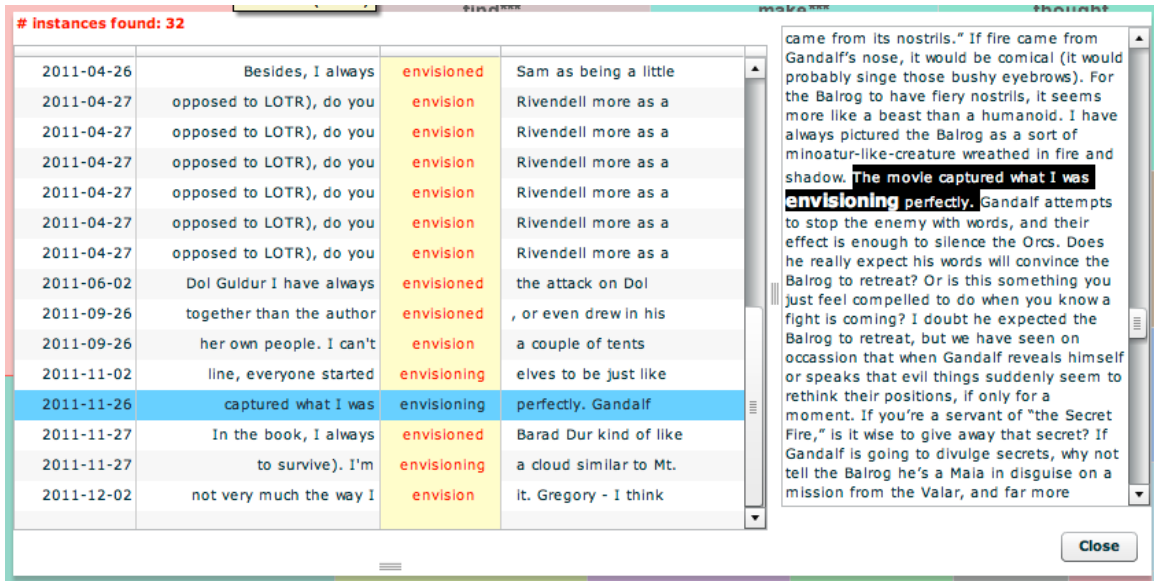
Horses can do stairs - Kimi As long as they're fairly broad and shallow. But you're right, it might just have been an oversight.

Inferno. (2009, April 26). Book 3 chapter 7:Helm's Deep. Led by glaze.

ICTA Screen captures



CuriousG. (2010, September 1). Were there other Bree's?



worldsmiths. (2010, November 11). BALROG.

instances found: 32

2011-04-26	Besides, I always	envisoned	Sam as being a little
2011-04-27	opposed to LOTR), do you	envison	Rivendell more as a
2011-04-27	opposed to LOTR), do you	envison	Rivendell more as a
2011-04-27	opposed to LOTR), do you	envison	Rivendell more as a
2011-04-27	opposed to LOTR), do you	envison	Rivendell more as a
2011-04-27	opposed to LOTR), do you	envison	Rivendell more as a
2011-04-27	opposed to LOTR), do you	envison	Rivendell more as a
2011-06-02	Dol Guldur I have always	envisoned	the attack on Dol
2011-09-26	together than the author	envisoned	, or even drew in his
2011-09-26	her own people. I can't	envison	a couple of tents
2011-11-02	line, everyone started	envisoning	elves to be just like
2011-11-26	captured what I was	envisoning	perfectly. Gandalf
2011-11-27	In the book, I always	envisoned	Barad Dur kind of like
2011-11-27	to survive). I'm	envisoning	a cloud similar to Mt.
2011-12-02	not very much the way I	envison	it. Gregory - I think

FROM: Vaemyr Arandur
DATE: 2011-11-27

So you think the eye is... "I assumed it was some kind of diabolical, magico-scientific concentration" Totally. In the book, I always **envisoned** Barad Dur kind of like that huge building in Blade Runner with the big windows on top and where Tolkien describes the red light as coming out through those windows from inside--I would imagine Sauron in a trance on some crazy pentagram with candles and hexes all over the place peering out from there. But in the movie, the eye is on top like a magico-scientific concentration, which I liked because of the way that technology was portrayed in the movie as evil (especially with Saruman), Sauron as robot-like (even in the books, I think Tolkien went out of his way to point out that the armies of Mordor always built things out of iron, black iron, black rusty iron, etc.). Which brings me to the destruction of the ring--I loved the

Close

Vaemyr Arandur. (2008, November 29). So you think the eye is...

instances found: 381

2011-02-02	Oikumeme, the abiding	place	of Men, the objectively
2011-02-02	Hobbit and the LOTR take	place	in the north-west of
2011-02-02	settings, as well as	place	names. I could go
2011-02-02	Plain'.... Is there any	place	near this area in our
2011-02-02	on Cheddar Gorge (a	place	I've been lucky enough
2011-02-02	that Tolkien meant to	place	Gondor/Minis Tirith in
2011-02-02	based on: is it a real	place	that the artist
2011-02-02	the Elves) to a better	place	. For the Elves, they
2011-02-02	name for...the abiding	place	of Men, the objectively
2011-02-02	green, but just that	place	of solitude people were
2011-02-02	be Canada (or any "real"	place), that doesn't mean you
2011-02-02	with the action taking	place	: 1. At the Fellowship
2011-02-02	to his mind. But it does	place	an emphasis on the Ring
2011-02-02	accurate? What kind of	place	is this? Is it a
2011-02-02	middle-aged. Hobbits	place	their coming of age at
2011-02-02	he probably rushed from	place	to place or

FROM: a.s.
DATE: 2011-02-02

applicability :-). QuoteYour input on Middle-Earth being located in the North-West clearly destroys my theory, but it was a theory nonetheless. While I'm sure Tolkien didn't intend the Blessed Realm to literally be Canada (or any "real" **place**), that doesn't mean you have to give up your own personal interpretation of LOTR. I don't mean you can say "Tolkien meant the Blessed Realm in the West to be Canada", but you could say something like "for me, the Blessed Realm is Canada". We're all free to apply or derive personal understandings or interpretations to this work (or any, for that matter). I think LOTR is just as beautiful, for instance, to those who don't read it in English and don't automatically think of the Shire as England. They may not be able to state that Tolkien intended the Shire to be another country (because we have him on record otherwise)


Close

a.s. (2008, February 26). applicability :-).

[The One Ring Forums: Tolkien Topics: Reading Room:](#)
Yup.

[Previous Thread](#)
[Next Thread](#)
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Darkstone
 Half-elven



Aug 21 2007, 12:31pm

Views: 135
[Shortcut](#)

Yup. [\[In reply to\]](#)

It's the world itself that every reader falls in love with.

The audacious proposal stirred his heart. And the stirring became a song, and it mingled with the songs of Gil-galad and Celebrian, and with those of Feanor and Fingon. The song-weaving created a larger song, and then another, until suddenly it was as if a long forgotten memory woke and for one breathtaking moment the Music of the Ainur revealed itself in all glory. He opened his lips to sing and share this song. Then he realized that the others would not understand. Not even Mithrandir given his current state of mind. So he smiled and simply said "A diversion."

(This post was [edited](#) by Darkstone on Aug 21 2007, 12:33pm)

Can't Post

Subject	User	Time
Who is the single most important character in LOTR?	Fionnan2	Aug 20 2007, 10:49pm
▶ Sauron	sevilodorf	Aug 20 2007, 11:58pm
▶ Hmmm - it's a toss-up	Ataahua	Aug 21 2007, 12:57am
▶ Frodo	Penthe	Aug 21 2007, 3:09am
▶ Middle-Earth /	FarFromHome	Aug 21 2007, 7:23am
▶ Yup.	Darkstone	Aug 21 2007, 12:31pm

Darkstone. (2007, August 21). Yup.

Appendix F: Poster Comments from the Movie Discussion Board

The following comments were posted to TheOneRing.net Reading Room message forum at the following URL: <http://newboards.theonering.net/forum/gforum/perl/gforum.cgi?forum=8>

Emphasis, in red, Grek Martin.

Visualizing Middle-earth

In short (well, not really)

In general, I quite like the movies - as should be evident! But I like them not for their artistic qualities - I simply too little about movies in general to venture an opinion on that - but because I consider them to be an honest attempt to retell the story with love and respect to the source material. Most of the movies I've seen in the last decade or so (since I more or less lost interest in the cinematic medium) have been based on history, or adaptations of books I knew and loved - and I invariably left the theater with a feeling of a couple of good hours wasted. **Perhaps this experience puts me in an unique position to truly appreciate the effort put into faithfully rendering the book to screen. And my greatest interest in the movies is as an oblique, indirect commentary on the books - what would be convincingly told in a different medium, how the story could be retold to 21st-century people, how to show information rather than telling it (and Tolkien does a lot of telling), even how the scriptwriters read certain incidents and understood the characters. I am interested in the portraying of different cultures and in the changes made to the characters and plots, and in how one change leads to another. I completely agree with Curious, but unlike him I am actually happy that the filmmakers were bold enough to change what they thought needed changing (whether flaws in Tolkien, inherent problems in the transition from paper to screen, or the needs of a different audience - which every good story depends upon) and pursue them to their logical conclusion. I'm not happy with some of the decisions - but I am aware that I wouldn't be able to do better without demanding a far greater budget and leaving many of the audience unhappy (which would lead to no financiers investing in the first place). So in fact, my reaction to the moments in which the movies surprise or baffle me with their different interpretations or even gross misunderstandings is like reading something I disagree with by squire or CuriousG in the Reading Room (which when all is said and done, is my online home). While a part of my mind screams "you idiots, you got it all wrong!", another part tries to understand just why they got it wrong, and sometimes even accept that they have a point which I haven't considered before. This is because I view Tolkien's middle-earth as a "true myth" rather than his story. If it was just**

something he invented, my interest in it would be limited to three readings, and perhaps a random webpage or essay I accidentally came across. With all due respect, a well-told story by someone from a completely different background and outlook (a Catholic Oxford don of the early 20th century) goes pretty far, but not that far. It is because of Tolkien's struggle to tell a good story, while reconciling the myths he admired with his very different faith and values, while reacting to a world which was largely alien (at least spiritually) to both, that I feel these books speak to me. And I am interested most in how they speak to others - including the filmmakers, both as recipients of this 'tradition' (and all the more so since they are less of the intelligentsia frame of mind than my RR fellow-denizens) and as transmitting it to a wider audience. I suspect that both *FarFromHome* and *Darkstone* (who also often defend the movies in the RR) are of a similar attitude. Regarding your question about the different parts of the trilogy - I actually posted about this recently, but can't find the post at the moment. Because of what I wrote above, I like *The Two Towers* best - because it is the most unfilmable part of the book, it is both the places where the creative understanding of the filmmakers shows the most, when they have to rely on intuitive hunches rather than a simple reading of the text, and on the other hand all the changes they made were necessary (I mean, in all of those places some change was necessary, even if their solution was weak IMO), while I consider the changes made to *The Fellowship of the Ring* as mostly unwarranted. Perhaps they were needed to cater to the taste of the wide audience, but I still disapprove of them more than all those scenes which shocked me on my first viewing as much as any purist - the indecisions of Theoden and Treebeard, the wargs and Aragorn's fall from the cliff, Osgilliath, and worse of all (because the tension remained unresolved at the end of the film) - Arwen's setting out for the Havens. Okay, it wasn't short. Sorry.

sador. (2011, January 19). In short (well, not really).

places "X" on floor [excerpt]

... No, there is no way we can know what Tolkien would have done - which is why speculation runs rampant! I have wondered what he felt those "major" problems were, though...and I suppose we'll never know. Perhaps it's just as well. A "master of ambiguity"! I like that term. So much was left to the imagination of the reader - but I believe that's one of the things that makes his books so appealing, and helps one "get into" them.

dernwyn. (2011, January 17). *places "X" on floor*.

Ha! [excerpt]

...When I look at the stairs in Moria I don't think about their practicality but about what that design says about Dwarves: That they are grand thinkers, boastful, ignore space in favour of large statements and don't in any way think of themselves as being small. In this, the stairs fit the aesthetic of the many-pillared hall.

Ataahua. (2011, January 9). Ha!

I prefer the movies aswell

I'd choose PJ over Tolkien any day and I read the books first. TH book was good to read but LOTR just had so much unnecessary content and the way it was written in some parts felt too biblical or something but overall it was a good story. Anyway I think it would be a pretty sweet experience to watch the LOTR trilogy having only read TH book, the FOTR movie would feel like an epic sequel to TH book if you know what I mean.

Lurtz2010. (2011, January 3) I prefer the movies aswell.

another great report

You son is very astute about things! QuoteI have often complained that Saruman's complexity was diluted in the movies, and perhaps I was wrong to project my ideas to this scene. Was I? I don't think so. For two reasons. **One, I appreciate and love the movies in many ways. But the book is, imo, superior and when I have to make a choice on which form of art to either conjure up or allow to take precedence, it's almost always the book. It's more satisfying for me. I try to make the two work together for something greater than the parts (since the audio visual component of the movies helps me 'get' the story better) rather than allowing the two spar for a position of 'better' when they don't agree with each other by discarding what doesn't work (usually from the movie) and substituting (usually from the book) what does. Two, although I appreciate a detached, academic examination of Tolkien's work, I just as much (well.. probably more) appreciate using it to examine ourselves and our place in the world and our relationships to others. The often means allowing one to stray from a strict interpretation of Tolkien (with an understanding that one is) as the work becomes a tool of self exploration. This reminds me of an opinion I read once that familiar stories -- fairy tales, legends, etc. -- are better told than read because one naturally (and probably unconsciously) infuses one's own self into the story. One emphasizes things that seem important and glosses over that which does not. One might even change details to have it make more sense from their personal context or to skew the intent or moral to something more comfortable or pleasing. I like this thinking. I believe both approaches: a detached, analytical examination and a personal, mutable exploration are valuable. For that**

reason, I think your taking control of the story in some way is completely valid and valuable. Especially since you are so careful with details in general and aren't going to be corrupting your son's understanding of the story as a whole. :-) I think there was something else I wanted to comment on but I can't remember or find it now. thanks again. I love reading these.

Magpie. (2011, January 2). another great report.

You're exactly right

When you read a book, and when you read Lord of the Rings in particular, it's very rarely that you get a full picture of even individual characters, let alone whole scenes. What i find is (particularly with Tolkien) you tend to get an 'ambiance', a 'vibe' or at best a few details. Repeated or careful readings with conscious visualisation can give you more of an idea of what the author perhaps intended, but really your most lasting perceptions come spontaneously as you read the description afresh within it's full context. Therefore 'exactly like i imagined it' is a bit of misnomer since i don't think anyone (not even Tolkien) has an imagination that detailed. Instead what the design of the films managed to do was to capture the most striking elements of Tolkien's descriptions and extrapolate whole rafts of material from them both vast and minute in ways that took at least 90% of those familiar with the book along with it at any given time. I say 90% because i think everyone who knows the books had at least one scene, object or location that didn't quite capture their memories or impression of it/them. I consider myself quite lucky in that i read LotR for the first time over the winter of Fellowship of the Ring's release and so to a large extent, as i read the books, it was the film's visualisations that were my own images of the characters and places. Then again, there were certainly elements in the latter two films that did not really gel with my own images. For example... Rohan was a bit too 'yellowed' for my tastes, i kind of preferred the image of rolling green grasslands well watered by frequent rain (no prizes for telling i'm from Britain), but that was comparatively minor compared to my impression of Fangorn which really did fall short of the imposing oak forest i imagined and instead went for an altogether more tropical almost 'Indiana Jones' jungle look. The Pelennor too was a bit of a disappointment, partly due to the contraction of the geography in the film in order to show the relation of locations to each other. The Pelennor i pictured (and all the more each time i read the book) is altogether larger and undulating marked with the occasional farmstead and lightly marked fields that grew the grain to feed the city (it also had the Rammas, but that omission is fair enough). That said, for every tiny complaint i had there were a hundred that blew my mind with how well they captured what they represented. Minas Tirith was everything you could hope for. All the characters (granted i had seen the little 'thumbnails on the lordoftherings.net website before) enriched and invigorated the literary sketches Tolkien had provided. Moria, it's architecture and inhabitants pretty much blew

my mind (the image that was locked in my head as i stumbled out of the cinema at 11pm aged 12 after seeing FotR on the opening night was the Balrog and Gandalf facing off across the bridge) and above all i am virtually worshipful of how the design team managed to solidify and define in every detail what was written, because now as i read the books i bring those images back in there with me and it creates a richer and infinitely more easily imagined world. Even the bits that didn't impress me help since i can now identify what doesn't work for me and so in that way direct my imagination. I personally think that what the films have created is possibly the definitive visualisation of Middle-earth and they deserve every praise in the world for doing so.

DrDeath153. (2010, December 22). You're exactly right.

good to hear

First of all, don't worry about liking the films more. Unlike movie-Aragorn I wouldn't call someone out to parley only to lop off a head. Actually, even with years of reading preceding the films I find myself preferring some of the changes the filmmakers made. Plus, as you say, there are shots in the film that go beyond words. As Magpie and I have observed a number of times, the musical score stands on its own even when (sometimes particularly when) it's not the music I imagined while reading the book. The beauty of the whole thing is that all the aspects - words, pictures, acting and music work so well on their respective levels.

dijomaja. (2010, April 6). good to hear.

Hmm.... [excerpt]

... As others have said, I definitely have the mental images of the characters and places from the movie when I read, but that's totally fine with me. It does take me quite a bit longer to read, though, because I hear each character saying the lines instead of the speed-reading I usually do. ...
Flammifer. (2010, April 6). Hmm.... .

That's me :)

I must admit that when I first saw FotR I was underwhelmed. I was a 13 year old kid who thought it all very confusing! My mum loved it so we got it on video, I watched it at home and I was pretty blown away! I *read* the entire trilogy although it took me a few years and being so young still it almost felt like a chore not a pleasure. But I've started to re-read now (after reading numerous other Tolkien works) and I'm loving it! Although... I can't help but see the movie characters when I'm reading, which is the only downfall of being a movie firster. I've got the Alan Lee illustrated versions so his drawings help me see another side to things, and his Galadriel is

closer to my mental image I think. But Tolkien's world totally comes to life for me on the page, and I find myself smiling when reading and experiencing things that I never would have if I'd just seen the movies and nothing else. It's hard to put into words, but I find myself wanting to go and read (I'm just coming to the end of FotR so I'm on a mission to finish it!) and to soak up as much as I can. I think seeing the films first though probably was an advantage for me because ME was already set up, I just have to build upon the existing foundations, similar I think to Eryn. The fact that I can expand (and have done) upon characters, myths & languages etc by reading UT, HoME etc just makes it all the more fabulous ...

the_argonath. (2010, April 3). That's me :).

I'm one too!

I tried reading the books when I was young-ish, and although I thought them rather cool, I never really got into them, and gave up half way. The main reason was that I was just too confused! The books are not all that fast-paced, and there was SO much going on, and really SO many different characters and species, that I couldn't really keep track of anything, and hence didn't really appreciate it. So I consider myself to have really seen the films first. And it totally changed my view of the books! I didn't see the films until quite a few years after they all came out, hence I saw them all in quick succession. I was so enthralled by the world that was portrayed, that I wanted to 1) see exactly how the author actually portrayed the events/characters/world of M.E. and 2) just find out more about M.E., and see if the book held any more details than the films. Both of these I found completely in the books, and I consequently swallowed up the Trilogy, then hunted down the Silmarillion, Children of Hurin, several thousand 'guides to middle earth', atlases and what have you, and am now starting the entire History of M.E.! All of this as a result of the films. Seeing places and people on screen, really made it easier to appreciate what was going on in the books. As I said earlier, when I first tried reading them, there were just too many characters, and I couldn't remember who all of them were, because I didn't really 'know' them well enough. From seeing the films, characters have a much more distinct identity, so I found that all a lot more easy to digest afterwards. It was also hard beforehand to appreciate what elves, dwarves, hobbits and orcs really looked like, and acted like. It was all so new to me, basically! Now I have a better idea of all this, and in addition, it helps to visualise in my head the places and people that aren't even in the films What I am particularly pleased about, is that the film hasn't totally 'taken over' middle earth in my imagination. By that I mean that although the film has shown many of the places and people in LOTR, I can still make up how things look myself. Eryn. (2010, April 3). I'm one too!

Pumpkin

I liked what someone said about the idea of how everything blends together to create a very comfortable atmosphere and I think the pumpkin adds to that because it has the nice orange hue. Think, for a moment, if they chose a giant cucumber or watermelon, a dark green would give a darker feeling to the shot and not the warmth and comfort that it does now. I could be over analyzing, but it's fun to do so sometimes
mamp17. (2009, November 29). Pumpkin.

Sauron isn't a "giant eyeball" [excerpt]

... As for Mordor, I agree with Elizabeth. The point of filming a book isn't to try to replicate the book, but to tell the story of the book, in a way that works on screen. In the book, it's the sense of oppression and thirst, the sense of being horribly exposed, and the Eye of Sauron beating down on Frodo as described very strikingly earlier in the story: "Frodo knew just where the present habitation and heart of that will now was: as certainly as a man can tell the direction of the sun with his eyes shut. He was facing it, and its potency beat upon his brow." How would literal darkness have helped with any of that, when instead you can show the barren, exposed, sunbeaten volcanic landscape that expresses the hobbits' experience so much more closely?
FarFromHome. (2009, September 10). Sauron isn't a "giant eyeball".

I think she took the thoughts out of my head!

Kidding. It is beyond my feeble imagination to picture Moria in its prime - but, yes, Alan Lee! Paint this for us! I was just thinking though...maybe we'll see a bit of Moria in "The Hobbit" - like a flashback to the good ol' days of Dwarf power or something - no, I suppose not; it's not pertinent. But, wouldn't that just be cool? Every time I read parts of the Sil, I can imagine those settings and scenes on the screen. Talk about heroic epics! It's drama and pathos to the max with the potential for visual images of unique settings like Nargothrond, or splendor of Gondolin..
hobbitlove. (2009, June 11). I think she took the thoughts out of my head!

At one time, I thought it would ruin the magic for me, too.

But, somehow, it didn't. As you say, it just made it better. I can't explain it. And, of course now, knowing about all these people who worked on the film, and understanding what they put into creating the magic, well, they are more important to me than anything else, now. We're all in this

fan-thing, this joy of understanding and being in Middle-earth, well, we're all there together. Does that make any sense?

I have thought about this issue of how those who create the magic (or know how it was created, like us) can still truly enjoy the magic itself - I mean, who is the biggest movie fan of us all - Peter - and he certainly knows what goes into making the magic. We should bring this up again some time. Thanks, Weaver.

hobbitlove. (2009, June 8). At one time, I thought it would ruin the magic for me, too.

It was always the beacons [excerpt]

... When I read a novel, I usually tend to see it as a mental movie. My own mental movie of LOTR is, of course, very faithful to the book. I have to admit that this scene isn't as flashy as the movie beacons sequence. ...

Kristin Thompson . (2009, May 31). It was always the beacons.

It's a BIG BIG World! [excerpt]

...What did you think of PJ's version of Bree? I think it was spot on - at least it fit with my own mental picture of Bree. ...

Lossefalme. (2009, May 13). It's a BIG BIG World!

The light comes from the same place as the music :)

This room has always fascinated me. It's stark and cold, but still rich in the woodwork, his **armour** display, and the huge bed. I'm thinking another sign of his status is that his room is so big in what could easily be what very little space may be available in Meduseld. The hall is huge, and Theoden certainly has his quarters... as do Eowyn and Eomer. So that could mean space is limited. The pelts on the floor are a nice touch since they would protect his feet from the cold of the stone floors... which are very lovely, too. I try to make out the pattern in case they're meaningful; but I figure it's just craftwork at its best :) The bed looks comfortable and warm. It reminds me of the beds Gandalf is sleeping in later in the film. Grima. What gall to sit on Theodred's bed as he lay dead. It was dropped from the plot, but he had poisoned Theodred to make sure the job of getting the heir to Theoden out of the way.

grammaboodawg. (2009, May 4). The light comes from the same place as the music :).

food for thought!

Thanks to all for contributing! You all gave me plenty of food for thought. What strikes me is how rich in association this black-and-white room is: a sacred space/ mausoleum or a chessboard, Black versus White. I liked darkstone's comment about Faramir being a refusenik; he chooses not to change out of his Ranger gear into courtly robes. I also hadn't spotted the 'tombstone' chair backs; good catch that! As to the comparisons with cathedral spaces, thanks to those who shared their knowledge of Byzantine architecture! It seems to me that there are two 'sacred' elements and rituals in Middle-earth that lacks religious buildings and priests: burial and Kingship. Therefore it makes sense that both the Mausoleum of the Kings and Stewards and the throne room are sacred spaces. Which means that Denethor tearing at chicken pieces and tomatoes with his teeth in this room looks slightly sacrilegious, and the food and wine vessels look like sacred objects as well; somehow as if Denethor had taken them from the altar to use for his own feasts. What else has he changed? Was the room rich with hangings, tapestries, candle holders, pictures that he took away as a token of his mourning? Or has he added things, like the over-shiny gilded braziers, in the place of something else that was in that niche before? Interesting also that the Fellowship members conferring in the throne room later look slightly uneasy in this space--all but Gimli, sitting on the Steward's chair. As if to say that he is not in awe of anything made from stone... frederica bolger. (2009, April 22). food for thought!

Fire!

As with the others, my first reaction is horror at the thought of open flames in a room full of valuable old paper. Since glazed lanterns and lamps would hardly be out of place in the movie version of Middle-earth, I can't imagine how the designers dropped the ball on this one. The obvious answer is they couldn't resist the increased "Frankenstein"-like drama of the torch-bearing guide, or the visual image of the low-burning candles, which convey the amount of time that Gandalf has been reading the old manuscripts. The guide's torch, by the way, has enough gasoline in it to power an infant automobile industry, should Denethor be interested. In the first scene, *I also think drama has trumped sense in the messy piles of books in the foreground.* It makes a great shot - the archives of Gondor as a gigantic musty old basement, with books just stacked any old place in no particular order. But I would like to have seen the version where Gondor actually keeps an archive, not a trash heap. Note the spiral staircase railing. I assume this set was thrown together from generic pieces of Minas Tirith. Anyone know where that staircase "really" appears? *I've always loved this screencap and the scene it represents. Because it shows a table or workspace where Gandalf has spent quite some time searching for a particular book/ manuscript, the messy arrangement is much more believable!* I love the drinking mug. The 6-

candle arrangement in the right background is a classic film/TV device to add an interesting but not overpowering light to a dark background. I can hear the DP (cinematographer) looking in his lens during the set-up, and calling "let's have a few candles back there on the right, please." The glass globe in the foreground is intriguing. Is it Gandalf's refreshment, a bottle of clear liqueur? Or is it a vessel of oil with a lampwick in it, another source of light that the prop department supplied but which the DP used instead for its strong visual qualities of transparency, refraction, and reflection?

squire. (2009, March 22). Fire!

Well said! ...

I loved the look of the Grey Havens, it seemed to be the kind of place that filled your mind with beautiful visions and colour, and very appropriate as the last thing you see for memories sake, as you leave the shores of Middle-Earth. Thanks Ataahua...

Elven. (2009, March 11). Well said!

A huge benefit of these films [excerpt]

has been the visualisation of places that I had difficulty grasping. The layout of Helm's Deep and the size of Isengard and its gardens were two of them - but a third was the Grey Havens. Here, I can see that the Grey Havens weren't merely a couple of buildings for making ships and sleeping in, and an ancient pier: This was a city in its own right, now empty as the time of the Elves comes to a full stop. It has the feeling of a place that was once busy, but which has slowly aged and started to fall into disrepair as, over the centuries, fewer and fewer Elves have lived there. The activity of the Grey Havens has dwindled, but evidence of its past activity is evident. It is all beautifully rendered. ...

Ataahua. (2009, March 10). A huge benefit of these films.

The Ring and Eye as characters....

Earl and Ataahua's replies got me thinking about how the Eye on the same terms as the way the Ring is treated in the films. In the case of the Ring, there is a lot in the commentaries about how they wanted to make it a character -- it sings, it speaks, it whispers, it has its own theme, etc. I don't think they talk as much about the Eye in those terms, but I like looking at it that way, as it does get you past the Sauron-as-a-Lighthouse kind of mental imagery that many don't care for. It's not Sauron, it's a manifestation of him, like the Ring...it has a will of its own, but it's not "all" that

Sauron is...yeah, I can work with that. I do think it takes more work, though, to accept the Eye as a character -- the Ring is a tangible thing in the book, so it's not that hard to make the leap to treating it as a . -- the Eye, on the other hand, is more of a type of imagery uses -- **I know I never thought of it in a literal way when I read the books. So to "see" it, as they kind of had to do in a visual media, is harder to reconcile with the book approach. Perhaps the Eye works a lot better when you don't see it, when it's more of an invisible presence, force, etc. that is relentlessly seeking Frodo and the Ring. Making it "tangible" does, I think, take away some of the power or impact on Frodo that it conveys in the books, to me anyway. Kind of like seeing the Army of the Dead, in the films, is not as scary as having Gimli tell us how it felt to be scared out of his wits by them. Somethings are easier to pull off in text than on screen.**

weaver. (2009, February 24). The Ring and Eye as characters.... .

Totally agree!

I love that beginning as well, and I was a movie firster too. Even without having read the book, there was something about that beginning, hearing words in that strange, beautiful, unknown language, her voice, the music, the blank screen, it just sucked me right into another world. Now that I've read the books I especially like it even more. Goosebumps!

Loresilme. (2009, January 31). Totally agree!

I'm always delighted by the little things they didn't have to do...

Things like respecting the scale difference with the hobbits and Gimli, or bothering with the hobbit feet, or all of the detail that went into the sets, props, costumes, etc., or the book nods that weren't explained, like Legolas walking on snow or the quick glimpse of the trolls. I know I'm not exactly answering your question, but to me what made me buy into the approach they took to Middle Earth was that level of attention to detail. It made me think they made the films with care, and that if things were different than I had imagined or might have done them, they did not change things without much thought or what they felt was a good reason. I liked the sense I got that they treated the whole series and the books with respect As far as individual scenes, I think they had a good sense of what were the "iconic" book moments -- don't they say that 100 times in the commentaries? -- and did a good job presenting them. The Balrog on the bridge, the reaction of the fellowship after Gandalf's fall, the introduction of Strider, the introduction of Gollum, etc. all pretty much fit what I had pictured from the books. Other scenes, like Boromir's death, hit me harder on screen than in reading, even though it wasn't exactly as written or as I had imagined it. And some, like the bridge scene between Aragorn and Arwen, or Boromir picking up the Ring in

the snow, or Grima circling around Eowyn but saying the words of Gandalf from the book, were scenes I really like that were not even in the books but which feel like they should have been! So there are times the films presented the book in ways that exactly matched the way it was written, in ways that enhanced on what was written, and in ways that were never written but were brilliant improvisations on the books. I have lots of favorites in all those categories, as you can see! weaver. (2009, January 29). I'm always delighted by the little things they didn't have to do... .

There are so many!

Since you're asking about "something", I'll start with "someone" Bilbo, Gandalf, Aragorn, Elrond, Legolas and Gimli are great choices and I will always imagine them in my mind from now on when I read the books. As about things, The Shire, Rivendell and Lorien were absolutely fantastic! Moria was very good too. Some things related to the atmosphere and detail are among my favourites too: architecture, costumes (Arwen's daughter thread has opened my eyes a big deal), statues and art in the different dwellings, interior design - the work done by designers and artists is mind blowing! simplyaven. (2009, January 28). There are so many!

I amar prestar aen...

... The opening of FOTR gives me goosebumps every time. I only wish I had been a book firster. I think I would have been in raptures the first time I saw the movie because of that opening. Alassëa Eruvande. (2008, January 28). I amar prestar aen... .

Your Favorite Move Representation

What movie version of something from the books did you like best, or think was particularly well done? For me it's all of middle-earth. That might be cheating, but I think they couldn't have picked better locations to film. Whenever I think of middle-earth I always picture it as in the movies. I also think they did really well with the battles, considering how Tolkien didn't really go in-depth with the detail on them.

Cegwyn. (2009, January 28). Your Favorite Move Representation.

I'm with you... I found Middle-earth! [excerpt]

And the characters. Each and every one of the Fellowship had their perfect blood and bones counterparts. I was staggered by that! But NZ's landscapes and the construction of the various environs (Rivendell, Edoras, BAG END and Hobbiton.... all of them just transported me. ... grammaboodawg. (2009, January 28). I'm with you... I found Middle-earth!

Mordor and the Eye

I think that if the Eye were not in this shot, Mordor would look ...bitter, cold, barren, ruined, dreadful. The scene as shot lends a deep feeling of horror to the landscape, a living presence of evil, a watchful and malificent presence.

annalda. (2009, January 20). Mordor and the Eye.

Take what is, expect no more and certainly no less.

Simply put, for the Tolkien purists, I say this: take what is, expect no more and certainly no less...

My theory is that the LotR filmgoer must be prepared to accept what is. Tookish has an interesting attitude towards these movies that seems to enable the maximum enjoyment from them. I worried that being so immersed in someone else's imagery would taint my own. A long time ago, back before there was ever talk of Peter Jackson's movies, Alcarcalime refused to see the Bakshi movie because she was afraid that it would ruin how she imagined things to be. She had great reservations about going to see FOTR and said that she probably would not have if it were not for seeing the spy reports on TORN (and a little coaxing from me). She wasn't disappointed to say the least. I wonder how many other people were worried in that way. I will forever hold in gratitude all the many people who brought this story to film, and I thank, too, my friends from TheOneRing.net who have enabled me to touch the flame so closely. Me too.

OhioHobbit. (2009, January 3). Take what is, expect no more and certainly no less.

Seventh and Final Review -- from our own Eledhwen...

I thought it only appropriate that I close out these review postings with one from a recognized member of TORn... I thought this one from Eledhwen was nicely balanced in its approach, and got the OK to post it, so here you go! Thanks again to all who lurked and joined in on these posts -- it was fun to take a trip down memory lane with you! Posted by Eledhwen on 12-30-03 "The end is come," says Elrond (Hugo Weaving) in The Return of the King, the final part of Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings trilogy. Unfortunately, he's right. The Quest is completed, the journey over. And what a journey it's been. ROTK picks up where The Two Towers left off. Frodo and

Sam (Elijah Wood and Sean Astin) are picking their way to Mordor, guided by Gollum (Andy Serkis). Aragorn (Viggo Mortensen), Gandalf (Ian McKellen) and their companions are in the kingdom of Rohan. Middle-earth is poised on a knife-edge, as the forces of the Dark Lord Sauron gather to confront the Free Peoples. As in the two earlier instalments, the most remarkable thing about ROTK is the way in which director Peter Jackson and his talented crew have combined amazing special effects with characters you care about. Neither detracts from the other. And the effects are incredible - sweeping shots of the beleaguered city of Minas Tirith take your breath away; the major battle is astonishing. But the characters are what really matter, and it is hard to pick out anyone in this ensemble cast who does not deliver. McKellen is Gandalf, saying so much with one look from those deep, wise eyes. With Aragorn, Mortensen gives us a very human hero, a leader shouldering responsibility he does not really want. The other members of the Fellowship come into their own, too, in this final part. Billy Boyd in particular does a fine job as the foolish young hobbit Pippin, growing from a boy to a man. Meanwhile, Wood and Astin, stumbling through the wasteland of Mordor on their hopeless errand, are wholly believable. This story strand would not be the same, though, without the incredible work of Andy Serkis as Gollum. Though computer animated, Gollum is indubitably Serkis, as we see in an early flashback sequence. Accentuating the performances is the usual stunning background of New Zealand as Middle-earth. Jackson's signature aerial scenes of mountains and plains and dry, dusty desert are used to stunning effect, but he is equally at home focusing in close on the emotions in the eyes of his actors. The film looks beautiful, from the rich colours of Rohan to the bleached white coldness of Minas Tirith. Costumes, makeup, armour - all are flawless. ROTK is not a perfect film. In places it feels rushed, as we jump from scene to scene to catch up with what some of the characters are doing. A few lines are delivered with aching slowness. There is the odd continuity error (what happen to the horses before the final battle?) But these are small flaws in a film which rightly deserves the description of "epic". It delivers on all levels: an action adventure film with touches of fantasy and horror, as well as being character-driven and packed with true emotion and passion. With it, Peter Jackson has ended his LOTR trilogy on a high, and provided audiences with one of the greatest cinematic experiences ever. Arm yourself with a handkerchief, and go and see it."

weaver. (2009, January 2 [originally posted by Eledhwen, 2003, December 30]). Seventh and Final Review -- from our own Eledhwen... .

Sixth Review -- A long and thoughtful one from Jan. 1 2004.... [excerpt]

This one seemed like a great New Year's Day post for this place -- make sure to read to the end... Happy New Year everyone, and thanks to Tookish for this post! Posted by Tookish, January 1,

2004 Peter Jackson's LotR: Return of the King -- His Trilogy Completed, His Vision Fulfilled
 Peter Jackson has done it again. The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King is nothing less than an epic success, its brilliance and passion shining as brightly as the Phial of Galadriel. Reactions from fans that we read on the internet range from euphoric to depressed to offended, depending on the perspective and experience of the viewer. Simply put, for the Tolkien purists, I say this: take what is, expect no more and certainly no less. One cannot simply walk into the theater and expect to see the images that Professor Tolkien hacked out on his typewriter letter by letter -- which later became imprinted on our minds in youth, adolescence, and adulthood -- appear the way they come into the imagination. It's just not a possibility. It's also unrealistic to expect a movie production of this magnitude to employ Tolkien's text to the letter; there must be a final offering that is accessible to a wide-ranging global audience, from those who have read the story to those who may not even be able to read. That means a story that paces well, appeals to both genders and a spread of age groups, and contains essential elements of character development, relationship arcs, plot revelations, putting at risk who and what the audience holds dear through action sequences or by other means, and a satisfactory conclusion of events. My theory is that the LotR filmgoer must be prepared to accept what is. ...
 weaver. (2009, January 1 [originally posted by Tookish, 2004, January 1]). Sixth Review -- A long and thoughtful one from Jan. 1 2004.... .

Sixth Review(s) -- Here's someone who reviewed it twice.... [excerpt]

Halbarad, Date Posted: 2002-12-19 I MUST see it again. I left the movie as divided as Smeagol and Gollum. I had seen enough spoiler's that I am afraid I had built up some negative reactions to what I THOUGHT I was going to see. Had I simply watched the movie I would have thought it wonderful. The film is beautifully filmed, very well acted, and lovingly crafted. Gollum was Outstanding...Andy's acting and the graphics were so well done. I can't describe how well his character was done. The action was excellently managed..keeping the tension at a high level. There were so many moments taken from the books that it made me smile throughout the movie. The two main points that left me glum were the inclusion of Elves at H.D. (one of the pre-conceived spoiler distress moments) and the Nazgul at Osgilliath scene. When I saw the Elrond/Galardriel scenen and the elves arriving, I completely accepted this change from the books. It added to the story rather than distracting from it. I had hoped for a company of Rangers but was accepting of the reasons as to why the elves can to Rohan's aid. ...
 weaver. (2008, December 24 [originally posted by Halbarad, 2002, December 19]). Sixth Review (s) -- Here's someone who reviewed it twice.... .

The Ford scene

That's my only regret - that I didn't see Glorfindel and the original scene at the Ford. I love the movies as they were made. I love the books even more. But I realize and I acknowledge these are two different venues to convey a story. I think PJ made really great stuff! I liked all the mentioned scenes that were added to the movies (including the Elves in Helm's Deep and Haldir's death is still among my favourite scenes) and I can understand his decisions to cut some of the book scenes. Especially the Aragorn/Arwen plot - I love it. I can feel it. Even the "Arwen is dying" line simplyaven. (2008, November 23). The Ford scene.

[the following two posts are related]

Too much work

Impressive analysis, as usual! All I can say in response is: it doesn't take these mental gymnastics for me to appreciate the book, but the film's many weak moments only work intellectually, and only when described this way by you or Darkstone or FFH. That's not a substantive reply, of course -- just how I feel sometimes.

N.E. Brigand. (2008, July 22). Too much work.

yep, I can relate... [excerpt]

First, I want to clarify that I don't feel like I'm doing mental gymnastics with the films when I discuss points like this -- the analytical process of trying to figure out "why" they work enhances that enjoyment for me. ...

weaver. (2008, July 22). yep, I can relate... .

Very good SCOD [*Screen Cap Of the Day*]

1. How do you feel about this SCOD? A very good SCOD. The detail is spectacular. 2. EE watchers: Did you pick up the difference of the addition? Yes, I did notice it, and I was excited to see that! 3. Does the addition make a difference to you? In what way? Hm... I don't know. 4. Is this how you imagined the landscape to look? - Could you tell where you are in the film - get your bearings? **Yes, the landscape is perfect! Just like how Gondor is described in the book.** 5. Any comments on the 'blue tint' to this scene? Does it work for you? Yes, it does. It makes you

get that dark feeling, like Mordor has begun their attack on Middle-earth. 6. Any other comments you'd like to add to the 2 SCODS? Well done on your SCOD week.

LordotRings93. (2008, May 31). Very good SCOD.

Music

This sounds sort of silly, but you know how sometimes, the music can create the perfect image? I was going to say the Shire, first, but when I think of it, I think of all the green and plants and grass and homes, but I then think of Shore's themes, and more than anything, his music sums it up. From Rohan to the Ents to Mordor, the music represents the book(s) wonderfully!

Laerasëa. (2009, January 28). Music.

First I don't think that any of the changes from the book made a better move. [excerpt]

That is not to say that I thought the movies were bad. I loved them, but over time I have had to separate the two, meaning the books from the movies. Realistically you can't film each page, but you can stick with the story. One thing that PJ did that no other director has done, is make three movies at once. What an monumental task, and he passed with flying colors on all three. The world he created passed my wildest dreams of how Middle-earth might look. I could easily live there for the rest of my life. ...

Woodyend. (2008, January 7). First I don't think that any of the changes from the book made a better move.

looks in book

...Peter Jackson did ruin a few good pages Funny, I can't find any in my copy that have been ruined. Seriously, I never understand this argument (which has appeared here often). The book remains the book no matter what Bakshi or Rankin-Bass or Jackson might do with a movie version, or what drawings the various Tolkien artists might draw to illustrate it. (cough Ezpeleta cough). It's just someone's interpretation of what Tolkien wrote, not a rewrite of the book itself. I don't think an "errorless" movie is possible. **I know from the discussion here that every single fan of the book sees it slightly differently. Even if someone made a word-for-word, scene-for-scene version of the book (which would be over 20 hours long!), fans would still get upset because a character didn't look like they imagined, or the actor's interpretation struck them as wrong, or one of the locales wouldn't match their idea of what it should like, or the film-maker didn't bring out some subtle point that they thought was essential.** What color is Legolas's hair? Does the Balrog

have wings, or not? Is Imrahil noble or does he have a stick up his a***? Is Arwen content to sit and embroider while Aragorn is out risking his life? We've fought over all those topics and many more. How could any one film-maker make us all happy? It's fine to say that Jackson did things you didn't like and that you were disappointed sometimes. I was too. I hated the wargs, and I am bewildered by what happened to Gandalf in the third movie - that whining guy wasn't Gandalf! I got very, very tired of Jackson's need to introduce additional tension with all the "cliffhangers" and fake deaths, the Dead were all wrong, and I missed Eomer & Aragorn's brotherhood. That's not all I didn't like. And I'd prefer to see Alfonso Cuaron do The Hobbit. ...

Annael. (2008, January 6). *looks in book*.

hmmm

Well, actually I don't think PJ added much that would have made the books a better read. Some of the things he added I certainly liked, but they were also inextricably linked with changes in storylines etc. that would have required major changes to the story & tone of the books. It's also worth noting that PJ & co. often takes words, events & conceptions from the actual book, but changes their position and context to provide background/themes, characterization and generate conflict. The stories of Arwen & Eowyn are all taken mostly from the book, if you include the appendices, but what is seen & understood fully only later in the story is moved to earlier parts of the films. PJ & the script writers often like to take things only hinted at or relegated to the background of the storyline of the book and bring them front & center in the movies. In this way they also create structure and an effective converging of storylines, a prominent example is the way Saruman's treachery & hunt for the Ring makes a story pattern for the movie FoTR. Many people will probably disagree with me on this, but of all the changes in characterization, or the focus of the characterization, only Boromir's story felt at times more interesting, or more fully told, even if they partly spoil it by revealing Boromir's ring-lust too early. Even if Aragorn's story in the films is well told, I don't feel the books would have benefitted from this kind of emotional intimacy and introvert characterization. Tolkien's way of seeing the characters from the outside, but from the point of view of many different characters, makes for more depth and mystery as I see it.

elostirion74. (2008, January 6). hmmm.

"To be dissolved, or to be degraded..."

... is the likely fate of Fantasy when a dramatist tries to use it." (from On Fairy Stories) Tolkien says in this essay that he thinks drama is unsuitable for Fantasy because drama implies a

"secondary world" in itself, by having "imaginary men in a story." He goes on: "To introduce, even with mechanical success, into this quasi-magical secondary world a further fantasy or magic is to demand, as it were, an inner or tertiary world. It is a world too much..." I think Tolkien might have admired Jackson's attempt to finesse this creation of a "tertiary world" by making his movie as realistic and gritty as possible, rather than going for outright "fantasy". Even with the CGI, I think, the aim was to make the magic look "real" - Gandalf's smoke-ship, the horses in the Bruinen, Gollum himself, are presented in a solid, realistic, unflashy way that makes you believe in them. In this way, PJ does succeed in creating a "secondary world" that we enter into, rather than pushing us into a "tertiary world" as Tolkien feared. Tolkien goes on in this essay to talk about the constraints of Drama: "You are, for instance, likely to prefer characters, even the basest and dullest, to things. Very little about trees as trees can be got into a play." That's one of the criticisms often made about the movies - that they spend a lot of time on "character arcs". It's true enough that drama must proceed via characters, and interactions between those characters, and that trees aren't really very dramatic! But at least movies, as opposed to plays, can let the camera do some of the talking - and the landscapes of New Zealand certainly do manage to say something about trees as trees (I'm thinking particularly of those aerial shots of Fangorn as Treebeard recites his verse), although admittedly less explicitly than than the book. One last quote: "Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside, but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose." That describes both the book and the movies, for me. I don't know whether Tolkien would have been able to enter Jackson's Secondary World - maybe he would have found it too difficult to leave his own and see Jackson's for what it is. It's notoriously difficult, apparently, for writers to appreciate a screenplay based on their work. But many modern writers have learned to get beyond this initial difficulty and are able to appreciate seeing their work given new expression. If Tolkien were alive today, perhaps he would have learned this too.

FarFromHome. (2008, January 6). "To be dissolved, or to be degraded..."

that's fine [excerpt]

I do see the movies as something separate from the book. Admittedly, it took me three viewings of Fellowship to stop thinking in terms of what Jackson did wrong and start seeing the film on its own merits. What helped me was to think of Jackson as a modern-day Man, retelling the story of LOTR from the viewpoint of Men rather than Hobbits. Like any storyteller he embellished certain things and got some parts of the story wrong. We never ever get to consensus on this board, but I think you'll find most people agree with that last statement. That doesn't mean they agree with me on what was right and what was wrong. Some people liked the very things I didn't and disliked

some of my favorite parts. I expected that, because I'd been on this board for over two years by the time Fellowship came out. When I first found this site I was elated to find other Tolkien fans, period, after 30-some years of having no one to talk to about my favorite book. But then I got a huge shock because we didn't always agree! People saw different things in the book than I did. The worst arguments we ever had here were not over the movies, they were over interpreting certain passages in the book. If the fans don't agree, how could one film version please them all? Not possible. Peter Jackson said over and over that he knew he wouldn't please all the fans. I saw the Bakshi version of the first half of LOTR as a first-run film. I also had the experience of sitting through the David Lynch version of my other favorite story, Dune, which still gives me the shudders to remember. So when I went to see Fellowship, it was with a lot of dread. It could have been soooo bad! It was much better than I expected, in fact. Betcha he won't be the last to film it, either. I hope the next version is even better, and I hope I'm alive to see it. (What I really want is a 20-hour holographic version.) And I still want Boromir to acknowledge Aragorn as his king before he dies. It should have been in the book!

Annael. (2008, January 4). that's fine.

oh, no [excerpt]

... And do check out the Reading Room. I have to say, I thought I knew Tolkien pretty well when I first came here, but soon after we started the RR, I realized I was way undereducated - I'd only read LOTR, The Hobbit, the Silmarillion, Tolkien's Letters, and the biography by Carpenter. Thanks to TORN I now have an entire bookshelf of works by and about Tolkien, and my understanding of LOTR has deepened immeasurably.

Annael. (2008, January 4). oh, no.

Not sure there is anything [excerpt]

...I'm not sure there was anything added to the movies that would really benefit the books. I think the further development of Boromir comes the closest, as many others have said. But a lot of the changes that I liked only really benefit the movie version. Best example I can think of offhand is the lighting of the beacons... absolutely amazing scene in the movie, but if it had been in the book (beyond what is already there), it wouldn't have been anything special. That's a pure cinematic moment. ...

acheron. (2008, January 3). Not sure there is anything.

yes . . .

. . . it wouldn't have done much for the book to have a peak-by-peak description of the lighting of the beacons . . . but what a moment on film!

Annael. (2008, January 3). yes

Well

“Even the nose of a very modest idol (younger than Chu-Bu and not much older than Sheemish) cannot remain entirely untickled by the sweet smell of incense.” -Letter 336 What would JRR Tolkien have liked about Peter Jackson and Company’s trilogy of movies? Carpenter strongly implies that the big reason Tolkien wasn’t exactly enamored with the Zimmerman treatment was that he would have received very little cash for the project. Still, I merely note that Tolkien did indeed take his valuable time to honestly critique it instead of just tearing it up and throwing it in the dustbin. I think that showed he considered it had some merit. Anyway, Tolkien notes more than one time in his letters that the most important thing in LOTR were the languages. As he says, that’s why he wrote it: To provide a world for his languages. The story and the characters weren’t even secondary considerations when he started. Indeed, like Jackson he switched dialogue from one character to another, and changed characters willy-nilly. (For example, angst ridden Trotter became taciturn Aragorn, and the original wisecracking action hero Frodo became Merry.) But the two things Tolkien never changed were his languages and his world. And those are the things Jackson most definitely got right. Might Tolkien have frowned furiously more than a time or two? No doubt. But I do very sincerely think that he would have been transfixed during those moments when his beloved languages were being earnestly spoken on the big screen for all the world to hear. And as far as the world of Middle-earth, I also think that he well might have considered moving to New Zealand when the film ended. Did PJ draw people towards the "real masterpiece" in any significant way? Indeed. About half of all Tolkien books ever sold have been sold since the first movie came out. So it would appear that half of all Tolkien readers have come to the books because of the movies. I do think that that is the cause of a lot of resentment by Real Fans. Like how the British fans felt back in the 1960s about the influx of American fans. They felt non-British readers could never really “get” Tolkien. Similarly I’ve heard a lot of book-firsters maintain that movie-firsters could never “get” Tolkien. The more things change.... I do think a lot of people who hated the movies would have had an entirely different attitude had the movies flopped. (Look at Bakshi devotees.) It may be it’s not the movies they resent, but, like the British fans of the 1960s, the influx of the Great Unwashed into a previously exclusive little fandom. I strongly suspect that's why Real Fans get so passionate about niggly little details from the book that are missing from the films. It says "I'm A Real Fan because I came to Tolkien because of the

books. You'll never understand how important [fill in the blank] is to the story because you came to Tolkien through the films. *sniff* Ugh! I'm glad I'm Not A Real Fan! (Still, how could have Jackson left out The Fox???)
 Darkstone. (2008, January 3). Well.

ICTA Screen Captures

instances found: 167

2011-02-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-02-20	Frodo, the wizard,	dwarves	and elves. And the
2011-03-20	it could work for	dwarves	, too. It sends the
2011-03-20	why Gimli and the	Dwarves	showed up there (FOTR
2011-03-20	why Gimli and the	Dwarves	showed up there (FOTR
2011-03-20	something to the	dwarves	or to the White
2011-03-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-03-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? Did it
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? Did it
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? It was
2011-03-22	fellowship. Elves,	dwarves	, hobbits and men learn
2011-04-16	appreciate what elves,	dwarves	, hobbits and orcs
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:

FROM: Magpie
 DATE: 2011-02-20

kind of between a book & movie firster I'm going to quote from the first part of my journal, the Summer of Tolkien....
 Prologue: Sometime in the late 1960's, I began reading J.R.R. Tolkien. Certainly I read The Hobbit. I remembered Bilbo and a wizard, "The Road Goes Ever On", a dragon, Gollum, a ring... And I must have read The Lord of the Rings. I remembered Frodo, the wizard, **dwarves** and elves. And the ring... I remembered drawing huge mountains that encompassed the whole blackboard during the lunch/fee time before algebra class. Huge mountains and the legend: My algebra teacher, Mrs. Gilbert, would smile and say 'Ah, so you're reading The Lord of the Rings?' I got the impression that she'd heard of these books before! The outrage, I had discovered them of course. **This story, this world was mine!** But I don't remember how I'd discovered them.

Close

Back **good place** HINT: Click on a category for more info

instances found: 167

2011-02-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-02-20	Frodo, the wizard,	dwarves	and elves. And the
2011-03-20	it could work for	dwarves	, too. It sends the
2011-03-20	why Gimli and the	Dwarves	showed up there (FOTR
2011-03-20	why Gimli and the	Dwarves	showed up there (FOTR
2011-03-20	something to the	dwarves	or to the White
2011-03-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-03-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? Did it
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? Did it
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? It was
2011-03-22	fellowship. Elves,	dwarves	, hobbits and men learn
2011-04-16	appreciate what elves,	dwarves	, hobbits and orcs
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:

books for my children, encouraged them to read them. I had acquired the BBC audio dramatization when our tape player ate a tape and I had to replace the borrowed set. But I had no inclination to re-read the books. And all I could remember is that once... the dark riders had really scared me. 2000. Word came that they were making a movie of Harry Potter and The Lord of the Rings. **Everyone was worried about Harry Potter. They would ruin it! They'd rob all those kids of the pictures in their head.** But I was more worried about Lord of the Rings. **That stupid cartoon hobbit offended me and I refused to rent it for the kids. This story had images that should remain unsullied by mediocre Hollywood special effects.** (Even though these images weren't really in my head anymore.) But we're always up for a movie, especially a fantasy/sci-fi movie. 2001: We always see a new, full priced movie for the major holidays. On Thanksgiving we saw Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. It was

Close

rivendell
moria
lothlorien

dwarf

Created by SocialMediaLab.ca

instances found: 167

2011-02-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-02-20	Frodo, the wizard,	dwarves	and elves. And the
2011-03-20	it could work for	dwarves	, too. It sends the
2011-03-20	why Gimli and the	Dwarves	showed up there (FOTR
2011-03-20	why Gimli and the	Dwarves	showed up there (FOTR
2011-03-20	something to the	dwarves	or to the White
2011-03-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-03-20	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? Did it
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? Did it
2011-03-22	movie wth elves and	dwarves	and wizards? It was
2011-03-22	fellowship. Elves,	dwarves	, hobbits and men learn
2011-04-16	appreciate what elves,	dwarves	, hobbits and orcs
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:
2011-04-16	"Pretty rings..."	Dwarves	: "Pretty rings..." Men:

remember back over this summer. In the long run, it all came in dribs and drabs. Like a fugue that starts with a lone instrument and slowly adds others, finally ending in a glorious crescendo. I think it may be easier to just visit each facet of my experience and ramble where I may. I went on to explore many things that comprised that summer. I finally gave up on rereading The Hobbit and moved to FOTR. I read it once, then again and that was when my life seemed to fully shift into another dimension. I read the three books over that summer of 2002 while watching FOTR matinees at my neighborhood theaters. I also, for the first time, used the internet to satisfy this hunger I had for all things Tolkien. When I finished rereading ROTK in early August, I was in a daze. I felt that me and my perception of the world had completely changed. I think I might have looked a little crazy to family and friends. I felt alive like I had never felt before. That journal covers that summer. It's interesting to

Close

Magpie. (2009, February 2). kind of between a book & movie firster.

instances found: 79

2011-01-22	fields. I also like the	beacons	a lot - but is this
2011-01-22	is the lighting of the	beacons	... absolutely amazing
2011-01-22	of the lighting of the	beacons	... but what a moment
2011-01-22	listing all of the	beacons	between Greece and Troy
2011-02-16	# The Lighting of the	Beacons	# "I can't carry it for
2011-02-16	out the lighting of the	beacons	- the scenery, the
2011-02-16	The lighting of the	beacons	- awesome!!! The
2011-02-16	visual (well, maybe the	beacons) or the lines spoken,
2011-05-16	& children, and lit the	beacons	before Gandalf & Pippin
2011-05-16	about the	beacons	sequence Greetings,
2011-05-16	We then see the	beacons	progress, it is night
2011-05-16	time to light enough	beacons	to cover that distance.
2011-05-16	describing the	beacons	from Troy to Athens
2011-05-16	me... I love that the	beacons	start with Pippin and
2011-05-16	of the lighting of the	beacons	- we see a view from
2011-05-16	of the lighting of the	beacons	. Looking at the films.

FROM: Kristin Thompson
DATE: 2011-05-16

Question about the **beacons** sequence
Greetings, all! I know the **beacons** sequence in ROTK is a favorite for many of us. I'm writing an essay about it at the moment and so have been pondering it. It's difficult to pin down the appeal of that scene. Nothing really happens in it in terms of the plot. A cut from Gandalf looking out at the second beacon lighting to the shot of Aragorn seeing the last beacon would have made the same narrative point: the **beacons** have carried the news from Gondor to Rohan. But it's a stirring sequence nonetheless, between the mountains and the music and so on, and a lot of people have commented on it. In the DVD commentary, PJ says it's his favorite sequence. But let me ask a specific question. I'm sure you all remember that in the shot where the last beacon flares up

Close

Kristin Thompson. (2009, May 28). Question about the beacons sequence.

instances found: 251

2011-01-16	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-16	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-20	come to influencing	Sauron	as an ally, to his
2011-01-20	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-20	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-20	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-20	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-20	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-20	Does the glowing Eye of	Sauron	make Mordor look even
2011-01-20	Does the glowing Eye of	Sauron	make Mordor look even
2011-01-20	what they want? Or	Sauron	could be doing this for
2011-01-20	Does the glowing Eye of	Sauron	make Mordor look even
2011-01-20	forces of the Dark Lord	Sauron	gather to confront the
2011-01-21	Men: "Pretty rings..."	Sauron	: "Mine's better." "Ah,
2011-01-22	of High King and	Sauron	he becomes reluctant

FROM: Cegwyn
DATE: 2011-01-20

hmm... 1. Frodo and Sam have finally made it to Mordor. What do you think the two hobbits are wondering as the gaze across the barren land of Mordor? I think they're relieved to have finally reached Mordor. Sam, as usual, probably has some sort of optimism, hoping against hope that they'll get through it all right. Frodo probably just wants to get it over with and end it all, no matter what happens after. 2. Now, what are YOUR thoughts on Mordor? Well, it certainly looks evil. I don't think they could have done a better job, personally. 3. Does the glowing Eye of Sauron make Mordor look even more barren, cold, and dark? I think so. It's like there's nothing you can do to escape him, he'll always be watching. It gives a very strong feeling of oppression and despair. Mordor is so dark, and the only light is coming from him. 4. Any other

Close

Cegwyn. (2009, January 24). hmm... .

instances found: 34

2011-02-20	circle of light atop	Barad-dur	. It's belittling. He
2011-02-20	can see the explosion of	Barad-dur	while the Mountain is
2011-02-20	simultaneous falling of	Barad-Dur	and the eruption of Mt.
2011-02-20	view (from the bottom of	Barad-Dur) is quite dramatic,
2011-02-20	stumbles off away from	Barad-dur	. Gandalf looks toward
2011-07-16	the destruction of	Barad-dur	, an eagle rescue, etc.
2011-08-20	a floating eyeball atop	Barad-dur	is just plain silly, in
2011-08-20	that's why he makes	Barad-dur	so high. He wants to
2011-09-16	would have preferred a	Barad-Dur	almost not seen at all,
2011-09-16	monitory powers from	Barad-dur	. I might even believe
2011-09-16	circle of light atop	Barad-dur	. It's belittling. He
2011-09-16	tower, when Frodo sees	Barad-dur	from the Seat of
2011-09-16	statin that the thing on	Barad-dur	was just a symbol. I
2011-09-16	rival,from the summit of	Barad-dur	his eye watches
2011-09-16	some kind of spirit in	Barad-dur	- a misty form, maybe,
2011-09-16	sits upon the top of	Barad-dur	IS Sauron. They

scene??? "Go home Sam!" at Amon Hen. (Oh, wait. That bit was in the book. Never mind!) "Let's hunt some orc?" "Sam, I'm glad you're with me." (Here at the end of all things.) Talk about flattening and anticipation! Isn't this phrase two movies premature? Well!!! I could go on and on. Quite frankly Fellowship seems more freely based on" or "inspired by" Tolkien rather than any sort of actual adaptation of his work. ("Hasty, insensitive, and impertinent" as Tolkien said about the Zimmerman treatment.) Except for Rhys-Davies (The Perfect Dwarf) and Tyler (The Perfect Elf) all the characters were pretty much unrecognizable. TTT was much more faithful in comparison, and ROTK was even moreso. In fact, ROTK was really much too faithful to the book. It often seemed like a jumble of "the best of Tolkien" highlights. Jackson really should have made up a few more scenes to keep the narrative tighter, but I guess by the third film he and the crew and cast had just developed too much

Close

Darkstone. (2008, August 14). Well.

instances found: 138

2011-01-22	and what he wouldn't.	I also	agree with Weaver in
2011-01-22	was writing romance XD	I also	loved the fact that
2011-01-22	on Pelennor fields.	I also	like the beacons a lot
2011-01-22	once a year since then.	I also	absolutely love the
2011-01-22	real story it's there.	I also	love the films, and if
2011-01-22	as a first-run film.	I also	had the experience of
2011-01-24	take back the prisoners.	I also	mentioned that it was a
2011-01-24	LotR without them.	I also	recognized when I chose
2011-01-24	holds on to the Books.	I also	wanted to speak to
2011-02-16	stop watching a movie.	I also	see it as a case of the
2011-02-20	crumbles earthward.	I also	like the panicked look
2011-02-20	is all right there!	I also	know they must have
2011-02-20	hard-core book firsters.	I also	remember reading about
2011-02-20	never quite understood.	I also	was profoundly affected
2011-02-20	neighborhood theaters.	I also	, for the first time,
2011-03-20	In the first scene.	I also	think drama has trumped

(LOTR, Hobbit, SII) along with the three soundtracks. There was a combination of factors about LOTR that affected me so much. It seemed to me that the writing of the books and the making of the films (including the score), paralleled the themes of the story itself, of how things that were such a long shot, things that *shouldn't* have been possible, were in fact achieved, first by Tolkien just not giving up, and then by people who worked together to make it happen against the odds, and then by what seemed to be an unseen hand, something that wanted it to happen, the idea of eucatastrophe, of the fellowship, of not giving in to despair, the idea of the shadow always reappearing and the need to overcome it. Many things. I felt that it made me re-examine myself and how I had been living my life, like a window suddenly opening into another way of life that I had never understood. Recently here there was a post about how even the commentaries had affected people, and they affected me

Close

loresilme. (2009, February 1). Why indeed.

instances found: 138

2011-04-16	for it to come together.	I also	know from the grantwork
2011-04-16	but not dirty.	I also	love the kettle and
2011-04-16	simply in another room.	I also	watched for gifts from
2011-04-16	with baskets in them.	I also	love baskets and kind
2011-04-16	served us perfectly.	I also	use another large
2011-04-16	stored in those, and	I also	use canvas tote type
2011-04-20	but not dirty.	I also	love the kettle and
2011-04-20	simply in another room.	I also	watched for gifts from
2011-04-20	with baskets in them.	I also	love baskets and kind
2011-04-20	served us perfectly.	I also	use another large
2011-04-20	stored in those, and	I also	use canvas tote type
2011-04-20	about the candles,	I also	wonder about the
2011-04-20	me, and the dining area.	I also	notice the books, and
2011-04-20	there to hide them.	I also	never realized these
2011-04-20	a floorplan somewhere?	I also	like this lamp - (and
2011-04-20	men in the household).	I also	have problems in mv

probably also know how to make dripless candles that don't burn anything other than themselves, too.. It's kind of interesting looking at this place after we had the PROPs shots of the Minas Tirith library and Bree -- the elves are just much more genteel.. Like you, the desk intrigues me, and the dining area. I also notice the books, and the patterns used on the design of the floor and the columns. I had not noticed the bust before, so thanks for the close up on it. Very classy, like the rest of the place. I know when it came to dwarves, they counted on JRD's portrayal of Gimli to give us an idea of dwarven culture...when it comes to elves, I think the settings, costumes, and props chosen really do a lot to tell us about their culture and values, and contribute to the sense that they are "immortal, fairest and wisest of all beings", except of course, when it comes to trying to micromanage your daughter's love life... Thanks for the many different images, this was a treat! Weaver

Close

weaver. (2009, April 4). So, he has his own Chambers, does he?

instances found: 479

2011-01-22	1. Comments on this	image	? Do you feel
2011-01-22	makes shot is that	imagery	and presence of those
2011-01-22	1. Comments on this	image	? Do you feel
2011-01-22	blown away by the	imagery	. The effect has died
2011-01-22	1. Comments on this	image	? Nice. Both are ready
2011-01-22	of the greatest and most	imaginative	adaptations ever
2011-01-22	provide from their own	imaginations	and skills to make the
2011-01-22	they're very close to my	imagining	of them... but to be
2011-01-22	you only can see the	images	in your head,
2011-01-22	a lie!!) Honestly, the	image	of *Disney* using
2011-01-22	I got 6 pgs in and the	image	of the 5 sisters
2011-01-22	Alan Lee & John Howe's	imagery	, I think we're seeing
2011-01-22	didn't look like they	imagined	, or the actor's
2011-01-22	script. So they had the	images	but not the
2011-01-22	can), and see if we can	imagine	what he may have
2011-01-22	Could Tolkien have	imagined	at his death in 1973

FROM: grammaboodawg
DATE: 2011-01-22

I'm glad you like the movies I'm sorry you can't appreciate the effort Jackson and his NZ filmic-family did to make them possible. I've loved this story since 1971, and I have no problem with the changes. This is Jackson's telling of the story. He wasn't trying to do the book, he was making the films he'd always wanted to see. There's no way everything could be included let alone done to everyone's satisfaction. United with Howard Shore's music and guided by Alan Lee & John Howe's **imagery**, I think we're seeing the closest thing possible to Middle-earth. Did you enjoy SEEING the storming of Isengard by the Ents? Aragorn and Arwen's story expanded? The attack of the huorns? More mumakil than you could shake a stick at? There's been much discussion on other directors and what they're take on these films would be and/or should be for the upcoming Hobbit & sequel films. Seek those

Close

grammaboodawg. (2008, January 6). I'm glad you like the movies.

instances found: 29

2011-09-16	nearly endless night.	I picture	it being so dark that
2011-11-20	things,lol.....and when	i see pictures	of england and the rest
2011-12-16	That is exactly how	I pictured	it. Exactly. So, your
2011-12-16	were very close to how	I pictured	them, too. And this is
2011-12-16	That is exactly how	I pictured	it is Moriah. Not all
2011-12-16	Hobbiton looked just as	I had always pictured	it. I'd add that
2011-12-16	In my imagination -	I pictured	Minas Tirith as being
2011-12-16	each other. The Pelennor	I pictured	(and all the more each
2011-12-16	The Silmarillion or LOTR	I picture	both Luthien and Arwen
2011-12-16	Saruman in the book.	I always pictured	Saruman as being less

FROM: Flagg
DATE: 2011-12-16

I agree about the buildings I often get them dreadfully wrong in my imagination - **I pictured** Minas Tirith as being composed of seven increasingly deep walled levels (with the innermost circle deep underground), and with the very top of the Tower of the Sun on a horizontal level with the ground surrounding the city. Essentially **I pictured** Minas Tirith both upside-down and underground. And I thought the whole place was fashioned from a greenish, lichen-covered stone for some reason. When I first saw it in the film, I thought 'Aha, so that's what I was supposed to be imagining!'

Close

Flagg. (2010, December 21). I agree about the buildings.