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01:28:11.830 --> 01:28:13.164

Tim Lenz: Alright we are!

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01:28:13.800 --> 01:28:17.500

Tim Lenz: We're at the top of the hour, so feel free to get started.

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01:28:18.140 --> 01:28:19.360

William Thompson: All right. Thank you.

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01:28:23.340 --> 01:28:30.060

William Thompson: All right. Well, thank you for being here. Thank you, Alicia, Alicia, for moderating, and I

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01:28:30.360 --> 01:28:37.289

William Thompson: I'm really grateful that the conference decided to do this as a hybrid event, because made it

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01:28:37.690 --> 01:28:41.940

William Thompson: very. It made it possible for me to attend it all, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to.

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01:28:43.335 --> 01:28:45.994

William Thompson: So what I want to talk about today is

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01:28:49.096 --> 01:28:54.030

William Thompson: the sub creator in the secondary world. And I want to look at the hobbit as as a middle text.

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01:28:54.540 --> 01:29:01.870

William Thompson: And I I do want to address some issues around composition, but I think those.

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01:29:02.560 --> 01:29:14.890

William Thompson: you know, are are handled pretty extensively elsewhere, especially in the history of the Hobbit, by John Radcliffe. What I want to try and do is address some of the issues around composition in the context of

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01:29:15.040 --> 01:29:20.679

William Thompson: Tolkien's writing process, or at least how I've come to understand the writing process

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01:29:21.352 --> 01:29:25.869

William Thompson: of the hobbit. So that's what I'm going to try and do so. This 1st slide.

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01:29:26.453 --> 01:29:32.460

William Thompson: The the picture you're seeing there is actually a it's supposed to be a picture of Nimrodel

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01:29:32.820 --> 01:29:33.520

William Thompson: and

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01:29:34.760 --> 01:29:39.522

William Thompson: where I where in the city where I'm where I live in Edmonton, there's a

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01:29:40.780 --> 01:29:46.660

William Thompson: It's called the Matard Conservatory, and it's a series of 3 glass pyramids that they've built

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01:29:46.970 --> 01:29:48.882

William Thompson: for the purpose of

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01:29:49.540 --> 01:30:03.849

William Thompson: yeah. Housing all kinds of different interesting and exotic plants. And what they'll do is they'll put up a they'll have a. They have a show pavilion, and they'll often, you know, do something interesting in the show pavilions in one year they did, Tolkien. This was

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01:30:04.170 --> 01:30:09.490

William Thompson: oh, maybe 10 or 15 years ago, and and they created some very interesting

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01:30:11.360 --> 01:30:19.929

William Thompson: characters that were planted all over the all over the show pavilion, and you know variously, and you know, inside all this foliage look pretty amazing.

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01:30:23.450 --> 01:30:32.769

William Thompson: So, coming between his tales of the 1st stage and Lord of the Rings, JR. Tolkien's the hobbit presents a curious position as a middle text.

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01:30:33.520 --> 01:30:36.879

William Thompson: It's noteworthy for its lucky main character, Mr. Baggins.

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01:30:37.150 --> 01:30:40.430

William Thompson: and it's sometimes intrusive narrative voice.

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01:30:43.230 --> 01:30:59.399

William Thompson: and and when I 1st started thinking about the the hobbit as a middle text, I I thought about it as a way, or perhaps you know, Tolkien's means of, you know, finding a way from his tales of the 1st stage, and do something into into an into a new kind of narrative. And so

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01:30:59.770 --> 01:31:06.510

William Thompson: initially, I was thinking that he was using his tales of the 1st stages as, or using the hobbit as a way to map

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01:31:06.530 --> 01:31:12.660

William Thompson: some of the tales of the 1st age at the details of the tales of the 1st stage onto a new kind of narrative.

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01:31:12.820 --> 01:31:22.089

William Thompson: And I and I'm not entirely sure about that. Which is why I sort of shifted my focus to more towards this rating process.

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01:31:25.204 --> 01:31:33.479

William Thompson: And I want to talk about. As I said, the middle position of the hobbit, but also this idea of middlelessness.

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01:31:33.670 --> 01:31:38.160

William Thompson: that being the conference theme, the idea of middlelessness with respect to the hobbit itself.

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01:31:41.620 --> 01:31:43.919

William Thompson: I'm just going to switch slides.

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01:31:45.240 --> 01:31:47.020

Tim Lenz: Sorry. Yep.

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01:31:48.930 --> 01:31:59.979

William Thompson: So when I 1st started thinking about the hobbit as the middle text, i i i think I went to the letter to Milton Waldman almost by accident.

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01:32:00.120 --> 01:32:03.040

William Thompson: and found this passage from Tolkien.

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01:32:04.010 --> 01:32:12.910

William Thompson: as he explains his his secondary world, and and kind of the development of that world to Walton in this letter.

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01:32:16.430 --> 01:32:21.700

William Thompson: and and this is where Tolkien claims that the hobbit was conceived quite independently.

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01:32:22.890 --> 01:32:40.410

William Thompson: quite conceived, independently of the tales of the 1st age. But he does identify the hobbit as the middle text in between the tales, 1st age and the later Lord of the Rings. And and so, you know, with that in mind, I thought, well, I mean, if if Tolkien is calling it the middle text, I mean, that's certainly helpful.

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01:32:40.480 --> 01:32:43.080

William Thompson: And and certainly he was seeing it that way.

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01:32:43.799 --> 01:32:53.339

William Thompson: If not, if not the entire time he was trying to. He was writing the book, and then later, but he certainly saw it that way at this point

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01:32:53.830 --> 01:32:56.480

William Thompson: in this letter to Waldman, in the

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01:32:57.900 --> 01:33:00.270

William Thompson: think that was 1,951 that letter.

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01:33:01.460 --> 01:33:04.540

William Thompson: So the hobbit gets identified both as a sequel to

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01:33:04.690 --> 01:33:10.589

William Thompson: the Tales of the 1st age, and of course, a prequel to the hobbit or prequel to the Lord of the Rings.

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01:33:11.950 --> 01:33:13.580

William Thompson: and it seems clear that

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01:33:15.480 --> 01:33:18.450

William Thompson: it seems clear that Tolkien is definitely developing

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01:33:18.540 --> 01:33:24.799

William Thompson: a new kind of story through the hobbit, and then later in Lord of the rings, but he doesn't actually determine

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01:33:24.960 --> 01:33:31.499

William Thompson: on, you know, a clear direction for Lord of the Rings until after he's been writing it for quite a while.

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01:33:40.910 --> 01:33:43.810

William Thompson: So some of these pictures I just threw in here for

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01:33:43.940 --> 01:33:46.150

William Thompson: entertainment's sake as much as anything else.

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01:33:46.230 --> 01:33:49.289

William Thompson: That's a photo from Peter Jackson's middle earth.

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01:33:54.230 --> 01:34:08.650

William Thompson: So here's a letter from Tolkien again to this one's to Stanley Unwin, and this is shortly after the publication of the Hobbit, and this is when Tolkien is trying to describe, or trying to think about writing a sequel to the hobbit.

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01:34:08.930 --> 01:34:20.619

William Thompson: And at this point, you know, he's had the request from the publisher, and he's starting to think about it, but he's also he also has in mind his tales of the 1st age, which at this point I think he also sends to to Waldman.

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01:34:23.600 --> 01:34:25.185

William Thompson: and I think one of the

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01:34:26.380 --> 01:34:43.919

William Thompson: One of the considerations I think, to make with respect to the hobbit and these tales of the 1st age with the with the tales of the 1st stage Tolkien. He doesn't really have an audience. Eventually he will send. He sends the jest of Baron and Lethian to Cs. Lewis, who responds with all kinds of comments

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01:34:44.370 --> 01:34:45.035

William Thompson: and

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01:34:47.990 --> 01:35:07.349

William Thompson: But really, Lewis, and then, of course, later, the later, the inklings, once they're meeting in a regular way, are really, you know, the audience, for certainly for Lord of the Rings, and for some of those early tales, but with a hobbit he conceived of a different audience. He began telling the stories, of course, to his children at Northmore Road.

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01:35:07.500 --> 01:35:15.140

William Thompson: and so a lot of what we see in the Hobbit, especially with those narrative asides that Tolkien

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01:35:16.060 --> 01:35:21.089

William Thompson: began to dislike, especially after the publication of the book. In 1,000 931,937

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01:35:23.000 --> 01:35:28.680

William Thompson: He was dealing with a different audience, his children, and then some family and friends, and so the

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01:35:29.600 --> 01:35:47.889

William Thompson: and I and I think that you know an awareness of the audience that Tolkien is conceiving of for the hobbit it's natural enough that some of his ideas place names things from the 1st stage are going to creep in, but he is trying to create a different kind of story, at least initially, and at least in his own mind.

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01:35:59.660 --> 01:36:02.759

William Thompson: Okay, the hobbit as equal.

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01:36:12.690 --> 01:36:22.830

William Thompson: Sorry. Just give me a second here, just just going back to Tolkien's letter to Stanley on one. He does say that he can't. He doesn't think he can think of anything more to say about Hobbits.

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01:36:22.990 --> 01:36:30.720

William Thompson: and it's not very long after this letter is written that he actually writes the the opening chapter for Lord of the Rings, the long expected party.

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01:36:34.350 --> 01:36:44.089

William Thompson: So in 1,937, or at this point, at least in Tolkien's mind. The hobbit is little more than an intrusion into this world that he's been working on since 1,917

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01:36:47.030 --> 01:37:06.019

William Thompson: to suggest that Tolkien was deliberately drawing on his tales of the 1st stage in the creation of the Hobbit is certainly something that many critics talk about, and John Radluff is one who certainly does the most extensive job in looking at early drafts of the hobbit and trying to determine.

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01:37:06.020 --> 01:37:19.739

William Thompson: you know where exactly Tolkien is drawing on those earlier myths, and how he ends up using them, and and even omitting, after the 1st draft, some of these very specific references, that, he added in the initial draft.

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01:37:23.620 --> 01:37:24.859

William Thompson: Now I think I've

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01:37:25.820 --> 01:37:31.780

William Thompson: the hobbit is sequel. What? What's on that? What, Alicia? Can you tell me? What's on that slide. I think I've lost my place here.

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01:37:32.726 --> 01:37:35.640

Tim Lenz: It's the quote about Gandalf, the dwarf.

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01:37:35.640 --> 01:37:36.660

William Thompson: Oh, yes.

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01:37:36.670 --> 01:37:48.049

William Thompson: right, this is the one from Ratala. That's right. Yeah. So as you can see in this in this passage, this is this is in the 1st draft of the the hobbit manuscript.

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01:37:48.070 --> 01:38:01.580

William Thompson: And you know, Radolouff explains that this is a. It's. It's essentially what's going to appear in the final draft. Although the names are are different, you can see that Gandalf, the name Gandalf is given to Thorin.

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01:38:02.076 --> 01:38:06.089

William Thompson: Gandalf, who later becomes Gandalf, is is named Blatterthan.

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01:38:06.380 --> 01:38:10.800

William Thompson: And then we have these other very specific references to

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01:38:11.700 --> 01:38:17.510

William Thompson: elements from the 1st age in the, in the initial draft of the hobbit, which are then later taken out.

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01:38:18.650 --> 01:38:19.550

William Thompson: and

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01:38:27.050 --> 01:38:45.739

William Thompson: and I think one of the one of the very telling references that Radluff points to is that reference to baron and tenuial. And this is actually something that Humphrey Carpenter talks about in his biography of Tolkien as well. This early reference to Baron and and Tenuial

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01:38:45.770 --> 01:38:52.859

William Thompson: in the 1st draft of the hobbit really does point directly back to the tales of the 1st age. And and I think.

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01:38:57.640 --> 01:39:01.680

William Thompson: yeah, he has flown. He's in referring to the necromancer.

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01:39:02.220 --> 01:39:07.369

William Thompson: Bladder then says that he has flown to another cat. Another darker place.

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01:39:08.140 --> 01:39:09.220

William Thompson: Geneuvial.

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01:39:10.600 --> 01:39:13.710

William Thompson: Yeah, baron and tenuial broke his power. So this.

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01:39:14.820 --> 01:39:19.460

William Thompson: it it seems to be, probably is a reference to Sauron at this point.

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01:39:19.560 --> 01:39:33.260

William Thompson: But even in the early drafts of Lord of the Rings in the in the early stages. Tolkien doesn't actually refer to Sauron until he understands or really fleshes out the idea of the ring as being central to

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01:39:33.330 --> 01:39:39.160

William Thompson: lord of the rings. There's a i, and and this is one that I have to find in the histories.

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01:39:39.230 --> 01:39:41.550

William Thompson: But it's an early conversation when

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01:39:42.506 --> 01:39:52.390

William Thompson: Frodo's name is still Bingo, and Bingo is having a conversation with Glorfindel, and it's Glorfindel who actually talks about the necromancer and the ring. So it's

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01:39:53.100 --> 01:39:56.410

William Thompson: it seems a bit half hearted, I guess, on Tolkien's part.

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01:39:56.871 --> 01:40:03.519

William Thompson: He's already been developing the tale of Luffy and tenuvial, and the character of Sauron is developing

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01:40:03.580 --> 01:40:07.090

William Thompson: as he keeps revising that tale so.

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01:40:07.380 --> 01:40:20.330

William Thompson: and I'm not sure. And this is something I'd have to check. Maybe somebody else knows this, whether or not in 1,936, 37 around, when the hobbit actually appears. Whether or not

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01:40:20.540 --> 01:40:31.817

William Thompson: Tolkien has kind of settled the myth of baron and tenuvial or Luthean, and the character of Sauron is is fully developed, as the you know, as that

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01:40:33.201 --> 01:40:37.848

William Thompson: the one who controls that the tower of Minostarith. I think it's called.

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01:40:38.440 --> 01:40:40.050

William Thompson: and there's a

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01:40:40.410 --> 01:40:45.127

William Thompson: Luthian comes to free baron, and whoever's left from the castle, and then

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01:40:46.190 --> 01:40:51.429

William Thompson: And then she confronts him, and then he turns into a bat and flies off. Some of that could be what

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01:40:53.200 --> 01:40:57.929

William Thompson: Tolkien is referring to in this early passage from the hobbit. But, like I said, it still seems a bit half-hearted.

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01:40:59.050 --> 01:41:16.499

William Thompson: and later, in a later letter, I'll I'll mention that in a bit. In a later letter, in 1,960, Tolkien claimed that the reference to the necromancer was really only incidental. It was just a plot device just to get Gandalf away from Bilbo and the dwarves because he needed to leave them alone.

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01:41:21.260 --> 01:41:25.310

William Thompson: Yeah, so many of these references are often kind of obscure.

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01:41:25.618 --> 01:41:34.550

William Thompson: But many are very direct, such as the reference to Elrond half Elven, the city of Gondolin, which is the 1st of Tolkien's myth that he myth that he developed in

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01:41:34.670 --> 01:41:36.590

William Thompson: 1917, 18.

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01:41:37.340 --> 01:41:37.985

William Thompson: And

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01:41:45.350 --> 01:42:03.530

William Thompson: yeah. And the the story of gondolin, which, of course, is named in the hobbit, is, as I said, one of the older myths. And and this story of Baron and Tenuville. It's it's evolving. So, as I said, I'm not sure at what point that myth is developed when at which he's writing the hobbit.

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01:42:05.220 --> 01:42:08.680

William Thompson: So, according to carpenter in the biography.

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01:42:09.010 --> 01:42:15.339

William Thompson: Tolkien had no intention that the bourgeois bourgeois, comfortable world of the Mr. Beggins

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01:42:16.050 --> 01:42:20.600

William Thompson: would be related in any way to the vast landscape of the Silmerilian.

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01:42:22.106 --> 01:42:25.230

William Thompson: Gradually, though, elements began to creep in.

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01:42:26.830 --> 01:42:48.779

William Thompson: and they do. But, as I said, I think still at this point Tolkien seems kind of half hearted in how much he's willing to actually use these tales of the 1st stage. And I guess when why I say half hearted, is because the the tales of the 1st age are his hobby. They're his. You know. What he later talks about is his secret vice, inventing languages, and these tales growing out of these languages.

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01:42:48.850 --> 01:42:52.520

William Thompson: It's so dear to him that

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01:42:53.730 --> 01:43:05.600

William Thompson: I don't think that he was really ready at this point to, you know, to talk fully about those about those myths. He does send them in drought form to Unwin, and he does write to Unwin and talk about

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01:43:06.342 --> 01:43:12.860

William Thompson: That he's he's very glad that he got some kind of approval from Unwin, because otherwise it would have been very crushing.

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01:43:17.250 --> 01:43:18.600

William Thompson: Okay.

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01:43:20.890 --> 01:43:30.800

William Thompson: so that's I guess some considerations of the hobbit as a as a sequel to tales of the 1st age, and I mean even Hobbit. Even even Hobbit, even Tolkien himself said

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01:43:30.880 --> 01:43:37.269

William Thompson: that Lord of the Rings was as much a sequel to the Silver Illion, or the tales of the 1st stage as it was

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01:43:37.280 --> 01:43:38.690

William Thompson: to the hobbits.

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01:43:41.520 --> 01:43:45.929

William Thompson: So the hobbit as prequel to lord of the rings. So this is actually

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01:43:45.990 --> 01:43:47.059

William Thompson: interesting.

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01:43:49.100 --> 01:43:54.200

William Thompson: of course we have the. We have the 1st edition of the Hobbit in 1,951

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01:43:54.260 --> 01:44:22.460

William Thompson: Tolkien sends a letter to Unwin with some revisions to the chapter riddles in the dark, and claims that, according to Humphrey Carpenter, he sent those changes to riddles in the dark, just as a way of offering some revisions and hoping for some comments. But Unwin, he just simply thought that these were revisions, and they went into the next edition of the book. So Tolkien was astonished to find that these revisions were already in place.

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01:44:22.460 --> 01:44:42.600

William Thompson: and in some ways, I mean in in some ways it almost makes it seem as though those revisions to the you know to the second edition are almost accidental in other ways. It's probably good that Unwin just accepted them. Given Tolkien's penchant for revising and revising and revising we they may not have ever seen the light of day.

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01:44:48.340 --> 01:44:53.689

William Thompson: So the so those those additions to

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01:44:53.750 --> 01:45:21.219

William Thompson: riddles in the dark. They entered the next edition of the Hobbit, and it all lines up much more neatly with the Lord of the Rings, certainly places the ring in a very different kind of position in retrospect, and it also lines up with the second chapter of Lord of the Rings, the shadow of the past in which Gandalf provides the history of the ring, and talks about Gollum, and and why Bilbo felt he needed to put a claim on the ring

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01:45:21.300 --> 01:45:22.690

William Thompson: almost right away.

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01:45:25.300 --> 01:45:45.840

William Thompson: So just, I said that, you know for Tolkien, he! He talks about these all all of these additions, or or sorry all of these references that pick up elements from the tales of the 1st age, and he does talk about them as being fairly incidental, and he does this in a letter to Christopher Breatherton.

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01:45:46.290 --> 01:45:50.140

William Thompson: in 1,964, and he details this

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01:45:50.660 --> 01:45:56.740

William Thompson: pretty carefully, talks about the veiled reference to the necromancer as being simply a plot device

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01:45:57.960 --> 01:46:00.970

William Thompson: whose function was hardly there to just get gandrals

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01:46:01.050 --> 01:46:06.410

William Thompson: leave Gandalf, and for Gandalf to leave Bilbo and the dwarfs to fend for themselves.

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01:46:07.350 --> 01:46:09.150

William Thompson: and

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01:46:09.910 --> 01:46:13.420

William Thompson: he talks about the the name Elrond, relating

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01:46:14.010 --> 01:46:19.519

William Thompson: the character of Elrond in the Hobbit, to elrond of the tales of the 1st stage being an accident.

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01:46:20.940 --> 01:46:26.489

William Thompson: and he said it was partly he used the name, partly owing to the difficulty

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01:46:26.930 --> 01:46:31.480

William Thompson: of constantly inventing good names for new characters.

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01:46:31.950 --> 01:46:35.510

William Thompson: and certainly Tolkien is looking back after 30 years

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01:46:35.700 --> 01:46:47.480

William Thompson: on the composition of the hobbit. So I mean, it could just be that he was just creating the narrative of composition in his own mind, the one that sort of agreed with, you know, his understanding of his own process.

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01:46:49.520 --> 01:47:14.859

William Thompson: So, whether prequel or sequel. The hobbit does occupy this middle place in Tolkien's mythology, and certainly the book itself has elements of middle-ness throughout which I think, speak to speak to Bilbo's development as a character and sort of how Bilbo fits into the world of this heroic world that he enters, which is.

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01:47:15.490 --> 01:47:20.199

William Thompson: which later becomes metal earth in Lord of the Rings.

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01:47:21.440 --> 01:47:25.129

William Thompson: So for Tom Shippey. Oh, I should switch slides here.

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01:47:28.000 --> 01:47:30.850

William Thompson: there we go, the hobbit and middle-ness.

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01:47:31.720 --> 01:47:38.749

William Thompson: So Bilbo is middle class, and he's middle-aged. Of course it is a children's book, and we've got a middle-aged protagonist.

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01:47:39.600 --> 01:47:46.670

William Thompson: Tom Shippey talks about Bilbo's journey as one in which he enters the realm of the fairy tale.

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01:47:47.470 --> 01:47:51.749

William Thompson: He describes Bilbo as both Akronistic and bourgeois.

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01:47:52.370 --> 01:48:05.810

William Thompson: and it's a way of positioning bilbo in relation to the world of fairy tale that that he enters, and this is from Chapter one of Shippey's book, Jrr. Tolkien, author of The Century. So I'll just summarize a few of his points

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01:48:14.030 --> 01:48:24.500

William Thompson: a couple of things that Shippey describes in terms of the world of the folk tale. He talks about the way in which Bilbo's adventure each of these chapters. He's sort of entering

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01:48:24.580 --> 01:48:37.419

William Thompson: deeper and deeper into the world of the fairy tale, and you know each chapter is introducing a different race of beings. And so it has this kind of cumulative, cumulative effect. As the book moves forward.

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01:48:39.280 --> 01:48:48.960

William Thompson: and, as I said, Shippie identifies Bilbo as both middle class and an anachronistic character, a Edwardian.

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01:48:49.240 --> 01:48:51.939

William Thompson: You're close to Victorian middle class.

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01:48:51.990 --> 01:49:04.219

William Thompson: a gentleman who finds himself in this strange world of fairy tales, and Bilbo himself actually identifies the world of fairy tales. On his 1st meeting with Gandalf, when he talks about the stories that Gandalf used to tell.

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01:49:04.690 --> 01:49:14.719

William Thompson: like the unexpected luck of widow sons. Bilbo is not necessarily a widow son, but he is certainly a lucky character, as we find as we go through the book.

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01:49:17.207 --> 01:49:23.790

William Thompson: should be claims, or should be, states that Bilbo is at 1st defined by time, by class.

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01:49:27.320 --> 01:49:30.169

William Thompson: by class, and by culture. He is English

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01:49:30.440 --> 01:49:32.889

William Thompson: and roughly Victorian to Edwardian.

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01:49:36.200 --> 01:49:57.970

William Thompson: And so we end up with these 2 sides to not only the world that Bilbo enters his own world of the the Edwardian gentleman as opposed to the fairytale world that forms the adventure with the dwarfs, but also the the divide in Bilbo's character. The divide between the the Token Bagan sides, which we see. And so they. So they, you know, since we have these.

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01:49:57.990 --> 01:50:00.770

William Thompson: these, these different sides happening

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01:50:00.790 --> 01:50:06.170

William Thompson: throughout the book in various ways, we have bilbo kind of in the middle, moving back and forth between them.

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01:50:08.480 --> 01:50:17.289

William Thompson: And Shippi also says, kind of at the end of that chapter, where he talks about the hobbit, he only spends one chapter on the hobbit in in that book

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01:50:17.320 --> 01:50:20.689

William Thompson: which I always thought was a bit unfortunate, but nonetheless.

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01:50:21.437 --> 01:50:25.009

William Thompson: He says that Tolkien wanted to bridge the gap

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01:50:25.790 --> 01:50:28.910

William Thompson: between the ancient world and the modern one.

803

01:50:29.220 --> 01:50:42.130

William Thompson: The Hobbits are the bridge, and of course this is what Tolkien discovers with in writing, Lord of the rings is really that it's the hobbits that are going to bring this whole story forward and really form a connection or form the the bond between

804

01:50:42.190 --> 01:50:49.799

William Thompson: this more modern anachronous, these more modern anachronous characters, and the the tales of the 1st stage.

805

01:50:51.790 --> 01:50:57.540

William Thompson: So for Bilbo, when we look at the hobbit, if we're going to, as I said, in terms of talking about middleiness.

806

01:50:57.982 --> 01:51:08.899

William Thompson: Bilbo's major, the major development for bilbo kind of happens or spans the large kind of middle of the book, essentially, from the meeting with Gollum to the meeting with Smaug.

807

01:51:08.980 --> 01:51:34.399

William Thompson: and I'll come back to that in just a minute. But those those 2 encounters really bracket Bilbo's development as character, and there is a significant shift in Bilbo's character at roughly the middle of the book, when the company are in the forest of Mirkwood, and they're separated after doing the after ex, doing the thing that they were explicitly told not to do, which is to leave the path.

808

01:51:34.540 --> 01:51:44.200

William Thompson: Bilbo finds himself alone in the forest, and he wakes to find a spider trying to bind him, and at that point he draws his sword and attacks the spider.

809

01:51:44.260 --> 01:51:47.230

William Thompson: and after he kills it he immediately faints.

810

01:51:54.083 --> 01:51:57.446

William Thompson: So when Bilbo wakes up in the forest, he

811

01:51:57.890 --> 01:52:01.969

William Thompson: As he, as he looks down at his sword, and he looks down at the spider. He feels as though

812

01:52:02.325 --> 01:52:13.880

William Thompson: you know the killing of the giant spider by himself, with no dwarves and no Gandalf, made a great difference to Mr. Bagan. So that's what I mean by the the shift in Bilbo's character. So again, it does happen roughly around the middle of the book.

813

01:52:16.120 --> 01:52:27.090

William Thompson: So we do have this tension between the took and the baggin sides of Bilbo's character, and that 1st appears, of course, in Chapter one, when the dwarves appear, and we 1st see it during the song of the dwarves.

814

01:52:27.280 --> 01:52:32.490

William Thompson: And this is when Bilbo 1st experiences this call to adventure.

815

01:52:32.850 --> 01:52:34.600

William Thompson: He.

816

01:52:36.090 --> 01:52:41.280

William Thompson: something Turkish, woke up inside him, and he wished to go see the mountains.

817

01:52:41.520 --> 01:52:51.389

William Thompson: hear the pine trees and the waterfalls, and wear a sword instead of a walking stick. So he has that he has that. You know that sense that there is this. We have the sense that there is this other side to him.

818

01:52:51.540 --> 01:52:54.980

William Thompson: and he suppresses it, though almost immediately.

819

01:52:56.430 --> 01:53:05.030

William Thompson: And there's a so this all happens in the in the context of the of the song of the dwarfs. But really it's in the context of poetry

820

01:53:05.090 --> 01:53:15.310

William Thompson: and writing. And what's interesting is that at the very beginning of the book we have Bilbo writing in his engagement tablet when he thinks Gandalf is going to come and visit

821

01:53:15.380 --> 01:53:28.909

William Thompson: Gandalf tea Wednesday, and then, by the end of the book we have Bilbo, who's actually writing poetry when they come in sight of his home right at the very end of the book. This is when Bilbo 1st recites the poem, the road goes ever ever on.

822
01:53:29.080 --> 01:53:33.730
William Thompson: So that's you know, that shift in terms of Bilbo's.

823
01:53:34.000 --> 01:53:39.920
William Thompson: you know, understanding or use of language in different ways, and certainly his ability to be a writer. A poet

824
01:53:39.960 --> 01:53:45.360
William Thompson: again speaks to the, you know, the development that has happened over the course of the book for Bilbo.

825
01:53:54.204 --> 01:54:00.276
William Thompson: So the fight with the spiders just going back to that for a moment is the only time Bilbo actually uses his sword.

826
01:54:01.990 --> 01:54:07.370
William Thompson: Throughout the book. He does draw his sword on the meeting with Gollum, but that's mostly just his way of fending him off.

827
01:54:07.620 --> 01:54:18.559
William Thompson: and of course Bilbo has the moment at the end of the encounter, after he figures out what the ring does, that it can make him invisible, and it provides him with a means of escape from the tunnels.

828
01:54:18.570 --> 01:54:19.970
William Thompson: is

829
01:54:20.720 --> 01:54:34.690
William Thompson: standing invisibly behind Gollum in the doorway. He knows it's the way out, and he has this compulsion to, you know. Kill Gollum, kill Gollum put its eyes out, but then he's overcome with compassion, and he has a brief vision

830
01:54:34.710 --> 01:54:58.669
William Thompson: of the misery that is Gollum's life, and he decides not to kill him, and then jumps over over him and away down the tunnel. And this is the this is one of the points that Gandalf picks up in the shadow of the past and Lord of the rings, and he talks about the mercy of Bilbo, and and that that mercy is going to affect the lives of many people afterwards. And of course it does. We find out that by the end, by the end of

831
01:54:58.900 --> 01:55:00.480
William Thompson: Lord of the rings.

832
01:55:03.670 --> 01:55:10.969
William Thompson: So the the and I and I said that the you know Bilbo's development over the course of the book largely happens in this large middle

833

01:55:11.300 --> 01:55:29.619

William Thompson: and I think it's interesting that the last words that we hear Gollum shrieking after go after Bilbo as he's running away down the passage are thief, thief, thief, Baggins! We hates it, we hates it forever. That name that gets ascribed to Bilbo is one of the many names that Bilbo acquires over the course of the book.

834

01:55:29.720 --> 01:55:37.129

William Thompson: the others being burglar. Of course Mr. Bagan's Elf friend he's later named by the Elven King himself.

835

01:55:37.300 --> 01:55:44.700

William Thompson: but this term thief, which Bilbo doesn't really appreciate. He doesn't really like thinking of himself as a thief. He thinks of himself as a burglar.

836

01:55:44.800 --> 01:56:01.210

William Thompson: The last words that Gollum speaks to screams or shrieks after Bilbo are the very 1st words that the dragon says to Bilbo on his second journey down into the tunnels to the lair of the dragon. When the dragon says, Well, thief!

837

01:56:03.298 --> 01:56:07.950

William Thompson: Where is he here? Oh, there it is! Well, thief! I smell you, and I hear your air.

838

01:56:08.900 --> 01:56:11.089

William Thompson: I hear your breath. Come along.

839

01:56:11.460 --> 01:56:20.819

William Thompson: there's plenty, and help yourself again. There's plenty in despair, so it's it's not only not only the encounters themselves in terms of the riddles that Gollum?

840

01:56:21.070 --> 01:56:25.189

William Thompson: Asks Bilbo, and Bilbo asks in return, but also

841

01:56:25.250 --> 01:56:26.830

William Thompson: the riddling talk

842

01:56:26.970 --> 01:56:27.625

William Thompson: that's

843

01:56:28.490 --> 01:56:39.259

William Thompson: bilbo in place with the dragon that really formed these these brackets around Bilbo's development. But I think the the use of the term thief this name that gets ascribed to Bilbo.

844

01:56:39.340 --> 01:56:47.120

William Thompson: Yeah. The fact that it's used by both of these characters really helps to emphasize that bracketing of billless development.

845

01:56:52.007 --> 01:56:58.082

William Thompson: Just a couple of other notes. I mentioned that earlier bilbo

846

01:56:58.870 --> 01:57:01.760

William Thompson: upon his 1st meeting with Gandalf, or 1st 2.

847

01:57:02.102 --> 01:57:13.800

William Thompson: The unexpected luck of widow sons. If you look at the book, I did a count, and I think it's 49, or 50 different uses of the word luck, or lucky throughout the book, or luckily throughout the book.

848

01:57:14.140 --> 01:57:20.839

William Thompson: and it gets used a lot, and I think that. And I think even Tom Shippey even comments on this, that the

849

01:57:21.306 --> 01:57:26.850

William Thompson: this term luck, you know, gets used to help kind of place the

850

01:57:26.870 --> 01:57:28.440

William Thompson: the book more.

851

01:57:28.700 --> 01:57:33.090

William Thompson: you know, in line with a lot of the with a lot of folk and fairy tale

852

01:57:33.100 --> 01:57:37.880

William Thompson: kinds of heroes like the lucky tailor. All of these lucky characters that exist in folk tales.

853

01:57:40.510 --> 01:57:50.180

William Thompson: And Bilbo's luck is something that bears him all the way through many of his adventures. He's constantly lucky.

854

01:57:50.410 --> 01:58:00.573

William Thompson: And he even has luck of an unusual kind. When the the wood elves in the in the cellar start drinking, and the

855

01:58:01.672 --> 01:58:08.990

William Thompson: the 2 of them fall asleep, allowing Bilbo to pack the dwarfs into the casks and and help them escape from workwood.

856

01:58:12.610 --> 01:58:22.309

William Thompson: And it's interesting that right at the end of the book. And I think this is where this kind of you know. Maybe in some ways, Tolkien, talking to himself. But it's certainly Gandalf admonishing Bilbo

857

01:58:23.490 --> 01:58:28.549

William Thompson: right at the very end of the book. It's the second last speech in the book.

858

01:58:29.310 --> 01:58:37.540

William Thompson: Surely. Don't you don't believe disbelieve the prophecies just because you had a hand in bringing about yourself. You don't really suppose.

859

01:58:38.270 --> 01:58:43.400

William Thompson: do you, that all of your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck

860

01:58:44.470 --> 01:59:03.219

William Thompson: just for your sole benefit. So this is Gandalf kind of admonishing Bilbo and his I, and I think he maybe his his smugness over the adventure. Possibly, but it also comes through as a bit of a I think, an admonishment to Tolkien himself, and what he kind of how he later responded to

861

01:59:03.220 --> 01:59:14.539

William Thompson: the writing of the hobbit that he disliked all of the all of the narrative asides. There were things about the book he didn't like, and things he actually wanted to change. And I think Janet Brennan Croft was talking about this in a in a paper

862

01:59:14.847 --> 01:59:20.679

William Thompson: the other day. The kinds of things that Tolkien was thinking about doing to revise the hobbit yet again.

863

01:59:21.030 --> 01:59:25.570

William Thompson: and I'm glad he didn't, because then we'd have 3 distinct versions of the book to deal with

864

01:59:27.132 --> 01:59:30.190

William Thompson: but I think it again. It speaks to

865

01:59:30.700 --> 01:59:37.310

William Thompson: Tolkien's writing process, and how he was trying to figure out, you know, a way to

866

01:59:37.420 --> 01:59:45.750

William Thompson: find this bridge between his older tales, and a way of telling the story in a in a different way in Lord of the Rings.

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01:59:48.790 --> 01:59:52.480

William Thompson: So I'm just going to switch to the last slide or second last slide.

868

01:59:57.010 --> 02:00:07.299

William Thompson: So I've just titled this the road to ferry, and I think that in 19, so in 1,939. This is when Tolkien, of course, gives his Andrew Lang lecture when he delivers his

869

02:00:07.911 --> 02:00:13.539

William Thompson: his essay on fairy stories for the 1st time, and it's here that Tolkien is really working out. I think

870

02:00:15.400 --> 02:00:17.410

William Thompson: a lot of the ideas that he has

871

02:00:17.850 --> 02:00:23.879

William Thompson: around subcreation and secondary belief and things that he wasn't very happy about in

872

02:00:24.210 --> 02:00:25.670

William Thompson: in the writing of the hobbit.

873

02:00:26.170 --> 02:00:39.309

William Thompson: Now, Shippi points out that all of these asides in the hobbit actually do serve a function. They they do actually work to draw the reader in and indicate to the reader the ways in which

874

02:00:39.330 --> 02:00:41.410

William Thompson: this world of

875

02:00:42.040 --> 02:00:44.099

William Thompson: of bilbose has

876

02:00:44.280 --> 02:00:51.870

William Thompson: has depth, and has much more of a history than even our narrator Narrator is willing to give us.

877

02:00:52.080 --> 02:01:04.489

William Thompson: And but Tolkien wasn't ever really happy with that. But I think you know, in reading through reading through parts of on fairy stories, I always find it a pretty abstruse text to kind of

878

02:01:04.640 --> 02:01:05.620

William Thompson: parse

879

02:01:06.204 --> 02:01:14.369

William Thompson: but in in reading it again. I was thinking about it in terms of well, if Tolkien's unhappy in part with the way in which he

880

02:01:14.915 --> 02:01:27.020

William Thompson: the way in which he was providing these kinds of narrative asides, and the hobbit as a children's text, and wanting to do something different, wanting to elevate the story of of hobbits into something

881

02:01:27.100 --> 02:01:29.600

William Thompson: much different than what he gave us in the hobbit

882

02:01:30.708 --> 02:01:35.865

William Thompson: if if he was trying to work that out in his own mind. I think we can see part of that in

883

02:01:37.317 --> 02:01:43.939

William Thompson: in in his essay on Fairy Stories, and partly because he talks about folk tales. He talks about folk tales in relation to.

884

02:01:43.960 --> 02:01:48.759

William Thompson: you know, being an accident of domestic history, and the fact that they get shunted into the

885

02:01:50.637 --> 02:02:04.972

William Thompson: essentially into the into the into the playroom and become, you know, become text for children when they weren't really meant to do that initially. And here he's actually talking about Andrew Lang and Andrew Lang, of course, was

886

02:02:07.020 --> 02:02:12.380

William Thompson: someone that Tolkien had read, and there were some favorites in the Tolkien household. Certainly Andrew Lang was one of them.

887

02:02:13.580 --> 02:02:14.850

William Thompson: and

888

02:02:15.100 --> 02:02:22.740

William Thompson: so I think he's he's again kind of positioning fairy tales in relation to children, and trying to and trying to move past that

889

02:02:22.760 --> 02:02:23.890

William Thompson: into

890

02:02:23.930 --> 02:02:32.960

William Thompson: another another theory around sub-creation that he's going to later try and adhere to a little more carefully in writing Lord of the rings.

891

02:02:36.850 --> 02:02:46.920

William Thompson: So Lang makes a comment in one of his books that children have a greater appetite, for you know this kind of marvelous tale, and Tolkien agrees in part.

892

02:02:48.448 --> 02:02:50.659

William Thompson: Tolkien says, children are, of course.

893

02:02:50.900 --> 02:02:52.900

William Thompson: capable of literary belief.

894

02:02:54.100 --> 02:02:56.820

William Thompson: When the story makers art is good

895

02:02:57.080 --> 02:02:58.879

William Thompson: enough to produce it.

896

02:02:59.540 --> 02:03:03.869

William Thompson: That statement is that State is called the willing suspension of disbelief.

897

02:03:07.020 --> 02:03:11.930

William Thompson: Yeah. And and so you can see that he's he moves from Andrew Lang.

898

02:03:11.970 --> 02:03:22.159

William Thompson: and and thinking about children, and thinking about the inexperience of children as readers, and and and how that

899

02:03:22.810 --> 02:03:34.629

William Thompson: children, as readers of folk and fairy tales are, you know, are are limited in in particular ways, but he moves very quickly to what he thinks is most important. And it's this idea of subcreation.

900

02:03:36.020 --> 02:03:44.780

William Thompson: So the story maker becomes a successful subcreator when he makes a secondary world which your mind can enter inside. What he relates is true

901

02:03:45.040 --> 02:03:51.879

William Thompson: in accordance with the laws of that world. You are, you believe it. While you were inside, as it were

902

02:03:51.940 --> 02:03:53.440

William Thompson: so. And I think.

903

02:03:53.800 --> 02:04:06.269

William Thompson: as I said, you know, when in the light of thinking about Tolkien and his process of trying to understand where the hobbit fits and how it fit with his writing process. I think this is Tolkien still trying to work this out, trying to figure this out.

904

02:04:06.280 --> 02:04:14.030

William Thompson: and so he he does this in part, you know, in fairy stories, and then we see it fully. You know, coming to fruition in

905

02:04:14.120 --> 02:04:15.460

William Thompson: Lord of the Rings.

906

02:04:22.190 --> 02:04:27.970

William Thompson: and the adventures of Frodo and Sam and Gollum, and the rest of the fellowship. Thank you.

907

02:04:30.370 --> 02:04:31.380

Tim Lenz: Thank you.

908

02:04:35.280 --> 02:04:48.009

Tim Lenz: We do have a little bit of time for questions. I'm going to take questions from first.st Give the people online a chance to type anything up or raise your hand. If you would like to

909

02:04:48.110 --> 02:04:52.460

Tim Lenz: do your questions on camera, I will read any

910

02:04:52.930 --> 02:04:55.409

Tim Lenz: questions out if you want to type them.

911

02:05:08.530 --> 02:05:20.540

Tim Lenz: Isn't there a letter sort of 1938 in which Tolkien refers to quote Sauron, the whole, I think, peeping over the edge of the story.

912

02:05:20.700 --> 02:05:23.569

William Thompson: Oh, yes, yes, I do remember that.

913

02:05:30.360 --> 02:05:32.340

William Thompson: I'm going to try and find it if I can.

914

02:05:35.260 --> 02:05:36.720

Tim Lenz: First.st

915

02:05:37.330 --> 02:05:41.550

William Thompson: And I think I may have. I may be remembering that from carpenter

916

02:05:43.003 --> 02:05:44.709

William Thompson: but yeah, I do think you're right.

917

02:05:49.140 --> 02:05:49.820

Tim Lenz: That's

918

02:05:54.900 --> 02:05:55.380

Tim Lenz: oh!

919

02:05:55.380 --> 02:05:56.000

William Thompson: Sorry.

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02:05:56.890 --> 02:06:03.979

Tim Lenz: I haven't opened books and.

921

02:06:06.070 --> 02:06:08.139

William Thompson: Sorry about that. I thought that was muted.

922

02:06:08.230 --> 02:06:11.130

William Thompson: But yes, I do think you're right, and

923

02:06:25.870 --> 02:06:28.550

William Thompson: just bringing it up now, bringing up the letters. Now

924

02:06:31.490 --> 02:06:33.223

William Thompson: I may not be able to find it.

925

02:06:33.880 --> 02:06:35.391

William Thompson: but I think it's

926

02:06:38.340 --> 02:06:43.820

William Thompson: He, you know he does talk about. He does mention a couple of times that the hobbit was a kind of intrusion

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02:06:44.050 --> 02:06:44.690

William Thompson: which

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02:06:46.580 --> 02:06:49.049

William Thompson: which he, you know he kind of holds to.

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02:06:49.860 --> 02:07:00.570

William Thompson: Yeah, no, I can't find it in the letters, unfortunately, but I do think I remember that from Humphrey

Carpenter he does talk about the hobbit as a kind of intrusion into this world that he already created.

930

02:07:00.590 --> 02:07:18.089

William Thompson: and and i 1 of the things that I was trying to find. And it's I didn't have any luck. Maybe somebody knows I was trying to figure out when exactly Tolkien 1st used the term middle Earth in, you know, in in relation to the tales of the 1st age, and I'm not sure exactly when he does that Christopher Tolkien, in

931

02:07:18.170 --> 02:07:38.100

William Thompson: in the histories, just uses the term middle Earth, you know, constantly just to describe that world seeming, you know, kind of, regardless of of which version he's talking about of the tales or or or when they were written. So I'm not exactly sure when he 1st uses the term Middle Earth. I'm not sure if it's

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02:07:38.200 --> 02:07:44.240

William Thompson: preview prior to the hobbit, I think it must be. I'm pretty sure it is because I think it appears in

933

02:07:44.390 --> 02:07:46.854

William Thompson: an early draft of

934

02:07:49.841 --> 02:07:55.078

William Thompson: one of the perhaps one of the versions of

935

02:07:56.330 --> 02:07:57.430

William Thompson: the

936

02:08:00.200 --> 02:08:09.098

William Thompson: it wouldn't be the it wouldn't be the tales involving, like the early tales involving a Louvatar, it would have been later. But I again I I would have to chase that one down

937

02:08:10.700 --> 02:08:16.979

William Thompson: But as for your question, yes, I think I think at least, Carpenter, I'm sure, does refer to that which does suggest that.

938

02:08:17.230 --> 02:08:21.810

William Thompson: you know there was more. There was more of the 1st stage, probably coming into the hobbit

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02:08:21.870 --> 02:08:22.635

William Thompson: as

940

02:08:23.780 --> 02:08:46.719

William Thompson: more than Tolkien maybe even wants to admit to. I mean, Tolkien has the. You know, he uses the the metaphor of the cauldron of story. He also has the metaphor of the leaf mold of the mind, and certainly, if Tolkien has been working on these tales for 20 years, you know. It seems natural enough that some of them, especially if he's just telling these tales, you know, telling the tale of the hobbit to his children initially, that some of these details are

going to find their way in.

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02:08:47.020 --> 02:08:47.990

William Thompson: So

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02:08:51.230 --> 02:08:54.590

William Thompson: if that helps sort of answer your question.

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02:08:59.880 --> 02:09:11.329

Tim Lenz: I have not my question as just an idea that occurs to me that I'm trying to figure out how the hobbit fits into the legendarium.

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02:09:13.150 --> 02:09:21.300

Tim Lenz: yeah, I I just an idea came to me that instead of trying to think of the legendarium as a continuous story.

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02:09:21.320 --> 02:09:33.740

Tim Lenz: if you thought of Legendarium, as, say, a library where the hobbit fit in the library, especially now that we have the making of middle earth, which is just

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02:09:33.750 --> 02:09:36.970

Tim Lenz: horrible, horrible charts of

947

02:09:37.040 --> 02:09:40.669

Tim Lenz: numbers, right? So that's going to go over in the science section.

948

02:09:40.680 --> 02:09:59.500

Tim Lenz: So it's just something occurred to me that maybe that's somewhere that we can also deal with all of the different variations of the text. Okay, so this story of Baron and Luthian is this story, and there are all these other variants, and so you put them in the Baron and Luthian area, and.

949

02:09:59.500 --> 02:10:00.240

William Thompson: Yeah.

950

02:10:00.980 --> 02:10:01.299

Tim Lenz: I come.

951

02:10:01.300 --> 02:10:03.316

William Thompson: That's a great metaphor, actually.

952

02:10:03.720 --> 02:10:04.550

Tim Lenz: Back.

953

02:10:04.550 --> 02:10:11.124

William Thompson: Yeah, I mean, if they if all that stuff was in a library, I actually wouldn't know exactly where to put the hobbit.

954

02:10:11.450 --> 02:10:15.830

William Thompson: Mean, I would, you know I would. I might put it, you know. I might put it, you know.

955

02:10:15.870 --> 02:10:19.670

William Thompson: sort of at the end of some of those tales you know of Baron and Luthean?

956

02:10:20.245 --> 02:10:23.714

William Thompson: Maybe later. Maybe I just put it on its own shelf.

957

02:10:25.650 --> 02:10:27.170

Tim Lenz: Yeah, right?

958

02:10:31.780 --> 02:10:38.640

Tim Lenz: Because obviously, Tolkien had a problem with where to fit it in. How am I going to make this thing fit.

959

02:10:39.320 --> 02:10:46.929

William Thompson: I think so. Yeah, I think so. And the fact that he, especially in that later letter of 1,966, when he's talking about the

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02:10:46.980 --> 02:10:50.009

William Thompson: you know the the writing of the hobbit, and he.

961

02:10:52.410 --> 02:10:59.289

William Thompson: you know, he just dismisses this reference to the necromancer as a plot device.

962

02:10:59.590 --> 02:11:19.969

William Thompson: whereas if you go back and look specifically at that 1st draft of the hobbit, it's, you know, it's it's right there in relation to the tale of Baron Antonuvial, so it seems hardly a plot device, a plot device at that point. And and, as I said, I mean, maybe maybe Tolkien was just sort of doing some

963

02:11:20.560 --> 02:11:23.264

William Thompson: revising in his own mind. Maybe you just need to order.

964

02:11:23.570 --> 02:11:26.150

William Thompson: you know, in his, for his own sake, the

965

02:11:26.700 --> 02:11:30.760

William Thompson: the composite, the composition of the book, or what he thought of as the composition of the book.

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02:11:33.780 --> 02:11:38.479

Tim Lenz: Alright, this isn't so much of a question. It's just like an observation that

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02:11:38.850 --> 02:11:50.780

Tim Lenz: percolating around in my head. You mentioned multiple times at this point about how the 1st stage kept intruding into the hobbit or in Tolkien's words, like he wasn't

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02:11:50.990 --> 02:12:16.070

Tim Lenz: purposefully putting the 1st age in there. Yeah, and also tied to that that he was making story up for his children. When you look at something like the Father Christmas letters, it's it's very similar to the hobbit in that way. It's it's a story quote unquote, that he is putting forth for his children. And the 1st age has injected itself

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02:12:16.740 --> 02:12:18.780

Tim Lenz: significantly into.

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02:12:18.780 --> 02:12:19.180

William Thompson: Right.

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02:12:19.180 --> 02:12:27.549

Tim Lenz: Yeah. And it just. It's making me think that Tolkien's an unreliable narrator about his own creativity.

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02:12:27.550 --> 02:12:28.600

William Thompson: Well.

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02:12:29.650 --> 02:12:32.630

Tim Lenz: I didn't even think about previous.

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02:12:32.630 --> 02:12:36.952

William Thompson: Yeah, yeah, I mean, I honestly, I think that's a fair point. I think it's a fair point. And

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02:12:38.370 --> 02:12:45.069

William Thompson: the only thing the only thing I can say, and and I suppose one of the reasons why, you know, I wanted to think about this.

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02:12:45.200 --> 02:13:05.740

William Thompson: You know a little more in terms of Tolkien's own writing process, and how he thought about it, and how he understood it, and how we see evidence of it in early editions of the hobbit and how he talks about it. Later, in some of these letters I wanted to think about Tolkien and his writing process just because, you know, he was he, you know he was a father. He was a husband, he was an academic, I mean

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02:13:05.850 --> 02:13:14.519

William Thompson: he had a lot of responsibilities, just, you know, as a householder, as an academic, as a father. He had all these responsibilities. His writing often took a backseat to.

978

02:13:14.750 --> 02:13:18.610

William Thompson: To, you know all of these different responsibilities.

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02:13:18.640 --> 02:13:25.209

William Thompson: And if he's if he's just telling his children stories, if he's making up stuff for his kids.

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02:13:25.300 --> 02:13:30.470

William Thompson: then really, you know it, it doesn't surprise me at all that

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02:13:31.170 --> 02:13:53.520

William Thompson: elements of you know of this mythology that he had been working on for a couple of decades are gonna find their way in somehow, because it just takes up so much of his inner landscape. I think I think it's necessarily going to going to find a way in I just. And and this is nothing. This is nowhere ex exactly the same. But when I think about this in terms of my own experience.

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02:13:53.520 --> 02:14:02.929

William Thompson: I remember telling my my kids stories at bedtimes, at bedtime we did it for years, and I would make stories up, and at 1st I tried learning new folk tales all the time, and

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02:14:03.470 --> 02:14:10.179

William Thompson: eventually I I started creating a cycle of stories that my children and I would would tell every night. But I was pulling.

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02:14:10.330 --> 02:14:32.610

William Thompson: You know. I was pulling details from every single thing. I read into these stories that I was telling my kids at night. I mean, they were young, they didn't care, and they didn't know but I mean I was so tired, and and you know I I didn't have the I didn't have the wherewithal to, you know, sit down and properly work out new folk tales and a new world for my children. So I just borrowed from everything

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02:14:32.610 --> 02:14:51.227

William Thompson: in order to create something that I could tell them at night. And it was. It was always funny years later, because my kids, once they became readers in their own right and started reading some of the stuff that I had read. Then I then I then they then they then they spoke to me and said, you know, you took this detail from from these stories.

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02:14:51.490 --> 02:15:03.920

William Thompson: You took this detail from from this book, didn't you? And I, I'd have to admit. Yes, I did so. Yeah, so I mean, I can. I can. Just, you know, I can kind of imagine in some ways talking you know.

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02:15:04.190 --> 02:15:08.770

William Thompson: you know, being a father and wanting to, you know. Tell his kids some stories. And

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02:15:09.259 --> 02:15:16.479

William Thompson: you know, this being the thing that occupied so much of his mind that. Of course it's going to find its way in, and that doesn't really mean that.

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02:15:16.500 --> 02:15:21.280

William Thompson: you know that he wasn't doing it deliberately, and that certainly. Yes, I think he was revising

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02:15:21.858 --> 02:15:30.789

William Thompson: or, you know, revising his his own narrative of composition. And so yes, you know fairly an unreliable narrator, you know, as to his own composition process. But

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02:15:31.080 --> 02:15:34.960

William Thompson: but I but I but maybe all these things are kind of true. Simultaneously.

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02:15:36.340 --> 02:15:38.670

Tim Lenz: That is often the case with Tolkien.

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02:15:41.410 --> 02:15:46.520

Tim Lenz: And I think, especially when we're talking about creative process

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02:15:47.930 --> 02:15:49.520

Tim Lenz: and his

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02:15:49.610 --> 02:15:53.570

Tim Lenz: thinking about his creative process.

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02:15:53.990 --> 02:15:57.589

Tim Lenz: They're both constantly changing.

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02:15:57.590 --> 02:16:00.640

William Thompson: Well, yes, exactly. Yes, I agree. Totally.

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02:16:02.080 --> 02:16:06.439

Tim Lenz: To go back to X metaphor with the library

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02:16:07.290 --> 02:16:08.810

Tim Lenz: when talking

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02:16:09.930 --> 02:16:13.660

Tim Lenz: first.st Right? Stop it when it yeah

1001

02:16:14.470 --> 02:16:17.169

Tim Lenz: encounters the famous

1002

02:16:18.120 --> 02:16:24.390

Tim Lenz: blank examination paper and writes on it in a hole in the ground. They're living on it.

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02:16:26.140 --> 02:16:35.040

Tim Lenz: He doesn't have to figure out where that's going to go in the library. Yeah, it's only later than

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02:16:35.250 --> 02:16:37.990

Tim Lenz: either for talking or for us.

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02:16:38.549 --> 02:16:45.379

Tim Lenz: The question arises, Well, how does this fit into the library?

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02:16:45.389 --> 02:16:50.009

William Thompson: Yeah, yeah, it's true, it's true. And lots of critics talk about

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02:16:50.019 --> 02:16:52.059

William Thompson: the way in which Tolkien

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02:16:53.121 --> 02:16:56.249

William Thompson: you know, worked creatively and so often how?

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02:16:56.671 --> 02:17:08.559

William Thompson: You know. Language led to names led to stories. So the the process for Tolkien was was a little different, you know, was very different, for for many people who are creating secondary worlds of this kind.

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02:17:09.067 --> 02:17:18.529

William Thompson: And certainly, you know, once you wrote those words on that on that old exam booklet. Then, yeah, you had to find out or needed to find out.

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02:17:19.333 --> 02:17:22.066

William Thompson: What hobbits were. Certainly.

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02:17:23.489 --> 02:17:34.424

William Thompson: but I think I think for some critics it's a. It's a case of wanting to, you know. Make it a little more neat and tidy, and and create, you know, create a more linear kind of

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02:17:35.081 --> 02:17:41.849

William Thompson: narrative of composition for for Tolkien and I I really don't think it was like that. I mean, I don't think it's like that.

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02:17:41.850 --> 02:17:43.930
Tim Lenz: And grab a lot.

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02:17:43.930 --> 02:17:45.270
William Thompson: Yeah, yeah.

1016
02:17:46.940 --> 02:17:51.780
Tim Lenz: I love the idea of talking being an unreliable narrator.

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02:17:52.990 --> 02:17:59.989
Tim Lenz: most modern, to use an open word term, but there's no word text.

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02:18:00.520 --> 02:18:14.050
Tim Lenz: It's like it's like a police. Reports have 15 different versions of what happened. But you've still got the tracking incident, and that's what the Legendarium

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02:18:15.280 --> 02:18:16.940
Tim Lenz: quote unquote.

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02:18:17.770 --> 02:18:18.120
William Thompson: Yeah.

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02:18:19.502 --> 02:18:24.690
William Thompson: Well, you know, yeah. Tolkien was unreliable in in ways I mean

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02:18:24.750 --> 02:18:26.200
William Thompson: still, was Lewis.

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02:18:26.779 --> 02:18:30.539
William Thompson: I learned how unreliable Charles Williams was yesterday.

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02:18:31.920 --> 02:18:33.449
Tim Lenz: So are we all.

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02:18:36.559 --> 02:18:45.810
William Thompson: Yeah, indeed, indeed, but I and I don't know for Tolkien. And just simply because I suppose this whole process just encompassed his whole life.

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02:18:45.930 --> 02:19:03.240

William Thompson: and and he was such a he was such a stickler for revision, you know, revising over and over and over again. I mean, it's it's kind of funny, because even in Carpenter, even in Carpenter, he talks about how meticulous Tolkien is in terms of his manuscripts, and never letting anything go until he

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02:19:03.638 --> 02:19:16.589

William Thompson: you know, until he you know, was finished all the revisions that you think he has to make, and yet, when you know when he gets the proofs back on the, on the on the hobbit from Unwin, you know. Then

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02:19:16.719 --> 02:19:31.160

William Thompson: Carpenter says that he let the manuscript go without making the you know the kinds of corrections that he normally did, and I thought, Well, if he's so meticulous, why did he, you know? Why did he let it go? In the 1st place, why did he let a manuscript go that he wasn't ready for the world to see so

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02:19:31.450 --> 02:19:34.020

William Thompson: and like I said, it's a good thing that

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02:19:34.049 --> 02:19:41.499

William Thompson: Unwin just decided to accept the revisions to riddles in the dark, you know, as you know, as wrote, because

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02:19:41.700 --> 02:19:44.318

William Thompson: who knows? We may have never seen them, but.

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02:19:47.879 --> 02:19:48.254

Tim Lenz: Oh.

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02:19:48.789 --> 02:19:58.389

Tim Lenz: hate to wrap up the discussion! But we need to start getting ready for the next talk. Thank you so much, William. That was such a lovely talk!

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02:19:58.390 --> 02:19:59.049

William Thompson: Well, thank you.

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02:19:59.050 --> 02:19:59.880

Tim Lenz: And thanks for this.

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02:19:59.880 --> 02:20:00.710

William Thompson: Need to be explored.

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02:20:03.200 --> 02:20:04.140

William Thompson: Yeah.

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02:20:04.510 --> 02:20:07.540

William Thompson: Nice and nice to be part of it also. Thank you. Again.

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02:20:09.460 --> 02:20:10.450

Tim Lenz: Thank you.