

1. . . . green was a fairy colour, and suitable for such a being as this knight, whose Green Chapel was nothing else than a fairy mound; a *balȝ berȝ*.¹

2.

. . . a lyttel on la launde, a lawe as hit were;

A balȝ berȝ bi a bonke þe brymme bysyde,

Bi a forȝ of a flode þat ferked þare;

þe borne blubred þerinne as hit boyled hade.²

3.

Debatande wiþ hymself quat hit be myȝt.

Hit hade a hole on þe ende and on ayþer syde,

And ouergrown wiþ gresse in glodes aywhere,

And al watz holȝ inwiþ, nobot an olde caue,

Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he coupe hit noȝt deme

wiþ spelle (*SGGK* ll. 2179–84).

4. Tolkien, in his W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture on 15 April, 1953 said:

Now we, and no doubt many of our poet's audience, may not be surprised by [the Green Knight riding off holding his severed head]. If we are introduced to a green man, with green hair and face, on a green horse, at the court of King Arthur, we expect "magic"; and Arthur and Gawain should have expected it also, we think. As indeed most of those present seem to have done: "a phantom and fay-magic folk there thought it" (l. 2400).³

5. Forþi for fantoum and fayryȝe þe folk þere hit demed.

6. We have in fact reached the point of intersection of two different planes: of a real and permanent, and an unreal and passing world of values: *morals* in one hand, and in the other *a code of honour*, or a game with rules.⁴

¹ Tolkien, J. R. R. and E. V. Gordon. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925. 86 n. 151.

² Tolkien and Gordon, Editors. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. 2nd ed. Revised by Norman Davis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967. ll. 2171–74. All quotations from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are from this edition.

³ "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Monsters and the Critics*. London: Harper Collins, 1990. 75.

⁴ "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Monsters and the Critics*. London: Harper Collins, 1990. 89.

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Comment: *launde* l. 2171 n. "glade, awn, field" [Ofr. *la(u)nde*] (TG-Davis 194). A & W "glade, field, grassy plain" (A & W 329). *lawe* l. 2171 n. "mound, knoll" [OE. *blāwe*] (TG-Davis 194). A & W "mound, hill" (A & W 329).

Comment: *balȝ* l. 2172 adj. "swelling with round, smooth surface" [OE. *balȝ*] (164). See ll. 2032, 967. A & W "smooth and rounded" (A & W 304). *MED* cites this line for "bulging, round (knoll); ?smooth" (*MED* *balgh* (b)). *berȝ* l. 2172 n. "mound" [OE. *Be(o)rg*] (TG-Davis 165). See ll. 2178. *MED* cites this line "A hill; a mound, barrow" (*MED* *bergh*).

Comment: *forȝ* l. 2173 n. "channel, bed" [OE. *furb*] (TG-Davis 182). Davis' note "This has been taken (as by *MED* under *fors*) as the first appearance in English of *force* 'waterfall'. But *ȝ* is . . . not elsewhere used with this value after *r* in a stressed syllable . . . The word is therefore presumably OE. *furb* 'furrow', used in the sense of watercourse. This also suits the scene better than 'waterfall', which would not be in place at the bottom of a valley." Refers to Emerson, *JEGP* xxi (1922): 405, and xxvi (1927): 257 (TG-Davis 125–26 n. 2173). Vantuono notes that Tolkien and Gordon, and Gollancz translate *forȝ* "waterfall" (Vantuono 229 n. 2173). *ferked* l. 2173 v. "to go, ride" here "flow" [OE. *fer(e)cian*] (TG-Davis 180).

Comment: *fantoum* l. 240 n. "illusion" [Ofr. *fanto(s)me*.] (TG-Davis 179). Burrow "illusion" (Burrow 1972, 93, n. 240). *MED* "That which deludes the senses or imagination; illusion (as of dream or hallucination) (*MED* *fantom* 2. (a)). Cites this line. *fayryȝe* l. 240 n. "magic" [Ofr. *faierie*.] (TG-Davis 179). "the supernatural" (A & W 317). Silverstein glosses *fayryȝe* as "illusion" (205 s. v. *fayryȝe*). Burrow "magic" (Burrow 1972, 93, n. 240). *MED* s. v. *faerie* "2. (a) Supernatural contrivance; enchantment, magic, illusion; also, something illusory, a phantom; (b) something incredible or fictitious, a figment" (*MED* s. v. *faerie* 2(a-b)).

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