

The next week (11/19) will be S_t_a_r_T_r_e_k: G_e_n_e_r_a_t_i_o_n_s.

Live long. Prosper. Buy bonds. Remember the Maine. Have a nice day. [-mrl]

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2. So there I was, listening to an old-time radio show from the late 1940s or early 1950s and there were references to how bad times were. I think it was Arch Obler's "Revolt of the Worms" and somebody was telling the main character that with times as bad as they were, he should not be wasting his time working on developing a better rose with growth hormones. He, of course, finds his own reasons for regretting the action after the hormones leach into the soil and created giant worms. Well, in fact, the scriptwriter had a sort of a point in that any time that you have giant worms slithering around and eating people, you are allowed by a technical loophole to declare those times to be officially categorized as "bad." The only thing is that even before there were giant worms in the story the characters were saying how bad the time were. It struck me that these bad times were times we now consider to be good times. The war was over, the economy was booming. But does anybody ever say to themselves "Boy these are good times!"?

At the time of the original broadcast we had just gotten over a bad time back in WWII. Then when the war was over you could either worry about McCarthyism or about the fact that the Commies had The Bomb and we could die any minute. Well, even during the war there wasn't in our country the fear of instant death from the skies, so things had taken a turn for the worse. Then all of a sudden the Commies had satellites over our heads--maybe with The Bomb--and things really soured. Then things went into a slump when the Commies were ready to over-run Southeast Asia and Americans had to go there and get killed. Again after the Korean war--I didn't mention that one, did I?--Communist threat had turned into reality and people were dying from it. And Presidents and other major figures were being murdered. Yup, the Sixties shaped up as a real step down from the Fifties. Then things went into a slump about the time of Watergate. Then after that bad got worse with

inflation and unemployment. Well, you get the idea. Political ads on TV once had candidates talking about issues. Then they went downhill and candidates started just saying good things about themselves. Then those were the good ads and the bad ones would just talk about vague feel-good generalities like "the Great Society." Now we are nostalgic for those good ads. Today when you see a political ad talking about the record of a candidate, you can be pretty sure it is sponsored by the opposing party. Hey, and remember when people interviewed on radio or TV would be embarrassed if they made obvious grammatical errors like saying "ain't" or using double negatives. Heck, these days I am nostalgic for the days when the lead story on the news did not concern O. J. Simpson. Well, is this an illusion that the times are always bad? Historian Arnold Toynbee would have said that this is because things are perpetually getting worse. Civilization to him must have been at its highest as far back as Ancient Greece, or maybe back in Olduvai Gorge. Of course you hear from Ancient Greece

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quotes of people who complained about children no longer respecting their parents and that the social structure is falling apart.

In H. G. Wells's T_h_i_n_g_s_t_o_C_o_m_e screenplay, he has the world going through a bad patch (to say the least), and then has people saying that since then life has gotten "lovelier and lovelier." Duck tires! Nobody ever says the world has gotten good. So my prediction for the year 2015 is that in spite of all the technological advances that we will have in the interim, the mid-1990s will be remembered as the good old days. You might as well enjoy them. *Apres nous, le deluge.* [-mrl]

3. Recently Evelyn Leeper ran across this passage from the epilogue to W_a_r_a_n_d_P_e_a_c_e in which Tolstoy (unwittingly) has some thoughts on alternate histories: "However much we approximate the time of judgement to the time of the deed, we never get a conception of freedom in time. For if I examine an action committed a second ago I must still recognize it as not being free, for it was irrevocably linked to the moment at which it was committed. Can I lift my arm?"

I lift it, but ask myself: Could I have abstained from lifting my arm at the moment that has already passed? To convince myself of this I do not lift it the next moment. But I am not now abstaining from doing so at the first moment when I asked the question. Time has gone by which I could not detain, the arm I then lifted is no longer the same as the arm I now refrain from lifting, nor is the air in which I lifted it the same that now surrounds me. The moment in which the first movement was made is irrevocable, and at that moment I could only make one movement, and whatever movement I made would be the only one. That I did not lift my arm a moment later does not prove that I could have abstained from lifting it then. And since I could only make one movement at that single moment of time, it could not have been any other. To imagine it as free, it is necessary to imagine it in the present, on the boundary between the past and the future--that is, outside time which is impossible." [-ecl]

4. MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule review: Unevenly-paced rendition of the famous horror story takes far fewer liberties than most versions, but still does not really deserve to call itself "Mary Shelley's." Kenneth Branagh has a few bizarre images worth seeing, but much of his film lacks the spark really to capture the imagination of general audiences. Fans of the

story, however, will find the film rewarding.
Rating: low +2 (-4 to +4) (This review contains spoilers for people who do not already know the plot of the original novel. I don't believe they would hurt the enjoyment of the film, but reader discretion is advised.)

The novel F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n has been filmed in at least eleven previous English-language versions (listed at the end of this review). But perhaps it is more accurate to say that it has failed to be filmed

for nine of those versions. Most adaptations take only an idea or two from the novel. They stitch those ideas together with ideas more from the filmmaker in attempts to infuse the story with the spark of life on the screen. The problem is that the novel has almost no visually dramatic images beyond that of the creature itself. The original novel shies away from describing in any detail the process for creation. This is in part because Frankenstein, who in the novel tells the story, does not want to give away the secret. It also worked out conveniently for the teenaged Mary Shelley, who had only a slight acquaintance with science and could not realistically describe such a process herself. As a result the novel, while exciting, is extremely non-visual. D_r_a_c_u_l_a, on the other hand, was written by a man in the theater professionally, and that horror novel is extremely dramatic visually. The treatment D_r_a_c_u_l_a has gotten at the hands of filmmakers is far more shameful since a filmmaker has much more to work with.

But in adapting F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n to the screen a filmmaker is always faced with the dilemma that the more accurate a film version is to the book, the more ponderous and less dramatic the film must be. Calvin Floyd's V_i_c_t_o_r_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (TV title: T_e_r_r_o_r_o_f_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n) is the only version I would call a faithful adaptation of the novel. But that film, an ambitious Swedish-Irish co-production, turned out impenetrably static and dull even for a Swedish film. Dan Curtis made a middlingly faithful version for television in 1972, and most other filmmakers have not even tried to be faithful to the book, either because of the nature of the book or because they have just been sure that they could improve on Shelley. But adapting this novel to the screen in a way that is both faithful and entertaining is a real puzzle comparable to, say, giving modern audiences something they can enjoy from Shakespearean plays like H_e_n_r_y_V_o_r_M_u_c_h_A_d_o_a_b_o_u_t_N_o_t_h_i_n_g.

So Kenneth Branagh has taken on the ambitious task of adapting F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n to the screen in a reasonably faithful manner. Sadly, this film will not be his crowning achievement, but it is not a disaster either. People looking for excitement on the screen and people who wanted to see Shelley's novel accurately done will probably agree that this movie is just okay, but nothing great. But, in fact, Branagh has a sort of a moral victory on both fronts.

He perhaps has created the second most faithful screen adaptation and still has managed to make it moderately entertaining. And fans of the horror film will find he has infused some of the most interesting and bizarre original visual images since James Whale did the 1931 version.

The script does take liberties with the original story but generally these changes show the expert hand of Frank Darabont as the co-writer. Darabont, who wrote and directed T_h_e_S_h_a_w_s_h_a_n_k_R_e_d_e_m_p_t_i_o_n, has a remarkable ability to see minor strategic revisions to a story that have maximum impact in improving the resulting story. For example, modern readers of the novel are usually surprised that Frankenstein is not more concerned when his creature escapes and disappears. By the minor addition of setting the creation during a bad cholera epidemic, the script explains how Frankenstein is able to find "parts" as plentiful as he does, adds some visually exciting street scenes, and explains why Frankenstein had reasonable motivation for believing that his escaped creature will perish on his own. The epidemic is a very minor liberty which pays major dividends to the story-telling. With the exception of purists, most people should appreciate that the story works better with the change. There is a sequence toward the end of the film that is a major departure from the novel. It picks up the interest in a section of the story that would be slow and pays homage to another cinematic Frankenstein story.

Generally Branagh's style in telling the classic story is to take less dramatic scenes in the novel and to goose them up so that they are considerably more engaging in film version. For example, while the ship in the framing story just quietly gets locked by ice, the film version has an exciting scene of the ship foundering as the ice closes in on it while in the background huge icebergs rear out of the water. Time and again this film has scenes from the novel but gives them more dramatic interpretations, which is exactly what the story needed. Scenes that would normally have some dramatic impact, like the creation scene, are further energized by short quick cuts.

In fact, the creation scene is a study all by itself. The laboratory that is the setting seems strangely organic instead of mechanistic as is the case in many film versions. Mammoth bags of electric eels pulsate over the body. As we approach the instant of creation Branagh uses a frenzy of shorter and shorter cuts, then at the instant of the creation the pace changes to a long languorous shot. I assume the male readers will understand what just that particular pacing has to do with the act of creating life. It is amazing what you can do with editing. Moments later we see the creature pulled from its watery artificial womb amid a torrent of spilling fluid, again a very powerful birth image. The laboratory mechanisms are as bizarre for us today as Kenneth Strickfaden's electrical gizmos and Jack Pierce's neck bolts must have been to

1931 audiences. Whatever faults the film might have, and it certainly has them, the creation sequence makes up for.

The set design is often sumptuous. Much of what we see of Frankenstein's palatial family home takes place in a huge front hall dominated by a mammoth stairway that is at once both beautiful and dangerous-looking, another very symbolic image. Street scenes have a realistic feel.

Some of the script touches seem not well thought-out. It is tempting to say these touches were made after Darabont's work since they seem uncharacteristic of the care he seems to take with a script, but of course there is no way to tell for sure. At one point Frankenstein writes in his journal that in the morning he will destroy this journal. So why is he bothering to write? Did he have a surfeit of ink? In another sequence Frankenstein is standing in the middle of his home's enormous empty front lawn. He turns to the house, but from nowhere we see the previously undetected creature reach out his hand and grab Frankenstein. What did he do, burrow up from underground? How do you sneak up on someone standing in an open field?

Most film versions interpret the creature as a sort of zombie--the resurrected dead. Shelley saw the creature more as a baby in the artificially-created body of a large and powerful man. Branagh really gives the creature both aspects and walks a tightrope between them, much as the Karloff films did. The creature sees the world with fresh eyes, but can draw on memories of a former life. Branagh's version has Frankenstein initially inspired by the wish to bring his mother back from the dead, so he himself thinks of his work as resurrection as much as it is creation. In another departure in interpretation, Shelley's creature was powerfully strong, but only humanly so. Branagh's version chooses to give him superhuman strength. Most film versions do this, of course, but V_i_c_t_o_r_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n and the Dan Curtis version do not.

As Frankenstein, Branagh is intense and angry. Unlike the moody Colin Clive or even Peter Cushing, Branagh is vital and alive in the role. Top billing goes to Robert De Niro as the creature. It is a casting decision that I still do not understand, unless it was

a role that De Niro himself was anxious to play. I do not think it is as hard to play the creature well as most people think it is. I have always contended that it takes far more acting talent to play believably a Georgia cotton farmer than to play Frankenstein's creature. The creature should have some humanity, but also some feel of being alien. But as long as an actor gives him that, not much else he can do with the role can be wrong. The creature needs imposing physically--which De Niro is not--and beyond that just has to be a good creative actor. Except for stature problems De Niro is fine in the role, but is over-qualified for the role that should have gone to encourage the career of promising but less recognized

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actor. The surprise of the film is John Cleese in a rare serious role. He is terrific as an aging scientist who could have created life himself but who lacked the final spark of courage. His Dr. Waldman is a man broken by his own cowardice at taking that one last step (at least that is my interpretation). His is the most interesting character in the film, ironically. Helena Bonham-Carter is her usual pouty character as Elizabeth. Tom Hulce is just a little too naughty-schoolboy-ish to play Henry Clerval.

This interpretation does not always work, but at its best it is a vital interpretation of the Shelley book. I would have to give

Branagh's M_a_r_y_S_h_e_l_l_e_y'_s_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n
a low +2 on the -4 to +4
scale.

Previous film English language versions with the actor who played the creature:

- F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (1910)--Charles Ogle
- L_i_f_e_W_i_t_h_o_u_t_S_o_u_l (1915)--Percy Darrell Standing (I have not seen it)
- F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (1931)--Boris Karloff
- C_u_r_s_e_o_f_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (1957)--Christopher Lee
- H_o_r_r_o_r_o_f_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (1970)--David Prowse
- F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (1972)--Bo Svenson
- F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n: T_h_e_T_r_u_e_S_t_o_r_y (1974)--Michael Sarazan
- A_n_d_y_W_a_r_h_o_l'_s_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n (1974)--

Carlo Mancini

- _ V _ i _ c _ t _ o _ r _ F _ r _ a _ n _ k _ e _ n _ s _ t _ e _ i _ n (a.k.a _ T _ e _ r _ r _ o _ r
_ o _ f _ F _ r _ a _ n _ k _ e _ n _ s _ t _ e _ i _ n) (1975)--Per
Oscarsen
- _ F _ r _ a _ n _ k _ e _ n _ s _ t _ e _ i _ n (1984)--David Warner
- _ F _ r _ a _ n _ k _ e _ n _ s _ t _ e _ i _ n (1993)--Randy Quaid
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5. THE WATERWORKS by E. L. Doctorow (Random House, ISBN 0-394-58754-5, 1994, 253pp, \$23) (a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

It's an all-too familiar pattern: An author not known for science fiction or fantasy writes a book which _ i _ s science fiction or fantasy. It is far better than most of the books marketed as science fiction or fantasy, but the SF community doesn't notice it and when Hugo nomination time rolls around, I and perhaps a half dozen other lonely souls are the only ones who nominate it. It happened with Gore Vidal's _ L _ i _ v _ e _ f _ r _ o _ m _ G _ o _ l _ g _ o _ t _ h _ a, it happened with

Alan Lightman's _ E _ i _ n _ s _ t _ e _ i _ n ' s _ D _ r _ e _ a _ m _ s, and I guarantee that as night follows day it will happen with E. L. Doctorow's _ W _ a _ t _ e _ r _ w _ o _ r _ k _ s.

_ T _ h _ e _ W _ a _ t _ e _ r _ w _ o _ r _ k _ s is definitely science fiction, although this is not confirmed until the last quarter of the book. And Doctorow is not certainly not enamored of science, nor are his characters. As

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protagonist Martin Pemberton describes a scene, "I became aware of the atmosphere of his laboratories, without seeing anything in particular going on there--two or three rooms with doors open between them, and a faintly chemical smell in the air. All the light came from gas jets.... There were glass cabinets for instruments ... stone-top cabinets inset with iron sinks ... boxy machines on wheels with cables and gears and tubing. I remember a square wooden chair with leather straps at the armrests and an iron head brace.... The walls were draped in some brownish napped material, velour or velvet. To me this was the menacing furniture of science."

The novel is superficially about Pemberton's search for his father, whom he spots in a Municipal coach after his (father's) supposed death and funeral. What it is really about is the New York of the 1870s, about people's attitudes towards power, and about the transformations--political, economic, social, and technological--that New York City was undergoing.

I say this is science fiction, but it would also fall, I believe, in the category of magical realism, of which there are not many practitioners in this country. The only two other such authors who come to mind are John Crowley and Mark Helprin. The latter also wrote in the milieu of 19th Century New York, but where Helprin is lavish, Doctorow is spare. But even with few words, Doctorow can paint a complete picture in the reader's mind of the world of which he writes. Painting a picture of an alien world is what science fiction authors are supposed to do, of course, and so this is an aspect that should appeal to the science fiction reader even if there were no scientific content. I highly recommend this to fans of magical realism, literary science fiction, and 19th Century science. (And make a liar out of me by getting this on the Hugo ballot!) [-ecl]

6. LOVE & SLEEP by John Crowley (Bantam, ISBN 0-553-09642-7, August 1994, 502pp, \$22.95) (a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

There are those who define magical realism as something written in Latin America. Well, that may have been true once, but nowadays there are at least a few North American magical realists: Mark Helprin, E. L. Doctorow, and of course John Crowley. One of the things that seems to characterize magical realists is that their novels come out at far more widely spaced intervals than your average science fiction author's. So a new novel by one of them is an eagerly awaited event, and this is no exception: it has been five years since Crowley's last novel (and seven since A_ e_ g_ y_ p_ t, to which this is a sequel).

Helprin and Doctorow set their novels in urban places like New York City. Crowley's book takes place in Kentucky (though interestingly the main character, Pierce Moffett, was born in Brooklyn), Elizabethan London, and medieval Europe. While Doctorow draws on such real-life characters as Boss Tweed, Crowley relies on Giordano Bruno and John Dee. But Crowley needs these more elevated characters, because his story is not just of a single time and place, but of the secret history of the world and of the universe. Crowley's premise, or at least Moffett's, is a distant relative of an old discussion in the evolution/creation argument. Some creationists explain fossils by saying the world was created with this (misleading) fossil record. Evolutionists respond that if you can accept that, you must also accept that the world could have been created five minutes ago, with all your memories and everything else that makes you think it's older. Crowley postulates the world (universe) at times passes from one state to another, and the results of this passage work backward in time, as well as forward: "Every now and then the observable universe passes through a sort of turnstile or baffle and comes out ... different not only in its physical extensions and the laws that govern them, but ... in its past and future too: once the world was all like _ t _ h _ i _ s; then it changed; now it's like _ t _ h _ i _ s, and always has been."

Crowley is not for everyone, but for those who lean towards magical realism and the examination of hidden philosophical mysteries, _ L _ o _ v _ e & _ S _ l _ e _ e _ p is highly recommended. [-ecl]

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7. TOWING JEHOVAH by James Morrow (Harcourt Brace & Company, ISBN 0-15-190919-9, 1994, 371pp, \$23.95.) (a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

God is dead.

In law there is the concept of "habeus corpus," meaning "we have the body." It used to be that before someone could be charged with murder, a corpse had to be produced. (This, by the way, is no longer true, after police discovered someone who had dissolved his victims in acid and flushed them down the bathtub drain. But as usual I digress.)

In _ T _ o _ w _ i _ n _ g _ J _ e _ h _ o _ v _ a _ h we know God is dead because we have his body. It's floating at 0 degrees latitude, 0 degrees longitude, and it's starting to be a bit of a nuisance, blocking shipping lanes and all. So the Vatican hires a disgraced tanker captain to tow the body to a frozen crypt in the Arctic.

This being by James Morrow, you won't find much reverence here, and indeed when two of the Vatican's representatives explore the

enormous cadaver, they are somewhat unsettled by the experience: "It wasn't just that the sharks had wrought such terrible destruction, stripping off the foreskin like a gang of sadistic _ m _ o _ h _ e _ l _ s. Even if in good shape, God's penis would still rank high among those vistas a priest and a nun could not comfortably share."

God may be dead, but there are still supernatural forces at work, forces that drive the characters to examine their own faith or lack thereof. And Morrow looks at how people believe and how they react to having their beliefs confirmed--or rebutted. As with any great discovery, there are those who try to deny the facts, or even to conceal what they know to be to truth in order to further their own ends. As usual, Morrow is unsparing of all sides.

Morrow has a sacrilegious and at the same time reverent attitude toward religion. This may sound odd, but it's a function of his examination of what religion could be, and how often it, or its adherents, fall short of this ideal. Highly recommended. [-ec]

8. MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule review: A remake of a classic holiday film adds a few touches that the story did not need and basically just opens the story to a generation who won't watch black and white. There are far worse remakes, but isn't that faint praise? Rating: 0 (-4 to +4)

There are basically two reasons to remake a film. One reason is that movie theaters need something to thread into their projectors. Here the urge is often to try to get the product made as quickly as possible and to use as the blueprint a film that has already proven to be an audience pleaser. One can only hope that the filmmaker will treat the original material with respect, particularly if the original is a well-liked film. The other reason for remaking a film is that sometimes a filmmaker can discover a new slant on an old story and can bring something fresh to the story. And these reasons are in large part in conflict since the first requires

speed, the second slows down the process.

The new M_ i_ r_ a_ c_ l_ e_ o_ n_ 3_ 4_ t_ h_ S_ t_ r_ e_ e_ t feels like it was made for both

reasons. The holiday season is coming and those projectors are hungry to be fed. What does the new version add? Primarily what it adds is color. The original has become a great children's film that only adults will watch. Why? Because it is real, real old, from the days before people knew that movies need color, dude. The choice seems to be to colorize, to remake, or to just stop telling the story to children. Then I saw this film with absolutely the

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wrong audience, a collection of film fans who obviously would have grown up with the original and knew not to equate monochrome with bad filmmaking. To much of that audience this film was a purely redundant remake.

I suppose I feel much the same way. But I do admit it generally did treat the material with a degree of respect. So often films for children have gunplay or people kicking other people or attempted rapes, etc., ad nauseum. But in this film, besides an attempted corporate takeover by some shadowy bad guys, which admittedly I could have done without, this is a likable and a faithful retelling.

Kriss Kringle (played by Sir Richard Attenborough) is back on 34th Street. This time he is not in Macy's Department Store but in a foundering store called Cole's. (Macy's reportedly wanted no part of a remake that would claim they were in financial trouble. Other stores were anxious but none on 34th Street.) Kriss is the best department store Santa Claus that any store could have, with just one drawback. Kriss actually thinks that he is Santa Claus. And what is more he is able to convince others of his insanity. One of the people he would like to convince is the store's hard-nosed special projects director, Dorey Walker (Elizabeth Perkins), and her wide-eyed daughter Susan (Mara Wilson). But who does not know the plot of M_ i_ r_ a_ c_ l_ e_ o_ n_ 3_ 4_ t_ h_ S_ t_ r_ e_ e_ t, one of the perennial holiday classics.

Kriss is played by Sir Richard Attenborough, formerly of J_r_a_s_s_i_c_P_a_r_k. He is still trying to give children something real, but this time around it is something that won't bite them. Where Edmund Gwen was smiling and pleasant, Sir Richard genuinely radiates joy. His short beard is a bit of a problem, particularly since young Susan claims he looks like all the pictures of Santa Claus, but otherwise he is more satisfying in the role by objective standards. Mara Wilson plays young Susan, the wide-eyed premature realist. Wilson is not the beautiful child that Natalie Wood was, but does seem to show an intelligence far beyond her seven years of age. Elizabeth Perkins and Dylan McDermott play Dorey Walker and her suitor Bryan Bedford. Each know they have to out-act their predecessor in the previous film and probably do.

I do not remember the original giving much explanation why the mother has her attitudes on the danger of living in fantasy. This version gives a fairly thin explanation, but at least it is there. In some ways it strengthens the new version, but the explanation is also a bit downbeat for a children's film. The happy climax of the film trades the original's piles of mail for crowds of people and a much better legal argument. Strictly speaking, the happy ending of the court case is far less contrived in this version, not that it will be as satisfying to youngsters.

It is hard to know exactly how to rate a remake. Do you pretend you never saw the original? If so, then this is a fairly good film. But, if like most people, you have seen the original, there is not a whole lot new to offer. Overall, I suppose I will rate it from the latter point of view and give this a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale. [-mrl]

9. [Note: The following uses European conventions for punctuating numbers, and we have retained the convention of using special characters to represent Nordic letters not available in ASCII. For example, "" represents an 'o' with an umlaut, '|' represents an 'o' with a slash through it, and so on.]

Uppsala Tolkien Feast (a report by Magnus Odelius): Sala is a place about 50 kilometres south-west of Uppsala. (The district is famous for a rich silver-mine, since the 16th Century.) The 21th Celebration of Midg}rd's Fylking founding. I wrote to you about the 7-years-celebration at the Castle of Uppsala 14 years ago. This year's feast was something even more spectacular.

After having had lunch at the Fyris-school (Lasagne), three coaches arrived in the street in front of the schoolhouse. They were really crowded when we left. Ahrvid and I sat in the International bus, since there where people not only from all of Sweden but also from Norway and Denmark, 34 from Finland (who didn't know any other language than Finnish). Then there were a few British and Dutch people and one girl from Lithuania (Violeta, an old friend of mine). I think these were all the Nations present but I'm not completely sure. The guides started by handing out a commemoration fanzine and plastic-cups, in which they poured lime juice. After a while the handed out small buns, and small bag's containing Tallents, small coins impressed on leather which could be used in the market on our arrival there.

After half an hour the coaches stopped, standing on a country road. Pine forests grew on both sides of the road. We walked around the coaches and into the forest, beside a couple of large mining shafts (thank God there where fences!)- otherwise it would be an easy thing to fall down.

At the location where the festivity should take place there were two buildings painted in falu-red, probably the mining-office, nowadays, however, a museum of different kinds of oar. Behind the most distant house a marketplace had been arranged, with a blacksmith, a jeweller and a fortune-teller etc. There was also an inn which served food and two kinds of beer, Dark and Light, but they were both Lager.

After a bite we had an opportunity to watch a theatrical performance, "Beren and L10thien" (if you remember the story). Members of the university singing-choir took part in the play, and

their singing was extremely beautiful. When the play was over, it was time to go below earth. We were told to put on our the warmest cloak's and clothes before stepping down into the mine.

First of all we had to put on mine-helmets, for safety reason. We went down into the "Queen Christina's shaft" (she ruled between 1632 and 1654, after which she abdicated, went to Rome and converted to Catholicism). Then we were lead into the entrance of the mine, the galleries were rather small. I could stand up properly, but does that say anything (since I'm merely 1,70m). It wasn't very wide either, in some places it wasn't wider than a meter. And it was far between the torches too. There was a long and dark path down trough the mine.

It took about half an hour to get all the people assembled down there. Nearly last of all came Galadriel(Violeta) who managed with great despite of her pumps to reach down to the bottom of the spiral staircase. It took her a long time, at least 10 minutes. The hall was 15 meters high and at least 40 meters in diameter.

We stood with our backs to the spiral staircase, in front of us it seemed like a slope of plain rock. Just above our heads there was a throne, further up in the darkness stood a choir. Four dwarf-guards marched in on a row and took place in their designated positions. The Choir began to sing, they sang for a long while. Then the yet uncrowned King Gl'in made his entrance, the hall was quiet except for the steps of King Gl'in. When he sat down on the throne a quiet rejoice was heard. The choir hummed a tune all the time, he took the ancient Dwarf-crown and crowned himself King of Moria. Now, some fireworks sprang out from the ceiling.

FEAST OF FRIENDSHIP

Two striped party tents were raised on the large lawn, outside the mining-office. At first small glasses were handed out, filled with some transparent stuff, peculiarly enough non-alcoholic, which we are not used to at Midg}rd's Fylkings parties. There must be a first time for evreything! Salutes where held for Dwarfs and Elves, even for the other attendance at the feast.

At first the Elf King proclaimed his wishes of welcome! especially to the now crowned King Gl'in, and that this feast were held in his honour dynasty. Then King Gl'in began to speak about his (selfmade) coronation and how happy he was to be an Elf-friend. and this feast was held in his honour. (Since I Thr"r was also a Dwarf King in my time and an ances tor of Gl'in, I felt a tremble in my royal ancestral nerv when Gl'in expressed himself in those sentences).

The first dish was served, and different salutes for that people and these ancestors. Now it was time for bestowal of orders, 2 knights, 1 Guardian of Westerness, I didn't pay too much attention as I maybe should, since none of my friends became decorated.

The wine was served, it was quite delicious, the main course was also served, ham and baked potato (At least I thought it was rather poor, compared to the dinners which were served on such great festivities as the Seventh and Fourteenth commemorations). It took some time to get the different dishes because we were sitting a bit tight, (no broad shoulders were allowed)

Then they began to read aloud out of the annals, about the 7th and 14th anniversaries. Since I was absent at the 14th anniversary, I noticed at least that my memory is quite good considering the fact that the 7th anniversary was 14 years ago. The tents were bulging with laughter. Maybe you remember that I wrote that we were prepared. We had organized a special edition of orders, just to bestow each other with in Haradrim. So we did as the feast went by. There was a lot of enjoyable talk around the table. I sat in a place where there were a lot of Dutch and English people around me, and I like to be polite so the natural language was English. So everyone could understand what was said.

THE DELEGATIONS

The Elf and Dwarf King's received their ambassadors on the lawn outside the tents. No, don't think that they would be on the same level as the ambassadors, not even in a physical sense. They stood on top of a stone wall 3,5 meters high above all the others, sending down servants to collect the gifts.

The first ambassador was Beregond who represented Arda (a literary Tolkien society). Beregond represented his one-man embassy rather well, or at least I think he made it rather well. He made a speech that was far beyond my understanding, like most of the others. But who am I to judge in such a case, the kings looked satisfied and that is enough for me.

Forodrim (Stockholm Tolkien Society) was the second delegation and the third one came from Angmar (Malm| Tolkien Society). They didn't act in any specific or remarkable way, a rather dull performance but their clothes were in shining colours. The fourth delegation was Haradrim, they where led by Boromir the great and he where accompanied with Elf-queen Galadriel and their (small) court,

there of I was a member. We gave the Kings a barbecue-grill, and enchanted-coal. On our departure we light smoke torches, the surrounding area was filled with smoke.

Now there were time for fireworks? (What should you tell about them, when you are used to see really great fireworks on the

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Stockholm water festival. A World Competition of fireworks and the have had it annually four years in a row, each other night they have fireworks. Can you be a fair judge when you are used to see the best?) After the fireworks it was time to return to Uppsala, both Ahrvid and I slept in on the returning buss. Time was now 2.00 and the organizers had at least six hours hard work to look forward to.) [-mo]

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Revolutions have never lightened the burden of
tyranny, they have only shifted it to another shoulder.
--George Bernard Shaw

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