

THE HOBBIT

DEUS EX MACHINA & EUCATASTROPHE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Text-to-text connections
- Text-to-world connections
- Text-to-self connections

Sources:

Fluit, Chris. "Eucatastrophe." 2008.

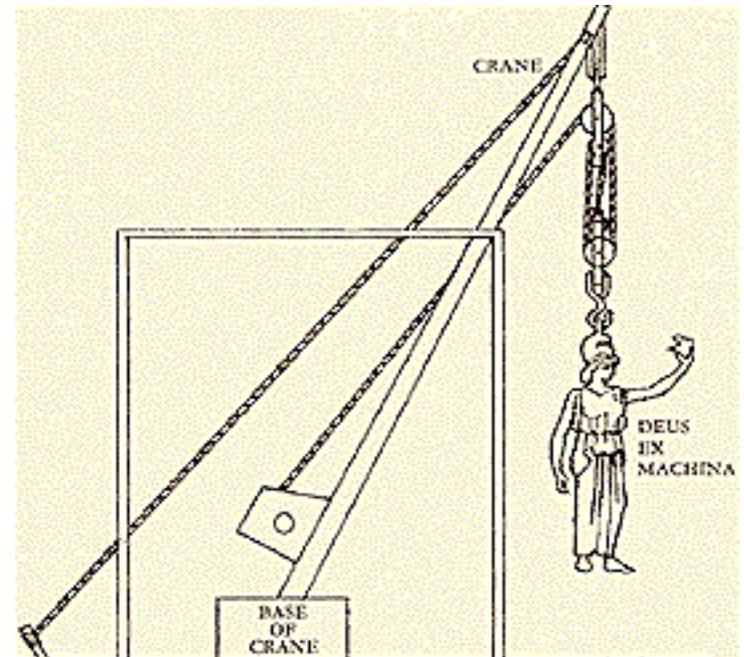
Olsen, Corey. *Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit*. 2012.

Rahel, Julie. *Tolkien's Eucatastrophe*. 2013.

Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy Stories." 1947.

DEUS EX MACHINA

- Deus ex machina – God from the machine
- Refers to Greek theater when a god was mechanically brought on stage to resolve the plot.
- The hero is saved from doom
- It is viewed negatively
 - Shows a lack of creativity
 - Is not believable
- Strains *suspension of disbelief*
 - Phrase coined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1817



DEUS EX MACHINA: *EXAMPLES*

- MacGuyver
- The Wizard of Oz
- Spongebob Squarepants Movie



EUCATASTROPHE: DEFINITION

- *Eucatastrophe*: good catastrophe
 - Greek *eu* (good) and *catastrophe* (destruction)
- *Eucatastrophe* is more than a happy ending. It is a sudden joyous “turn” in the story (for there is no true end to any fairy-story). It is a miraculous grace, never to be counted on to recur.
- *Eucatastrophe* does not deny the existence of sorrow and failure, but it denies universal final defeat, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy.



EUCATASTROPHE: *EXAMPLE*

- C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
 - The arrival of Father Christmas



DEUS EX MACHINA & EUCATASTROPHE

SIMILARITIES

- Sudden
- Unexpected
- Miraculous
- Happy Ending

TOLKIEN'S ESSAY

"ON FAIRY STORIES"

- There is no true end to any fairy-story.

“Redeemed Man is still man. Story, fantasy still go on, and should go on...The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die” (Tolkien 13).



TOLKIEN'S ESSAY

"ON FAIRY STORIES"

- The peculiar quality of the "joy" in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a "consolation" for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, "Is it true?"
- I would venture to say that approaching the Christian Story from this direction, it has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God redeemed the corrupt making-creatures, men. The Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories. They contain many... and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable *eucatastrophe*.
- The Birth of Christ is the *eucatastrophe* of Man's history. The Resurrection is the *eucatastrophe* of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy.