



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 21
Number 2

Article 23

Winter 10-15-1996

Tolkien as Reviser: A Case Study

Gloriana St. Clair

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

St. Clair, Gloriana (1996) "Tolkien as Reviser: A Case Study," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 21 : No. 2 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol21/iss2/23>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSUTM

Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



Abstract

The publication of drafts of *The Lord of the Rings* allows scholars to assess Tolkien as a reviser. A comparison of the early presentations of Gondor in *The History of "The Lord of the Rings"*, with the finished scenes indicates the nature and direction of Tolkien's changes. This paper will discuss how the process of revision contributed to the overall effect of the work.

Additional Keywords

Aragorn; Gandalf; heroism; ring; Strider; J.R.R. Tolkien: reviser; Trotter

Tolkien as Reviser: A Case Study

Gloriana St. Clair

Abstract: The publication of drafts of *The Lord of the Rings* allows scholars to assess Tolkien as a reviser. A comparison of the early presentations of Gondor in *The History of "The Lord of the Rings"*, with the finished scenes indicates the nature and direction of Tolkien's changes. This paper will discuss how the process of revision contributed to the overall effect of the work.

Keywords: Aragorn, Gandalf, heroism, ring, Strider, J.R.R. Tolkien: reviser, Trotter

"It was begun in 1936, and every part has been written many times. Hardly a word in its 600,000 or more has been unconsidered. And the placing, size, style, and contribution to the whole of all the features, incidents, and chapters has been laboriously pondered," wrote Tolkien to Milton Waldman in 1951 (Tolkien, 1981, p. 160). The publication of *The History of "The Lord of the Rings"* in 1988, 1989, and 1990 makes it possible for scholars to begin to see how extensive and important Tolkien's continuing revision of the work was to its final effect. The purpose of this paper is to touch on three of those revisions. I believe their overall effect was a darkening one. Through revision, Tolkien moved from a sequel to his children's story *The Hobbit* to the dark power of *The Lord of the Rings*. A great number of topics might be discussed relating to this thesis; the three I've selected are: Trotter appears and becomes Strider, the King of Númenor; the King of the Golden Hall; and minor revisions in "The Shadow of the Past."

Trotter becomes Strider and the King of Númenor

"Suddenly Bingo [Frodo] noticed that a queer-looking, brown-faced hobbit, sitting in the shadows behind the others, was also listening intently. He had an enormous mug (more like a jug) in front of him, and was smoking a broken-stemmed pipe right under his rather long nose. He was dressed in dark rough brown cloth, and had a hood on, in spite of the warmth, –and, very remarkably, he had wooden shoes!" (Tolkien, 1988, p. 137). This quotation is from the 1938 version of the manuscript; the story at that time was called simply the sequel to *The Hobbit*; this particular hobbit was named Trotter. Tolkien confesses in a 1955 letter to W.H. Auden that he had no clearer idea who this new character was than Frodo did (Tolkien, 1981, p. 216).

Many authors find that the circulation of manuscripts is a key to highly creative work. It seems that this particular change may have been engendered in this way. In a 1938 letter to Charles Furth, Tolkien says, "I am personally immensely amused by hobbits as such, and can contemplate them eating and making their rather fatuous jokes indefinitely; but I find that is not the case with even my most

devoted fans (such as Mr Lewis and ? Rayner Unwin). Mr Lewis says hobbits are only amusing when in unhobbitlike situations" (Tolkien, 1981, p. 38). However, I suspect that Lewis and Unwin provided only criticisms, not suggestions for solutions. Tolkien, Lewis, and Unwin were all focusing on an amusing tale; a proper sequel for *The Hobbit*.

The idea for the change from a larger-than-average-sized hobbit into one of the Kings of Men is recorded on a scrap of paper dated October 1939. Tolkien next conceived of Trotter as an elf but then almost immediately made him a real ranger and a descendent of the ancient men of the north (Tolkien, 1989, p. 7). But as Tolkien made the change from a hobbit as quest-assistant to a serious and committed man who will be king, the whole tenor of the story changed. It ceased to be an amusing tramp through the woods with the adventures of very lovable hobbits and took on the formal epic duties of saving mankind from the rise of evil.

This one change reflected itself in other ways. The company was to have been composed entirely of hobbits travelling with Gandalf. It now came to represent a coalition of all the free creatures of Middle-earth. That allowed Tolkien to introduce the theme of the importance of difference and variety. In the United States, we would say that Tolkien established the importance of cultural diversity to the survival of the world. This theme plays itself out in a number of serious ways, but one of the most enjoyable results is the continued bantering between Gimli and Legolas.

This change also set in place the moral of the work as Tolkien states it in a letter to Milton Waldman: ". . . without the high and noble the simple and vulgar is utterly mean; and without the simple and ordinary the noble and heroic is meaningless" (Tolkien, 1981, p. 160). Tolkien began with the mighty – the tales of *The Silmarillion* reflect an Elvish point of view. In *The Hobbit*, he invented hobbits, a foil for the mighty, but he found limitations to that as he began to compose another story. All who have read *The Lord of the Rings* recognize the value of hobbits, whose timid natures have almost eradicated any heroic spark. That creatures of their nature should have the courage to engage in the War of the Ring opens participation to every reader. The

unique view of the doings of heroes through the eyes of a patent stay-at-home is an important element in the overall effect of the work. However, to add another hobbit would be superfluous. To introduce the King of Númenor in a tavern near the Shire was brilliant.

While the effects of this change were major in the creation of themes and in the opportunities for future action, the continuity between the scene featuring Trotter and the one featuring Strider is great. Some parts of the plot remain the same: Frodo sees the stranger, is warned to curb his companion's loose lips, creates a greater stir by singing a comic song and vanishing, and has a serious conversation with the new character in his room. Other parts change: The whole timing changes from a few months to several years (see Tolkien, 1989, pp. 5-14), Tolkien goes through several ideas about who has the letter, whether there are one or two letters, and what the letter will say. Trotter's act of eavesdropping on the conversation of the travelling hobbits moves around a good bit and is finally omitted entirely.

The speeches assigned to the characters are more homologous than I would have expected. Because the whole text is expanding enormously, it is difficult to assess whether the hobbit ranger was more garrulous than his kingly successor.

Some levels of diction are changed to suit the new importance of the speaker. The initial conversation in the common room is virtually identical, and continues very much in line for a few pages. In the room, Trotter uses the phrase, "and give you what I've got, and what's more I'll keep your secret under my hood (which is closer than you or your friends keep it)" (Tolkien, 1988, p. 148). These remarks are gone. Later in the scene when Strider is talking about the process of their accepting him, the earlier character says, "Also, if you want to know, it amused me to see if I could induce you to take me on – just by my gifts of persuasion. It would have been nice (though quite wrong) if you had accepted me for my manners without testimonial! But there, I suppose my looks are against me!" In the final version, Strider says, "'But I must admit,' he added with a queer laugh, 'that I hoped you would take to me for my own sake. A hunted man sometimes wearies of distrust and longs for friendship. But there, I believe my looks are against me.'" This new conception of the speech appears in the 1939 Fourth Phase draft but the sentence is not yet perfectly formed. The revised sentence is epigrammatic in quality and typical of a remark that might have been made by a Norse hero in similar circumstances. The effect of such phrases, and of new dark additions, such as "The Enemy has set traps for me before now", greatly increase the perceived danger in the scene. "More alarming," Tolkien remarked in his letter to Stanley Unwin (Tolkien, 1981, p. 58).

Trotter's wooden shoes are now replaced with Strider's "high boots of supple leather that fitted him well, but had seen much wear and were now caked with mud." The cloak is more fully described as being travel-stained and made of heavy dark-green cloth. The hood still shades his face, but now Tolkien mentions that the "gleam of his eyes could be seen." This detail fits into a pervasive pattern of eye imagery

culminating in the Eye of Sauron. After the introduction of the letter, Tolkien notes "In his [Strider's] eyes gleamed a light, keen and commanding." At this point, Strider throws back his cloak, puts his hand on the hilt of Andúril, and declares, "I am Aragorn son of Arathorn; and if by life or death I can save you, I will." – a dark but compelling statement (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 183).

Two other good pieces are introduced in the Fourth Phase. Trotter tells Frodo that the Ring does not belong to either of them but that Frodo is ordained to guard it for a time. This idea is moved to the Council of Elrond chapter. When Sam challenges Trotter, he suddenly seems to grow taller. This detail remains and is replicated with Gandalf and Bilbo and in an encounter between Frodo and Galadriel in the finished version.

A general darkening of the work occurs through the addition of key descriptions and actions:

- Strider now says, "I have hunted many wild and wary things" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 175).
- "They [the Black Riders] will come on you in the wild, in some dark place where there is no help. Do you wish them to find you? They are terrible!" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 177).

- Butterbur says, "Though I don't know what the likes of me can do against, against –" and Strider finishes, "Against the Shadow in the East" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 181).

Thus, in the course of the chapter "Strider," Tolkien moves the reader from the amusing antics of Frodo's rendition of "The Cat and the Fiddle" in the Prancing Pony chapter to Merry's frightening account of seeing the Black Riders just outside the Inn. Changes in Strider's nature, in plot incidents, in speech, and in description all darken.

The King of the Golden Hall

In *The Road to Middle-earth*, T.A. Shippey says that this chapter is straightforwardly calqued on *Beowulf* (1982, p. 94). Editor Christopher Tolkien also labels various portions as "Beowulfian" or notes that portions of *Beowulf* are "very distinctly echoed" (Tolkien, 1989, p. 449). Readers of Tolkien's essay "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics" know a little bit about what he thought the meanings of that poem are. Two important themes are these. In the eternal battle against Chaos and Unreason, men join with the gods; their resistance becomes more perfect because it lacks hope (Tolkien, 1984, pp. 19-21).

And that great theme of "*man on earth*, rehandling in a new perspective an ancient theme: that man, each man and all men, and all their works shall die" (Tolkien, 1984, p. 23). In *Beowulf*, Tolkien thought the nearness of a pagan time lent a "shadow of its despair" (Tolkien, 1984, p. 23). I believe that some of Tolkien's debts to *Beowulf* were rather conscious ones because he knew the poem so intimately.

The imaginative spark for this particular adventure seems to have come from the horse Shadowfax, previously called Halbarad and Greyfax. In one outline, Tolkien has Gandalf riding an eagle to do battle with the Black Riders; had that conception materialized, these incidents might have been lost to the story. In 1939 outlines, Tolkien projects horsemen

riding behind Gandalf to Gorgoroth and in another draft Gandalf calls in at Isengard riding horses from Rohan. Boromir's fate was not yet determined, but one plan was to have him flee to Saruman. Christopher Tolkien notes that the structure of the narrative in the west would be wholly changed by the "emergence of the Kingdom of Rohan into the full light of the story" (Tolkien, 1989, p. 215).

Because this chapter had a connection with *Beowulf*, its preliminary drafts were dark indeed. Gandalf says, "For behold! the storm comes, and now all friends should gather together, lest each singly be destroyed" (Tolkien, 1967b, p. 117). And Théoden says, "For I fear that already you have come too late, only to see the last days of my house. Not long now shall stand the high hall which Brego son of Eorl built. Fire shall devour the high seat" (Tolkien, 1967b, p. 120). Although Brego is originally the son of Brytta, the remainder of the text remains exactly the same. Yet, in the process of revision, Tolkien makes the story even darker. He had originally intended for Gimli and Gandalf to arrive separately from Aragorn and Legolas. The latter two were to enter the hall and walk up to Théoden. Then he conceived the *Beowulfian* entry in which the guard challenges the hero and his companions and demands their story. The challenge came in Old English, which Aragorn understood and answered. The addition of the challenge establishes the land as one in such a state of turmoil that security is tight and courtesies have been put aside. In revision, the Old English text was abandoned, except for two phrases.

The original tableau of Théoden includes two fair women and the "wizened figure of a man with a pale wise face" (Tolkien, 1989, p. 444). Théoden speaks the speeches recounting the death of the Second Master of the Mark and the accusations that Gandalf brings only bad news and should be called "Láthspell" (Tolkien, 1989, p. 444). Wormtongue's role emerges only slowly as the drafting proceeds. His enmity to Éomer is not present in the earliest drafts. When Gandalf and Théoden look out from the porch, Gandalf asks Théoden to send for Éomer. At that point, Tolkien conceived the story of the imprisonment; Wormtongue now receives his name Frána, which was not replaced by Gríma until much later.

Tolkien originally intended for Gandalf to update Théoden on the disposition of the original fellowship members. At this stage of the composition, many of their stories were still evolving. In the final version, Gandalf speaks secretly to Théoden and concludes with a reference to the Ringbearer and his fate. Reflecting *Beowulf's* themes, the idea of hopelessness, finally expressed as "How thin indeed was the thread upon which doom still hung" (Tolkien 1967b, p. 121), persists through all drafts.

With the connection to *Beowulf*, Tolkien now was on firm and familiar ground. Christopher Tolkien notes, "the story as known from *The Two Towers* of the unmasking of Wormtongue, the rehabilitation of Eomer, the meal before departure, the gift of Shadowfax, was achieved almost unhesitatingly" (Tolkien, 1989, p. 446). One major change, however, was the deletion of that second woman standing on the dais.

The second woman was Idis, the daughter of Théoden. In the earlier drafts, actions which might have been hers – serving wine and serving as the governor in the King's absence – seemed to fall to Éowyn. What function Tolkien might have intended for her is unclear, but Éowyn overshadows her in every way. Undoubtedly, the darkness of the tale deepens when Théoden rides off to final battle saying "I have no child. Théodred my son is slain" rather than, "Behold I go forth. I have no son. I name Eomer my sister-son to be my heir" (Tolkien, 1989, p. 451). Indeed, Théodred was slain only five days before; his recent death in a battle against Saruman is poignant indeed, and somewhat underutilized. Tolkien did not really need two women in the story at this point. Éowyn and her brother made a more appealing team for use in the scenes ahead than the daughter Idis did.

In one early draft, Tolkien planned, "Aragorn weds Eowyn sister of Eomer (who becomes Lord of Rohan) and becomes King of Gondor." In another set of undated notes, Tolkien mentions cutting out the love-story of Aragorn and Éowyn because Aragorn is too old and grim. He considers making Éowyn the twin sister of Éomund, a stern amazon woman; this would have made her Théoden's age and not a generation younger. The stern amazon woman idea, though, he maintained from this point on. These notes further forecast that she should die to avenge or save Théoden. Indeed, she does almost die to avenge Théoden, but the appearance of Faramir saves her, for Tolkien now has some plot purpose for her.

The composition of the company riding forth from Rohan to war changed a good bit as the process of revision progressed. In some earlier versions, Merry rides with King Théoden; Éomer and Éowyn as stern amazon accompany him openly. These versions also support the theme of the diversity of peoples required in the fight against evil, but in the end Tolkien selected the device of having Éowyn disguise herself and surreptitiously take Merry along with her to the coming battle. That allows him the effective dramatic surprise of having her reveal herself before the Ringwraith, whose destruction occurs at the hand of a woman and a hobbit, rather than a more traditional hero.

Numerous critics have lambasted *The Lord of the Rings* for the paucity of its love interests, even though love stories have traditionally received little attention in heroic works. Tolkien says, "this tale does not deal with a period of 'Courtly Love' and its pretences; but with a culture more primitive (sc. less corrupt) and nobler" (Tolkien, 1981, p. 324). Those primarily interested in love stories should look elsewhere. Galadriel offered Tolkien an opportunity to make a small sortie into courtly love with Gimli's devotion to the elven woman. Éowyn offers some other avenues for exploration. One of Wormtongue's motives for destroying Théoden is Wormtongue's disgusting lust for Éowyn, but that motive receives much less attention than the betrayal brought about by Saruman's power over Théoden's counsellor.

Even though Tolkien thought Aragorn "too old and lordly and grim" to marry Éowyn, the addition of the love story clearly appealed to him. While he considered letting Éowyn

die, he moved ahead with the story and later in 1944 created the character of Faramir. That allowed him to bring the issue of unrequited love into the story, for while Éowyn pines for Aragorn, Faramir pines for her. While this love story is a fairly simple one, it does provide a much needed counterbalance for the dark events of the battles at hand. Later in that year, Tolkien also identified an old and serious mate for Aragorn. He introduces Arwen in the chapter "Dunharrow", in which the elf-lords deliver messages to Aragorn from Elrond and Arwen (the "Lady of Rivendell"). This match is a much higher one, again increasing Aragorn's stature and importance in the story. Further, it allows Tolkien to touch again briefly on two favourite themes from *The Silmarillion* – the love of an immortal for a mortal, and the renunciation of immortality.

Thus, in the revisions to the content of "The King of the Golden Hall" Tolkien continued his practice of making the story darker and more complex. Even though the initial content reflected themes from that dark masterpiece *Beowulf*, the story as it developed became even more sombre. The creation of Wormtongue had the most profound effect. In it, Tolkien illustrated human duplicity, for while Saruman's evil relates back to Sauron, it is also independent from Sauron. Saruman has made evil choices for selfish reasons; he would set himself up as the dark lord if he could. Wormtongue as his pawn engages in evil not out of allegiance to Sauron but out of an inappropriate lust for power. Tolkien quite brilliantly uses these two characters to translate evil right back into the hobbits' own home – the Shire.

Minor Revisions in "The Shadow of the Past"

So far I have looked at passages in which major changes occurred in the direction of the story, but now I want to move to a more confined section and to look at the kinds of minor revisions that were occurring. For this purpose, I have selected a portion of the chapter "The Shadow of the Past," that section in which Gandalf tells Frodo Gollum's story. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, this passage begins after a space in the text with Frodo saying, "'Gollum!' cried Frodo. 'Gollum? Do you mean that this is the very Gollum-creature that Bilbo met? How loathsome!'", and ends at a text break with Gandalf saying, "But I am afraid there is no possible doubt: he had made his slow, sneaking way, step by step, mile by mile, south, down at last to the Land of Mordor" (Tolkien, 1967a, pp. 63-68).

The text history of this passage is as follows:

- In a note written early in 1938, Tolkien sketches the story ahead saying, "Ring must eventually go back to Maker, or draw you towards it. Rather a dirty trick handing it on?" (Tolkien, 1988, p. 43).

- First version: Also in 1938, Tolkien had three chapters prepared. These chapters included a two-page version of the passage.

- Between the first and second versions of this text, Tolkien wrote a page of "Queries and Alterations." In that exercise, he conceived the idea that this ring was the ruling ring. The text established in the first version is repeated with

only minor alterations and two-and-a-half pages of new text are added (Tolkien, 1988, pp. 261-264).

- A third phase seems to have been completed by February 1939 with only few details altered in this passage. However, Tolkien had now changed Bingo's name to Frodo (Tolkien, 1988, pp. 320-321).

- From the end of 1942 until sometime in 1944, Tolkien did not work on the manuscript; he says in the "Foreword" to the second edition, "Foresight had failed and there was no time for thought." Christopher Tolkien labels this fourth phase as a "very substantial rewriting" of Gandalf's discussion of Gollum's motives.

The elements in this four-page passage are divided into these more or less arbitrary several paragraph sections for further discussion:

- Discussion of Gollum as a hobbit and the riddle game
- Gollum's toughness
- The Ring itself
- Gandalf's knowledge
- Gandalf sees Gollum
- Gollum leaves the mountain
- Elves track Gollum East
- Aragorn tracks Gollum

Discussion of Gollum as a hobbit and the riddle game

This nineteen-line passage had its origins in nine lines in the first phase. In it, Bingo's reaction to the idea of Gollum being a hobbit is established. Gandalf argues, as he will continue to do through the phases, that their backgrounds were similar. Bingo's original assessment of Gollum's story is, "How very horrible and sad." By the fourth phase, this has been amended to "How loathsome!" and in a rejoinder Frodo says, "What an abominable idea!" By the fourth phase, the beginning of this passage is almost exactly the same as the published text. Sometime between the fourth phase and the publication, Tolkien reinforced the idea of Frodo's chauvinistic response to Gandalf's assertion that Gollum was a hobbit. He gives Frodo a whole paragraph about hobbits not being the only creatures who do riddles, hobbits not cheating, and Gollum's own evil motives. This addition underlined the expanding theme of the need for all the creatures of Middle-earth to cooperate against the power of Sauron.

Gollum's toughness

Phase one devotes twenty-one lines to this discussion. In Phase two, Gandalf comments to Bingo, "Frightfully wearisome, Bingo, in fact finally tormenting (even if you do not become a Wraith). Only Elves can stand it, and even they fade." The last sentence about the Elves enduring the Ring but fading is removed in the next revision as Tolkien's exploration of the nature of the Ring grew. The final text in *The Fellowship of the Ring* is twenty-eight lines long. Gandalf's explanation of Gollum's state of mind becomes much more fulsome with the wizard exploring more fully Gollum's hobbitness and speculating on Gollum's reaction to

Bilbo. Gandalf retains hope for Gollum's cure. Gollum's internal struggle against the power of the Ring is presented poignantly. The simple description of Gollum's wretchedness has been transformed into a thoughtful discussion of the influence of great evil on a wretched but redeemable creature.

The Ring itself

In the first draft, the next section of text focuses around Bingo's suggestion that Gollum might have given the Ring to the goblins; Gandalf rejects this on the practical grounds that the goblins were already beastly and miserable enough and that it would have been difficult to have an invisible goblin on the loose. This whole discussion will later be reduced to Frodo's line, "Wouldn't an Orc have suited it better?" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 65).

Already in the first phase the text carries the idea that agency played a part in the Ring's removal from Gollum to Bilbo. In the second phase, that idea becomes clearer with Gandalf uttering the justly famous speech, "I can put it no clearer than by saying that *Bilbo was 'meant' to have the Ring*, and that he perhaps got involved in the Quest of the treasure mainly for that reason." The original ending line of the speech in this version is, "In which case you were meant to have it. Which may (or may not) be a comforting thought" (Tolkien, 1988, p. 262). In the final version, this idea is even more clearly stated, for Tolkien replaces the discussion of Bilbo's involvement with the quest with the simple but expressive phrase, "and *not* by its maker", in phase four. The word "meant" receives the emphasis of italics and the equivocation over Frodo's having the Ring is resolved by the final draft. Gandalf says, "And that may be an encouraging thought" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 65).

Christopher Tolkien reports that this section was expanded in the third version; at some point before the final publication, Tolkien described the power of the Ring in determining its own fate more clearly in a paragraph beginning, "A Ring of Power looks after itself, Frodo." This addition is excellent in clarifying the situation and fits with Professor Shippey's interpretation of the Ring as a sentient being (Shippey, 1982, p.108).

A paragraph dealing with another power was added to this section at the fourth phase – a Ring trying to return to its master now appears. Between the fourth phase and the final one, Tolkien rearranged the sentences in this area, made them much more succinct, and tied the ideas into concrete examples from the history of the Ring. I suspect that "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age" might have been composed between phase four and the final version.

Gandalf's knowledge

Frodo questions the source and certainty of Gandalf's knowledge about the Ring beginning in the second phase of the story where many essential elements of this section – the fire writing, the knowledge of the Wise, and the reference to Elven history (Gilgalad and Isildor, not Elendil and Isildur)

already appear. In phase two, Gandalf urges Bingo to recall Gollum's first riddle, which he does. Christopher Tolkien remarks in the notes, "It is not very evident what Gandalf had deduced from Gollum's first riddle" (Tolkien, 1988, p. 271). Apparently, J.R.R. Tolkien also found the reference obscure, for in phase four, Gandalf does not ask about it but rather discusses how he pieced the story together from Gollum, from the minds and histories of the creatures of Middle-earth, and from his own logic. In the final version, Gollum's story and Gandalf's logic suffice. All the early versions end with Frodo/Bingo trying to reconcile the account just given with Bilbo's original account. That concern is subsumed into later discussion about why the differences exist.

Gandalf sees Gollum

"You have seen Gollum?" Seeing Gollum illustrates Tolkien's phrase, "This tale grew in the telling" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 5). Phase two provides the first text for Gandalf's extended forty-four-line account of Gollum's movements between his meeting with Bilbo and his eventual entry into Mordor. In this early account, Gollum thinks he has been misunderstood and ill-treated; he is unwilling to say anything after the Riddle Game. Gollum now believes that he has powerful friends and he knows Bilbo's name. Gandalf quotes his answers to the question about how he came to know Bilbo's name¹. His cunning, his creeping into Mirkwood, his trail of horrors, and his tracking by the Wood-elves are all present in the original presentation of the story. In fact several lines are precisely the same. In phase three, Frodo's question changes to, "You have seen Gollum!" Tolkien continues to wrestle with the problem of how Gollum came to have the Ring. Sometime after work on the fourth phase, he conceived the idea that the Ring had been associated with a birthday and wrote that across the manuscript. The development of that idea then resolved many of the problems in this section of the manuscript.

The revisions after phase four continued with refinements of words and phrases. Gollum's quotations now refer to his encounter with Bilbo rather than to how he knew Bilbo's name. The account of Gollum's travels is more detailed. We know that he followed Bilbo's trail to Esgaroth and then on towards the Shire, but he turned aside; as Tolkien notes in the final draft, "No, something else drew him away" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 67).

Only in the final version does Gandalf discuss his mistake in abandoning the search for Gollum because Gandalf still trusted the lore of Saruman. Aragorn, now introduced as "the greatest traveller and huntsman of this age of the world," finds Gollum. The scene ends with the sentence in the first draft, "I have in fact a horrible fancy that he made his slow sneaking way bit by bit to the dark tower, to the Necromancer, the Lord of the Rings. I think that Gollum is very likely the beginning of our present trouble; and that through him the Lord found out where to look for this last and most precious and potent of his Rings." This passage

¹ Christopher Tolkien points out that Bilbo tells him in *The Hobbit*.

underwent considerable expansion that allowed it to explain the details of this new interest by the Lord. In the finished version, the section ends dramatically, "But I am afraid there is no possible doubt: he had made his slow, sneaking way, step by step, mile by mile, south, down at last to the Land of Mordor" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 68). In the following section, the heavy silence includes "no sound of Sam's shears."

In the Foreword to *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien stated, "this tale grew in the telling" (Tolkien, 1967a, p. 5). This comparison of passages from versions of *The Lord of the Rings* illustrates that statement thoroughly. In instance after instance, ideas are sketched forth only to be filled in and expanded as the tale developed more fully.

References

- Shippey, T. A. 1982. *The Road to Middle-earth*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1967a. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, second edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1967b. *The Two Towers*, second edition. Boston, Houghton Mifflin.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1981. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1984. "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics." *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1988. *The Return of the Shadow (The History of "The Lord Of The Rings", part one)*, ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1989. *The Treason of Isengard (The History of "The Lord of the Rings", part two)*, ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.