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2.

Tolkienesque Elements in Etelka Görgey's Mythopoetical Science Fiction

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The *Csodaidők* [Miracle Times] series (2006–2010), and its accompanying *Időcsodák* [Time Miracles] series (2012–2022), written by Etelka Görgey and published under her pen name Raana Raas, is the most epic contemporary work of Hungarian science fiction,[1] which may be categorized as religious science fiction. The themes of faith and religion are not alien to science fiction (SF); and although Christian fundamentalism visibly impacted the genre in the 1980s (Mendlesohn 2003, 274), SF has traditionally had a critical perspective on religiosity since its early phase (ibid., 264). In the works that take this critical stance, "religion counterpoints not technology – although religious societies are often portrayed as anti-technology – but scientific thinking" (ibid., 265). This idea is challenged by Görgey, who is primarily interested in what an orthodox, traditional religion may be like in the future, what kind of social formations may come into existence due to the presence of fundamentalism, and the extent to which these would be tolerated by a society very similar to our global, pluralist world (Görgey, quoted in Bolla 2009).

Being a devoted Christian[2] and a Doctor of Theology, Görgey has a positive view of religion, but is not without a critical approach. Her interest lies in the moral questions that are daily posed to her by her religion and faith, largely independently of issues related to technology and science; understandably, then, it is not so much religious science fiction but religious fantasy, especially the oeuvre of the great inkling J. R. R. Tolkien, that has the most discernible influence on Görgey's fiction. The eight volumes are deeply rooted in Görgey's biblical interpretations, as indicated by her theological works, the themes of which recur frequently in her fiction. These biblical interpretations highlight her philological interest and knowledge: her study on the relationship between Psalm 22 and the crucifixion narrative (Görgey 2001a) or her analysis

[1] Based on their connection, I consider the two tetralogies as one work, but when discussing details, I differentiate between them. Due to the constraints of this study, I largely restrict my analysis to the first tetralogy.

[2] Görgey worked as a minister in the Hungarian Reformed Church while composing these novels.

on "the foolishness of God" (Görgey 2001b) rely on linguistic analysis and textual interrelations, the mechanisms of which are incorporated into the author's fiction.

The above observations may be good starting points for examining the world of Görgey's two tetralogies. The linguistic world building, which does not ignore the specifics of historical linguistics, serves as more than an atmosphere-creating component and demonstrates the Tolkienian ideal concerning an invented language, which should have "a highish level both of beauty in word-form considered abstractly, and of ingenuity in the relations of symbol and sense, not to mention its elaborate grammatical arrangements, nor its hypothetical historical background (a necessary thing as a constructor finds in the end, both for the satisfactory construction of the word-form, and for the giving of an illusion of coherence and unity to the whole)" (Tolkien 1997, 210). Looking at how Görgey constructs language in the series is beyond the scope of this paper, but I would like to emphasize that what is present on the linguistic level is only one brick of the worldbuilding and an indicator of what interests the author on the thematic level.

In Görgey's novel series, the relationship between individuals, between individuals and community, and among communities is as important a focal point as the relation among past, present, and future, including the influence of history, (religious) tradition, and myths on individuals and communities. As an SF work, it explores the possibilities of the future; however, this inquiry is tied onto looking at what – or rather what kind – the reference point is. The future and the present are dependent on the past, and in this work the question is whether the future is shaped by an unchanging, cemented tradition or by a living tradition that is capable of readjustment and transformation. Görgey is interested in exploring what kind of past, what kind of tradition would be able to sustain a community. Can we consider anything tradition if it keeps changing and seems to be losing its original form?

The above concerns are fundamental in Christianity and Judaism, and the way they are presented in this work reveals these religious-cultural roots. As early as the beginning of the first volume, we learn that the sacred text of the community at issue, the Kaven, is the so-called Bokra, which developed from the Bible. It is a rewritten version that was created on the planet Nies. It omitted many parts that were irrelevant to the new generations who did not know Earth. Then the remaining parts were thematically rearranged and completed with commentaries, whose number is ever increasing, making the Bokra grow like a tree (Görgey 2011, 70).

Heritage is thus very important to the Kaven, but it fulfils its purpose only if it can stay relevant to the community. Its content is sacred, but it needs explanation to become something to live by. It must also be practical, since the principles and values

that a text focuses on should offer practical help to people in their everyday lives. This is why parts that have grown irrelevant and impractical for a community existing in a changing environment are cut, and this is why it may grow, too. New situations may demand new solutions, and a transforming environment may require the reinterpretation of outdated guidelines. The ever-growing sacred book is discernibly based on "how the incessant interpretation of the Torah grows first into Mishnah and then the Talmud" (Görgey 2015).[3] Not surprisingly, the Kaven itself shows signs of a very closed, orthodox community, which is characterized by not only its shared set of rituals and its unique administrative system, but also a strict marriage policy and the irreversibility of exiting the community – something that one of the focalizing characters, Giin, is fighting against.

The changing of a tradition is naturally of interest to Görgey, who must have contemplated this issue as a congregational minister. One of the greatest challenges of the 21st century for Christian churches is to find a working strategy that will enable them to survive as living communities. But is the wisest strategy to rely on tradition? Or is clinging to traditions rigidly counterproductive because new generations can be engaged with only by reconsidering and ever more flexibly reinterpreting a community's heritage?

Görgey imagines a Kaven that qualifies as an ideal community in the Biblical sense; that is, a community made up of people "whose lives are shared. Whether they realize that or not, the strings of their lives are so tightly intertwined that one individual's acts may destroy or, on the contrary, save others; [in this community] *every* act has an importance from the perspective of the whole community" (Görgey 2007a, 201). While this idea comes from Görgey's 2007 study, every reader of her series is aware of it, as Giin is portrayed as a famous Bokra-commenting safir (that is, high-ranking officer), and his Bokra-interpretation and their re-interpretations and discussions are recurring elements in the novels. Interdependence within a community is ingrained into its members, and they learn as children that "people always depend on each other, and thus we are all responsible for others" (Görgey 2011, 68). This idea, however, is often experienced as an unbearable burden for a member, which is shown via another character, Yaan's example. Yaan suffers so terribly from this interdependence and responsibility that he decides to leave the community (just like many members who reach adulthood and as such are granted this opportunity); however, these principles have been so strongly ingrained in his personality that his actions are defined by them even when he lives outside the Kaven.

[3] In each case when a source published in Hungarian is quoted, it is presented in my own translation.

The community itself, of course, is not perfect, as it includes the human factor. Human fallibility cannot be automatically erased just because a community is based on principles that may ensure integrity for most of its members; what is more, a community may make a problematic decision on principle. The former is exemplified by Yaan in the first tetralogy, as he makes the decision to leave the community because he cannot cope with his own father's rigid despotism. The latter is showcased by one of the central conflicts: the Kaven is divided by the challenge that many of those who left the community would like to return. The Kaven has a zero-tolerance policy towards those who left, to keep the community pure and impervious to outside effects; however, this policy clearly has very palpable negative consequences. For instance, the number of suicides among those who left is terrifyingly high, and this phenomenon sharpens the question of the responsibility of the rejecting community.

Decisions are at the heart of each volume in this series – so much so that in the second tetralogy we read the story of the same characters spanning in the same period, except that in certain life situations they make different choices, and thus it becomes evident what consequences one decision may have even if one does not notice the weight of the choice when it is made. In addition, all three central characters – exactly because of their relation to the Kaven – are utterly aware of the importance of these decisive moments, contemplating possible outcomes in their inner monologues or in their conversations with others, so the readers' attention is consistently directed to this aspect of the narrative. The novels foreground one's attitude to one's own decisions, which invites the reconsideration of earlier choices. Rethinking the past, naturally, does not negate a bad decision, but as the series suggests, it does give a person an opportunity to ask for forgiveness and atone for what was done or to grant forgiveness and accept atonement. The parallel yet divergent trajectories in the alternate universes indicate that only when we know the bigger, more complete picture may we interpret what a certain decision may mean. This idea is confirmed at the end of *Csodaidők*, by a genuine Tolkienesque eucatastrophe, that is, "a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur" (Tolkien 2008, 77).

As Kathleen Dubs argues, the Boethian interpretation of this grace – divine providence – provides the key to understanding Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1981, 35) because "Boethius presents the philosophical issues quite apart from any link to Christian history (the Creation, the Fall, the Passion, etc.). For Tolkien, who was creating his own mythos, his own history, such an independent presentation was essential" (ibid., 35). Görgey follows Tolkien in her mythopoetic endeavors, and while she too relies on concepts that are fundamental in Christianity, she also makes sure not to present Christian propaganda even in the closures of her two tetralogies. Providence,

in Dubs's (1981) explanation of Boethius's position, is invisible to humans, who are capable of comprehending only fate. But "[a]lthough some events seem discordant or chaotic from our temporal perspective, they are not, because they remain subject to the order which proceeds from providence" (ibid., 36). Realizing this truth, Boethius' definition of "chance as an unexpected event brought about by a concurrence of causes which had other purposes in view" (Boethius 1962 quoted in Dubs 1981, 37) likewise becomes comprehensible.

Such unexpected "chance," which positively reinterprets the closures, provides the eucatastrophic turn at the end of the Görgey's two tetralogies, when all three focalizing characters learn about unforeseen, miraculously emerging facts that reinterpret both their pasts and their possible futures. This narrative strategy compels the reader to revisit the plot and especially the resolution of the first tetralogy in the light of the second, comparing the various characters' choices and the resulting consequences, which surely provokes thinking about free will, fate, and providence, as well as the connection between the individual and the community.

Creating a biblical community in a fantastic – and moreover science fictional – space is a theology-based thought experiment. As Görgey notes about the Reformed Church she served, one of its main "diseases" is that "out of its critical communities, only the family remained, but even that is a dying one" (Görgey 2007a, 202). But if we keep witnessing a gradual decline, can we imagine the revival of the biblical type of community in a techno-oriented future, which may work against interpersonal relations and strengthen the process of alienation?

Scrutinizing these issues, Görgey does have her eye on the future, but even though technological progress and alienation have become favored topics in SF, her approach, while acknowledging the interrelation of these two phenomena,[4] does not focus on it. In *Csodaidők* and *Időcsodák*, alienation is not primarily the result of scientific and technological progress but of people's thirst for power, which plays people off against people and cultures against cultures. Technological evolution, however, amplifies the effects of destruction – a notion already present in Tolkien's work[5] – from the planetary to the galactic scale.

[4] The novel *Hazatérők* [Returners], however, makes it clear that technology is a threat to interpersonal relations and may prevent immersion in the moment. The high-tech Nies society, positioned as quite a utopian one, voluntarily choose "slow" life despite possessing the technology of teleportation. They also prohibit human representation in art, which in practice means the prohibition of sending pictures showing people, arguing that allowing such a practice would lead to depersonalized communication (Görgey 2010, 188).

[5] The dangerous implications of technological progress are already addressed by Tolkien when he associates Sauron with the machines and thus "emphasizes the intersection of the desire for power with the technological impulse" (Twohig 2021).

Csodaidők expresses the conviction that it is the biblical, living community, if anything, that may keep humans humane in an alienating world. The three characters who serve as rotating focalizers of the various chapters show various aspects of this connection. In this respect, Yaan's trajectory is the most revealing, as at the end of the first volume of the series, he is the one who leaves his family and thus the whole community of the Kaven. His consequent decisions cause him to spiral into crisis situations, testing his conscience; yet even in the most inhuman times of war, while accepting the consequences of his separation from the Kaven, it is his tight relation to the community and the principles ingrained in him by that community that allow him to make the right calls in crises. These decisions eventually grant him the opportunity not to remain entirely separate from the community that at his core defines what kind of person he considers himself to be: Yaan Raas from the Kaven and not Paul Marty, his newly acquired identity outside the Kaven.

The living community, which assures one's integrity, functions on the model of the biblical community. It is also organized on similar principles as a Paleo-Christian community, "which considers the Scripture as the center of not only their religion but also of their life and historical thinking" (Görgey 2007a, 201). Similarly to what the Bible was to these early Christian communities, the sacred book of the Kaven is the Talmud-like, ever-growing, post-Christian version of the Bible, and its diachronic quality comes from the continuity guaranteed by the community (Görgey 2007a). As Görgey posits, coexisting and having a dialogue with the sacred text results in a community in "dialogue with the earlier generations, whose experiences and 'sacred text' help interpret the present, face its challenges, and create their own sacred text" (2007a, 201).

What is clear on the level of principles – the need to update tradition – may be very problematic in practice. The Kaven members, for instance, keep their heritage alive by upholding every part of their tradition, but this turns them into a very closed community. Görgey approaches this issue as a theologist and derives the solution from the Bible's theological commentary: the community may be broadened, as this is exactly what happened when the New Testament was created. The tree-parable of the New Testament posits that extending a community should be understood as grafting in a tree, which allows the new and wild shoot to "share in the nourishing sap from the olive root" (Rome 11,17). Keeping this biblical verse and its significance in Görgey's theological work directs our attention to the motif of the og tree in her SF series.

The og is not autochthonous on Kaven land; it comes from the planet of the historical ancestors, and people in the Kaven naturalized it together with other plants. The og represents unity, and it is able to give an instant sense of homeliness: as its red color differentiates it from the vegetation that is autochthonous outside the planet Nies, every

Kaven member immediately notices it. Wherever such a tree is planted and nurtured, people belonging to the Kaven live. The tree alone is able to embody one of the central ideas of the Bokra, the assurance that "you are not alone".

This embodiment of the sense of community is not unlike how the White Tree of Gondor functions in Tolkien's narratives. As Michael Cunningham (2006, 8) argues, the tree is a "potent symbol of fecundity and regeneration of form [and …] has long been associated with a perception of divinity and the riches lavished upon the rulers of men". The tree thus signals not only the health of the sacred king but, by extension, also the health of his community. The og tree has a function akin to this, as the blossoming of any og tree embodies the power of the metaphorical kingdom that is linked to the sacred power associated with Nies, whence the Kaven originate.

Old og trees are especially capable of communicating this sense of belonging to a community. There are trees that literally come from the Nies and were replanted in the new planet, and one of the big og trees is claimed to have originated from the grave of the famous ancestor Endeau (Görgey 2011, 310). The og bridges temporal and interplanetary distance, which suggests that the community itself should exhibit the same nature, in a ceaseless dialogue with the community separated from them by time and space.

The tree shows this connection as a physical, organic symbol: the replanted tree belongs both to Nies and the other planet where it now grows; it links planets and parts of the community, making it visible on a material level that this relation is a living one: the tree originally nourished by the ancient homeland can continue to grow in the new land. It connects death and life: the tree growing out of a grave revives on a new planet, and the live tradition defines the community's ritual heritage, according to which members of a family plant a tree to honor the memory of a deceased person. As a tree becomes more voluminous, it also reflects the community's imperative to develop and becomes the symbol of the ever-changing and growing Bokra, with which the community is in constant dialogue. The interpretation of the og as standing for eternal life (Görgey 2010, 246) is thus confirmed and enriched by the scene in which the third focalizer, Judy, finds a small stone placed in memory of Andreas the Great on his grave and is unsure how to read the old engraving on it. She cannot decide whether it should be read as "og" or "a.g.," which makes the og tree the symbol of eternal life interchangeable with the reference to the first line of the funeral prayer ("Ateenęma Gaadra," that is, "thank you, God").

At this point let me refer back to the connection noted earlier between Tolkien's and Görgey's quasi-secular use of Christian ideas to avoid reductive interpretation. While Görgey's SF centers around a community that may be labelled as religious, The Bokra-following Kaven does not exactly follow a religion similar to those of the

established Christian churches of our present-day reality. The Kaven is a society that has strong ties to God in their rituals, and many members also understand belonging to the community as following a religion, too; however, it is a community that shares a common set of moral principles but is much more secular than a(n ideally functioning) Christian community. Some of the people respected by the community are known from the Bible, and those are joined by other important figures, like the Kaven-founding Andreas the Great and his contemporaries, Mikel the Great and Endeau the Great. God (Gaadra) is present in rituals and in set phrases. Even though the Bokra is a modified version of the Bible, the reshapers of the sacred text have become venerated, prophet-like figures. What people know about these characters is partly the past, various pieces of which are proved. Some other details for a long time seem mythical and unrealistic due to their hyperbolic nature, which is explained by the great respect these characters have. This ambiguity is explored and reshaped as the story unfolds.

The enlightened (though spiritual) Kaven community is characterized by its critical attitude to its own myths. This portrayal aims to demonstrate that a technologically developed, science-oriented future is likely to result in a humanity with ways of thinking that are informed by natural sciences. This is as important an aspect of depicting the community as all the other elements that aim to challenge the mainstream SFF topos that there is an inherent contrast between religiosity and logical thinking/technology. People living in the Kaven not only use high-tech products; they are the people who develop these technologies, manufacturing various high-tech vehicles and devices (especially before the war). The Kaven families involved in these businesses are economic world powers, and studying IT is an integral part of their education. Görgey undoubtedly intends to convey her conviction that "religiousness equals neither dumbness nor weakness" (Görgey in Bolla 2009).

Myths are, nevertheless, important components of community building and futuristic worldbuilding alike, aiming to deconstruct the contradiction between "the mythical world view of churches" and "the scientific world view of the modern world" that Görgey thinks is "unsupportable" (Görgey in Bolla 2009). As she argues, one cannot change one's world view depending on context, since "such an attitude would force a harmful duality in thinking, which is absolutely unsupportable when, for instance, we face scientists or people with an interest in natural sciences;" what is more, we do so while "we give up the enormous potential symbols have, even though these could replace the mythical elements, and their relevance would be more meaningful for the outsiders as well" (Görgey in Bolla 2009).

In her SF work, Görgey validates most of the myths present in her fictive world, but by doing so, she also pulls these narratives out of the category of myth: she makes

it clear that what were thought of as myths are, in fact, based on historical facts, and she sharpens the mythical mist into history, which is capable of freshly interacting with the present. The conviction that the planet Nies must exist somewhere even though no one can locate it will be demystified by finding the planet accidentally.

Görgey also weaves an elaborate myth around the notion of longevity, reminiscent of the Tolkienian concept of longevity, which differentiates between several types of lifespans. In Tolkien's world, human's average life span is contrasted with different kinds of longevity. He has immortal characters, such as Gandalf, Saruman, or Sauron (Bassham ms., 3), while "Elves live for millennia, perhaps eons [and] thus possess remarkable 'longevity'" (ibid., 4) that Tolkien sees as "serial longevity" (ibid., 5). To these categories are added the Númenoreans, who were granted particularly long lives, spanning several centuries. In a similar fashion, while Görgey does not introduce any immortal characters, she gives Kaven people a longevity that is surprisingly long compared to the typical human lifespan. This average of one hundred and fifty years is dwarfed by the extreme longevity of several centuries attributed to certain mythical characters. Yet the possibility of extreme longevity is considered an exaggeration due to the mythical distance and the veneration of the respected figures. It is substantiated only after an encounter with the Nies people but turns out to be a rare phenomenon in the Nies community, too.

Finding the Nies demystifies some parts of a mythical past and confirms the existence of the miraculous. It also strengthens the link with the Tolkienian mythopoesis when we learn that people with extreme longevity on Nies also have what we may call the gift of the Dunédain in Tolkien's mythopoesis: the gift of choosing the time of their death, exemplified by the scene in which Aragorn decides to go beyond the world, saying "I am the last of the Númenoreans and the latest King of the Elder Days; and to me has been given not only a span thrice that of Men of Middle-earth, but also the grace to go at my will and give back the gift. Now, therefore, I will sleep" (Tolkien, "Here follows a part of the tale of Aragorn and Arwen" – Tolkien 2004, 1062).

The reception of romances with mythical characters also transforms due the discovery of the Nies. Shine Meron and Anna's romance is revealed to have been less fabulously romantic than literary heritage suggests, as it was a marriage arranged for practical, political reasons. Another love story familiar to the Kaven people evokes the past in a very specifically Tolkienian manner. In the so-called Siara-song, the female protagonist Siara falls in love with and marries a long-living man, which evokes the elven Galadriel and the Dunédain Aragorn's romance, as well as its diegetic mythical prefiguration, the romance of the elven Lúthien and the mortal Beren, which appears in several of Tolkien's works and also as a separate narrative titled *Beren and Lúthien*,

edited by Christopher Tolkien (2017). The Siara-song exhibits a less idealizing approach, though, as Siara always feels her beloved distant, and love in itself is not able to bridge the gap between extreme longevity and mortality, despite the fact that Siara survives her husband, who dies in battle. In this story, extreme longevity may not be given up, as the romance is not mixed with a magical world view, which is explicable with its function: the ballad closes with a Kaven hymn, turning the song into a story teaching about one's goals and commitment to community. Yet this gap, bridged by magic in Tolkien, will be resolved with a scientific solution at the end of *Csodaidők*.

Myths may serve even as keys to scientific breakthroughs, the series suggests. The mysterious Maareen syndrome is an incurable, genetical autoimmune disease that affects only Kaven members (Görgey 2011, 396). When the doctor Doron comes up with a hypothesis that what triggers it is linked to extreme longevity, extreme longevity still belongs to the sphere of myths, and thus the hypothesis is discarded by Judy as scientifically ridiculous and unsupportable. Yet when it turns out that extreme longevity is real (though rare), Doron's hypothesis becomes credible and is later verified. Gaining actual proof about the past turns most (but not all) mythical heritage into history, shedding light on how what survives as myth may still carry significant, life-changing knowledge and truth, and generating a new belief and understanding that knowing the past indeed contributes to building a better future.

Readers of the series may realize another significant element of the Siara-song at the end of the first tetralogy. Siara's trajectory in terms of her family history shows several analogies with Yaan's. In the war, Siara loses her partner (her husband) and both her children, similarly to Yaan, who in the war loses his wife and his child, and he also thinks that he has lost his adopted child. Görgey makes us realize the parallelism and explains the closure of the ballad, highlighting its ending stanza, then writes Yaan's story in a way that turns that hopeful stanza into reality when it is revealed that Yaan is not alone after all. The person of the future will be seen as an integrated part of the ancient myth by repeating it and confirming its promised hopeful futurity. Bridging the past and the future, Yaan is an example of how the power of a living community may be experienced.

Yaan corresponding to a diegetic mythic archetype is just one example of how Görgey uses archetypes from well-known myths and religions. Yaan's trajectory may be interpreted as one mirroring that of the prodigal son from the Bible, suggesting that here the whole community of the Kaven must act like a father, showing forgiveness and acceptance. In the second tetralogy, *Időcsodák*, Giin is given a storyline that strongly resembles Christ's narrative of suffering and self-sacrifice, keeping even the motif of resurrection from death thanks to the futuristic technology of the series. The storyline

set in the refugee camp alludes both to our present-day refugee crises and the story of the persecuted people of the Jews in the Bible.

Set in wartime, the three protagonists' stories center around loss and focus on the same motifs as the Book of Lamentations, the biblical text Görgey wrote several studies about (2005; 2006; 2007b): the relation between historical catastrophes and stories of human suffering; communal roles related to grieving; and the importance of rituals and heritage. Like the Book of Lamentations, this series may be categorized as survival literature (the best-known subcategory of which is Holocaust literature), and as such, it shows that such a story is always intertwined with the topos of the God-forsaken community (granted that the community in question is religious). Similarly to the biblical text, *Csodaidők* also focuses in its closing section on whether the separation from God is permanent or whether one may return to one's father – understood in Görgey's fiction as the community. Based on the teachings of the Scripture it is perhaps easy to decide whether anyone who has stepped off the narrow path may be received back once they have repented and desire the reunion. This is, after all, what the parable of the prodigal son teaches us. This parable may be read in various ways, of which I would like to highlight one interpretation that may be especially relevant in relation to *Csodaidők*. In Zsolt Kozma's interpretation, this parable may be interpreted in the context of Israel and the diaspora, as a result of which the biblical text is to be understood as the parable of leaving the holy nation (Kozma in Benyik 2003, 177).

In *Csodaidők*, the Kaven community has a dual role: it is the surviving diaspora of the Nies community, but it is also in the position of the holy nation in relation to those who left it. It may be considered as the holy nation because for a long time the Nies functions only as a mythological, fictive place: a place whose past existence has never been truly doubted but is considered to have been destroyed. Stories about the Nies remind us of the Atlantis myth, especially in the way the Kaven people trace back their fundamental heritage, the Bokra, to the Nies society. In the Atlantis myth – and its Tolkienian version, the myth of Númenor[6] – the sin that causes the fall of that developed civilization, oppressing others (Lynch 2018, 36), is clearly definable; the Nies, in contrast, seems a more idealized civilization, characterized by almost Edenic traits. Yet the Nies is not without sin – or at least a debatable decision – either: it purposefully isolated itself from the rest of the world, thus allowing itself to be erased from the reality of the human world. It has survived as a living community but only by cutting all ties with human civilization, which is a political decision aimed at securing peace and thus

[6] Tolkien specifically associates Númenor with Atlantis in several of his letters. See letters 131, 144, 151, 154, 156, 163, 227, 252, 257, 276, 294 (Tolkien 2023).

survival for the people on the planet (while forsaking those on other planets). However, when a small group of Kaven people meets the Nies society by chance, the issue of the holy nation and the diaspora emerges again and poses questions of conscience. Eventually, the Nies's decision to support the Kaven also has a positive influence on the Kaven's policy on how to relate to those who departed from the community.

The question of whether a new, accepting policy will be enough to reconstruct an utterly broken, disintegrated community that would be able to keep its heritage remains seemingly unanswered at the end. It is evident that the focal characters were socialized in the Kaven, and thus the opportunity to rebuild the society is invaluable to them. But the younger generations have very different connections to the community. The closure contemplates the likely fate of Emily, who by blood belongs to the Raas family of the Kaven but never received the kind of education that such members receive by tradition. She seems to be rootless, and the Raas family feels that they are losing her. This is where we leave the narrative – except that Görgey's unique mythopoetical solutions offer some confirmation that the changes depicted may effectively contribute to rebuilding the community, even among the younger generations.

With her chosen pen name and her foreword, Görgey positions her whole SF series as if it were a product from her fictive world. This mythopoesis is made more complex by a change that was generated by necessity: Animus publishing published only the first two volumes of the series, so the rest of the series appeared through self-publication, and the name of the publisher was changed to Shremeya, one of the Nies-founded planets in Görgey's imaginary universe. The front cover shows Raana Raas as author, and we soon learn that the Raas family is a central one in the narrative, so the pen name is a mythopetical tool. However, we also learn that given names in a family recur from generation to generation, so we cannot possibly know which Raana is the one writing this family history. Retrospectively, however, certain components of the foreword hint at the part of the story that was not written.

The author Raana is none other than Emilie, who learns about her family roots at the end of the tetralogy but does not feel herself connected to the Kaven community and is reluctant to listen to her Kaven name Raana. The family is convinced that she will break away from the community once she is 18 and is allowed to leave, but the foreword reveals that she does not lose ties with the Kaven. She is the family chronicler, writing her books in the literary language of the Kaven, Nitan, and uses her Kaven name as author. The foreword is written apropos of the new edition in the Lish language for an audience outside the Kaven, as a step towards cultural bridging. Raana refers to her own rootlessness in past tense and reveals her emotional connection to the Kaven, claiming that she went through a transformation while writing her book (Görgey 2011,

7). She connects this observation with a Bokra verse and its commentary, placing the emphasis on the biblical dimension of mythopoesis by recalling that each word is creation, and each act of storytelling is recreation (ibid., 8). This understanding directs attention to the speaker – that is, the narrator Raana – and completes the fictive world of *Csodaidők* and *Időcsodák* (in which Raana's name is preceded by the abbreviation *Sf.*, standing for the rank *safir*, revealing more than an emotional connection to the Kaven) and also completes the interpretation about the relationship between the sacred book and the community that holds it sacred. The two tetralogies may be seen as elaborated, community-shaping texts that illuminate the teachings of the Bokra as the Haggadah makes the teachings of the Torah easier to understand by using various tools, such as tales, myths, legends, miracle narratives, anecdotes, parables, proverbs, word-plays, similes, etc. ("Haggada"). The novel series builds the Bokra; it is a fresh branch of the symbolic og tree, whose roots, I believe, interlock with the roots of the white tree of Gondor, too.

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