

Research question: How do illustrations contribute to text in the Lord of the Rings?

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Authority of source: The author of this article is Emily E. Auger, Canadian independent scholar with over twenty years of teaching experience. Her other papers covering the topic of Tolkien's books are *The Lord of the Rings' Interlace: From Tolkien to Tarot* (published in *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*) and *The Lord of the Rings' Interlace: The Adaptation to Film* (published in *Mythlore: a Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*)

Summary of the source:

Tolkien himself thought that fantasy was a literary form, not a visual one (*On Fairy Stories*) and it was maybe this opinion of his that caused the lack of graphic representation of his novels. This makes Alan Lee's fifty paintings quite a rare exception. These paintings enhance all aspects of the books. Lee explains that he does not develop his illustrations individually. The first sketches are drawn in relation to each other – they are often linked in pairs and overlap.

Environment: The environment is often the focus of the illustration, the characters being drawn really small. This scale emphasises the monumentality of the task and, together with repeated use of specific motifs, helps to present the environment as it is (often) presented in the books – as an obstruction, an obstacle that needs to be overcome. Images of movement, like paths and streams, imply moving forward; darkness and clouds symbolize trouble; light and sun hope and safety. The images of environment add another dimension to the maps provided by Tolkien.

Gandalf: Gandalf is prominent in three illustrations: the first one depicts him in the Shire, the second one in Moria and the third one in Minas Tirith. It is in these three instances that Gandalf's leadership changes. In the Shire he guides Frodo to the beginning of his journey. The image in Moria depicts him right before his confrontation with the balrog and his subsequent death. And the final picture depicts him as Gandalf the White, standing before Denethor. Lee doesn't portray the moment of action, opting to subtly highlight the transitions in the text itself.

Sound: There are three images that invoke sound. In all three of them Lee uses the visual aspect of the scene to draw attention to sound. For example, when the company camps near the Isen River, which is “strangely silent and empty”. The illustrator cannot effectively draw sound (or, in this instance, a lack thereof), but can invoke it by drawing the river unnaturally still and use the atmospheric effects to emphasize the “auditory weirdness of the moment”.

Effectiveness of the source: This source is very well-arranged and easy to navigate. It provides an in-depth look on the illustrations and the text and provides many examples.