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## On the Shoulders of Gi(E)nts: The Joys of Bibliographic Scholarship and Fanzines in Tolkien Studies

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## Online Winter Seminar



### Online Winter Seminar

The Inklings and Horror: Fantasy's Dark Corners

February 4-5, 2022 (Friday evening, Saturday all day)

Via Zoom and Discord

## Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-52.htm>

### Abstract

I would like to thank the Council of Stewards for their kind invitation to speak at this year's conference, with special thanks to Janet Brennan Croft, Leslie Donovan, Alicia Fox-Lenz, and Lynn Maudlin. I was thrilled when Alicia sent me the invitation to attend as guest scholar, especially when she said my recent bibliographic scholarship was a reason. I am happy to be able to join you all this year to celebrate one of The Mythopoeic Society's series of 50th anniversary events, specifically, the launch of *Mythlore*. The journal, due to its longevity and focus on mythopoeic literature, is one of the most important sources on Tolkien scholarship. In addition, the *Mythlore Index Plus* by Janet Brennan Croft and Edith Crowe, which makes data on all Mythopoeic publications easily available online, is a fantastic tool. I know that every time I do a bibliographic search for a Tolkien project, I find that some of, if not the, earliest work on the topic appeared in *Mythlore*, which should not be surprising giving that the MLA indexes 422 articles on Tolkien in the journal!

My talk today is about bibliographic scholarship and fanzines, two great things that go great together! I must start with a confession though: becoming a fan of bibliographic scholarship was a shocking mid-career change for me. I never had a course in bibliography and methods because my first Master's was in Creative Writing in an English department that exempted us from the "academic" bibliography class and my second was in English at the Bread Loaf School of English, a summer graduate program developed for teachers, that took a different approach to graduate studies. When I eventually got to my doctoral program, there were minimal course requirements, and I did not seek out a bibliography course because I shared the common attitude that having to read essays on literature is tedious and boring compared to actually reading literature. When I was hired for a tenure-track job at East Texas State University, one of my senior colleagues, Dr. James "Bo" Grimshaw, a bibliographer, was shocked to learn I had never had such a class and suggested (perhaps jokingly, perhaps not) that I take his course. What changed my attitude toward bibliographic scholarship was Tolkien!

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**Additional Keywords**

fanzines



## ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS: THE JOYS OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC SCHOLARSHIP AND FANZINES IN TOLKIEN STUDIES<sup>1</sup>

ROBIN ANNE REID

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE COUNCIL OF STEWARDS for their kind invitation to speak at this year's conference, with special thanks to Janet Brennan Croft, Leslie Donovan, Alicia Fox-Lenz, and Lynn Maudlin. I was thrilled when Alicia sent me the invitation to attend as guest scholar, especially when she said my recent bibliographic scholarship was a reason. I am happy to be able to join you all this year to celebrate one of The Mythopoeic Society's series of 50th anniversary events, specifically, the launch of *Mythlore*. The journal, due to its longevity and focus on mythopoeic literature, is one of the most important sources on Tolkien scholarship. In addition, the *Mythlore Index Plus* by Janet Brennan Croft and Edith Crowe, which makes data on all Mythopoeic publications easily available online, is a fantastic tool. I know that every time I do a bibliographic search for a Tolkien project, I find that some of, if not the, earliest work on the topic appeared in *Mythlore*, which should not be surprising given that the MLA indexes 422 articles on Tolkien in the journal!

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<sup>1</sup> Scholar Guest of Honor Speech, Mythcon 49, Atlanta GA, 2018.

(perhaps jokingly, perhaps not) that I take his course. What changed my attitude toward bibliographic scholarship was Tolkien!

The title of my talk is based on two connections between Tolkien's Ents and the theme of this year's conference, although I should perhaps apologize for the pun in my title which I could not resist. The first connection is etymological: their species' name is based on an Anglo-Saxon word for "giant," one of many examples of what Tom Shippey calls Tolkien's "reconstruction" and Peter Gilliver calls his "linguistic imagination." In a 1954 letter to Katherine Farr, Tolkien says that "Ent" means a "mighty person of long ago—to whom all old works were ascribed," and says it has a "slightly philosophical tone [...] that also interested me" (#157, 208). At least in my current reading of the Ents, I see them as bibliographers in an oral rather than a print culture. As Treebeard explains to Merry and Pippin, "hobbits" are not in the "old lists that I learned when I was young [...] a long, long, time ago" (III.4.464) although he acknowledges that some unidentified "they" may have made new lists since then. Treebeard is the one to later add "hobbits" to the "Long List" for Ents to remember, placing their couplet after that of the Ents and before the Big People although he does not use Pippin's verse (464, 568).

The kind of bibliographic scholarship I do hovers on the boundaries of the field as defined by "The Bibliographical Society of America," the "oldest scholarly society in North America," which started in 1904. The Society defines bibliography as the study of "books and manuscripts as physical objects" on its home page, and as a branch of library and/or information sciences with specific sub-branches that focus on listing books relating to specific topics, or books in a specific location, or lists describing books as material objects. Bibliographies have expanded beyond books to include articles, and lists about texts in other media are identified by different names, filmographies for films, for example. A term has even been coined for a list of web pages, "arachniography." It was invented by a NASA engineer, Andrew J. Butrica. According to the entry on "arachniography" on WhatIs.com (a resource about information technology for those working in the field to learn each other's specialized terminology), he first thought of calling it a "webography" but disliked the mixed etymology (the Germanic "web" and Greek "graphy"). His brother, a Classics professor, suggested a word coined from two Greek ones instead, which I admit to liking more than his original idea.

There is a strong tradition of bibliographic scholarship in Tolkien studies. Today I will focus on the academic publications, although this is one choice among many. The earliest Tolkien bibliographies appeared in fanzines. Richard West published *Tolkien Criticism: An Annotated Checklist* with the Kent State University Press in 1970, but notes that its first publication was in *Orcrist* #1. The 73-page publication includes Tolkien's scholarship and fiction, starting

in the 1920s, and ending in 1969. West strove for completeness rather than critical selection. He provides brief information about each source and identifies major fanzines in his "Foreword," although the number of fanzines and the lack of indexing means that he was not able to include articles from them in his checklist. The list is organized in sections: Section A on Tolkien's own works; Section B on articles and books about Tolkien's work organized alphabetically by author's name; Section C on reviews of single books by Tolkien; and Section D being an index of all titles cited.<sup>2</sup>

The second Tolkien bibliography appeared in 1986, created by Judith A. Johnson, and published by Greenwood Press as the sixth volume in their "Bibliographies and Indexes in World Literature" series. The 266-page annotated bibliography is organized chronologically, with the first chapter covering 1922-1952 and the others covering a single decade each through 1984. Johnson's book covers reviews and criticism of Tolkien's earlier scholarship as well as his fiction. Her introductions to each chapter point out patterns in the critical responses in the time period, and there is an Appendix and two indexes. The Appendix lists Tolkien-related organizations and their journals, including what university libraries have the journals available. One index lists critics by name and the other is organized by Tolkien's publications grouped with the critical responses to each one.

West's and Johnson's works share some common themes: both note the impossibility of a complete bibliography (the impossible dream of every bibliographer, I suspect!); both credit bibliographic and critical work done by other fans published in fanzines (both thanking Glen GoodKnight and *Mythlore* among others) and invite corrections and additions in future; and both choose

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<sup>2</sup> As this project was going through the proofreading process, Janet Brennan Croft brought the following to my attention: Richard West published a revision of his 1970 *Tolkien Criticism* in 1981. I do not own a copy (yet), but it is 177 pages and covers work through 1980. The arrangement is much the same but uses Roman numerals instead of letters. Section I is "Tolkien's Writings"; Section II is "Critical Works on Tolkien"; Section III is "Book Reviews"; Section IV is "Indexes." In this edition, he excludes fanzines. Then, in 2004, he published "A Tolkien Checklist: Selected Criticism 1981-2004," in *Modern Fiction Studies*. Emphasizing the growth in scholarship on Tolkien's work, West notes the need to catch up. He covers "Review Articles," "Companions and Guides," "Monographs and Books," "Collections of Essays," "Special Issues," and "Essays and Articles," ending with an entry for the 2000 publication of Tolkien's letters with Hammond and Scull's longer index. This checklist is, by necessity, limited rather than comprehensive, focusing on scholarship in English, on Tolkien's fiction only, in print publication, excluding adaptations of his work. In this checklist he notes he does include some work by fans and publications for a more general audience. The article includes evaluations and brief commentary, with the choices reflecting publications that West considers the strongest.

to include popular and academic criticism relating to Tolkien. I especially like Johnson's explanation why she does not divide these into separate categories which she sees as "artificial and frequently misleading." She writes: "[w]ithout [Tolkien's] interest in philology, medieval literature and mythology, [he] would never have written his fantasy works. Without his interest in fantasy, he would probably not have been attracted to the academic fields that became his life's work. Tolkien considered 'lang' and 'lit' two parts of the same indivisible whole; I believe he also considered his scholarly work and his fantasy work as two parts of an indivisible whole" ("Introduction" vii).

Another type of bibliographic scholarship involves the evaluation of published work. In 2000, Michael D. C. Drout and Hilary Wynne published an extensive and authoritative essay accompanying their thirty-page bibliography of Tolkien scholarship from 1984-2000, starting from when Johnson's ended. Their essay, "Tom Shippey's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* and a Look Back at Tolkien Criticism Since 1982," identifies and addresses two related problems in Tolkien criticism: first, the tendency of Tolkien critics to not read the published criticism, which leads to the second, the repetition of certain basic arguments. They identify other bibliographic resources (I learned about Judith Johnson's book from this essay!) and analyze the scholarship from Shippey's first book to the time of their essay. They discuss the state of work on major topics in Tolkien scholarship—textual and manuscript history, source studies, themes of good and evil, Tolkien's "Mythology for England"—and then go on to identify weaknesses and gaps they would like to see addressed in future Tolkien criticism. The weaknesses they identified include "defending Tolkien against his detractors" (113) and "attack[s] on" Tolkien "fandom" (123). The gaps in the scholarship which need filling are, most importantly, stylistic analysis and applying contemporary socio-historical critical theories that involve consideration of constructions of race, class and gender to Tolkien's work, although they seem somewhat dubious about the contemporary approaches. They also argue that good critical work requires studying *The History of Middle-earth*.

Starting in 2004, the annual journal *Tolkien Studies* has included bibliographic materials in every issue. There are two regular bibliographic resources: a bibliography of Tolkien criticism in English and descriptive essays on the scholarship ("The Year in Tolkien Studies"). They have also published a number of checklists on the works of specific Tolkien scholars, the first being Douglas A. Anderson's list of Tom Shippey's publications. The bibliographic articles are currently being overseen by David Bratman, working with a number of Tolkienists, and a stellar list of others have contributed in the past: Douglas A. Anderson, Marjorie Burns, Edith Crowe, Michael Drout, Merlin DeTardo, Rebecca Epstein, Jason Fisher, John William Houghton, Laura Kalafarsky,

Stefanie Olsen, Kathryn Paar, Lauren Provost, and Jason Rea. David invited me to join this effort a few years ago and has been extremely kind and patient, especially when it comes to deadlines.

Other publications with bibliographic resources exist. *Mythlore* has also published bibliographic work on Tolkien and the Inklings, by Glen GoodKnight, George Thompson, Joe Christopher, Janet Brennan Croft, and Wayne G. Hammond. The authoritative bibliography on Tolkien's own publications, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography* by Wayne G. Hammond and Douglas A. Anderson, was published in the Winchester Bibliographies of 20th Century Writers series in 1993. Brad Eden, in a presentation at the 2018 Leeds Medieval Congress, argued the necessity of additional bibliographic resources relating to the historiography covering Tolkien's life in "A Man of His Time?: Tolkien and the Edwardian Worldview." In 2016, Janet Brennan Croft published an essay on "Bibliographic Resources for Literature Searches on J.R.R. Tolkien," in the *Journal of Tolkien Research*. Croft provides information on a wide range of resources, including free online ones as well as print and subscription databases, keeping the needs of independent scholars in mind.

I am indebted to these gi(E)nts whose shoulders I stand on to do my work. My contributions tend towards a narrower focus, specifically on topics and approaches relating to my scholarly interests in contemporary feminist, critical race, queer, and intersectional theories. I agree with West and Johnson that it is worth looking at fan as well as academic criticism, despite the problem of the vast range of commentary which has increased by the growth of fandoms on the internet. Using fanzines in my work is somewhat atypical for literary academic culture, which tends to valorize peer-reviewed scholarship and "literary with a capital L" works, but it would be accepted without question in cultural studies and some areas of history. There is also a growing awareness of reception theory in literary studies. I would note that when it comes to Tolkien, as well as many other popular authors, fan criticism and scholarship often precedes academic publications. I am also seeing increasing numbers of graduate students and junior faculty who are open about their years in fandom before they started graduate school, which is perhaps one reason for less mocking of "fandom" among the later generations of Tolkien scholars.

I was also a fan of science fiction and fantasy years before I decided to major in English. From the time I learned to read, encouraged by my father, a geology professor who was a longtime SF fan, I loved science fiction and fantasy, both those produced for children (the Mushroom Planet series, Space Cat, and the Oz books), and those found in his SF magazines as well as the SF juveniles. I read *The Hobbit* when I was eight though I did not like it very much, but when I got my hands on *The Lord of the Rings* at ten, I became addicted, reading it over a hundred times in the next decade, logging the details in a reading journal that



I lost somewhere along the way. I was involved in *Star Trek* fandom in the 1970s and early 1980s, and in APA fandom from the 1980s into the early 1990s, staying in fandom while doing graduate work. I gafiated<sup>3</sup> when I started writing my dissertation, but found myself in online fandom in 2003 as a result of my love for Peter Jackson's live-action film adaptation, which also led me to film adaptation studies and fan studies.

As with many other aspects of my life, my passion for bibliographic scholarship can be credited to Tolkien's influence, specifically to Janet Brennan Croft's and Leslie Donovan's *Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J.R.R. Tolkien*, for which I proposed writing a bibliographic essay analyzing the scholarship on female characters in Tolkien's legendarium from a feminist perspective. As I explained in that essay's first paragraph, the

purpose of this bibliographic essay is to provide an historical overview of fan, independent, and academic scholarship on female characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium. The element that makes this essay feminist is not that the scholarship is defined as feminist, or written by self-identified feminists (although some is), or even limited to authors who identify as women. Instead, as a feminist academic trained in cultural studies, I have identified articles and book chapters that primarily focus on Tolkien's female characters. (13)

My analysis of the scholarship showed three major changes over time: more attention paid to female characters, more scholarship using contemporary theories and methods, and a change in publication venues, from "fanzines to peer reviewed journals to academic collections" (13).

Tolkien scholars see the same sort of changes happening in Tolkien scholarship as a whole, including more attention being paid to Tolkien and to the adaptations and transformative works inspired by his legendarium. In 2000, Drouot and Wynne viewed the growth of scholarship through a rather negative lens, saying that the "glut of materials on Tolkien now in the MLA database" (104) makes it difficult to find the good articles. Dimitra Fimi expressed a more positive attitude on the state of Tolkien scholarship in her 2009 monograph, *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits*:

[A]lthough academics are elitist by nature, there has not been any better time for the inclusion of an author such as Tolkien in mainstream academic research. The boundary between 'high' literature and fiction that appeals to mass audiences has become blurred, especially with the

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<sup>3</sup> *Gafiated* comes from an early science fiction fandom acronym, GAFIA, meaning "Get Away From It All" — Ed.

advent of 'theory' and cultural studies. 'Classical' texts are analyzed alongside comics, and popular fiction and films are discussed as 'texts' worth 'reading'. In this context, Tolkien can be rediscovered and re-analysed in a serious way—a process that has already started during the last few years. (201)

I tend to agree with Fimi and appreciate the wide range of materials indexed by the MLA, although I also agree with Drout and Wynne that winding one's way through the thickets of the bibliographic records can be a daunting task. I suspect researchers often feel like hobbits gone astray in Fangorn.

However, it is possible to use the search tools in the MLA database to find paths through the scholarship rather than stopping with dismay when faced with the results of a simple subject search. On July 13, 2018, I did a "Subject" search on "Tolkien" in the Modern Languages International Bibliography, a search I do at least once a year, to keep track of what is being published. I do a "Subject" search because the more general one pulls up work on other mythopoeic authors and topics in *Mythlore* when the full title, which includes Tolkien's name, is included in entries. I should note that the MLA does not index all possible sources for Tolkien criticism but draws from over 6000 journals and book series in the fields of "literature, folklore, linguistics, languages, literary theory, criticism, dramatic arts, and the history of printing and publishing" ("MLA Directory"). According to the MLA FAQs, it currently contains more than 2.8 million records covering material in more than sixty languages. The website posts a spreadsheet of all journal titles being indexed (a total of 13,000) which can be downloaded from the MLA FAQ page. It is the database I go to first in my area of studies. I then check Academic Search Complete, which picks up material from journals in disciplines the MLA does not index, if I am feeling especially Entish.

The current number of publications listed on "Tolkien" is 2800 works including single-author monographs, essay collections, peer-reviewed articles, general articles, and editions. The earliest publication listed appeared in 1952, so Johnson's bibliography is required to see what was published before that date.

I then limited my search to everything published by 1999 (the year before Drout and Wynne's article appeared) to see what they were dealing with: the total for that period is 1004 publications. That means that from 2000-2018, the MLA added 1,796 publications on Tolkien which averages out to nearly 100 publications a year. The numbers clearly show the rising interest in publishing on Tolkien's legendarium and associated works as well as the different types of publications:

Academic Journals: 1,744  
 Book Articles: 837  
 Books: 162

Dissertation Abstracts: 51  
 Editions: 5

This overall growth has a number of implications, but the most obvious is that it is no longer possible to have claim to have read, even cursorily in some cases, all the published Tolkien scholarship listed in the MLA, not even if you limit it to peer-reviewed articles and books. You can direct searches to show what was published in specific years or decades, or, of course, add additional search terms to limit by topics.

**TABLE 1: TOP 50 SUBJECTS**

You can expand and see a list of the top fifty subject terms for your search results. The list is not exhaustive, and every entry lists multiple subjects for the article or book. However, a subject search allows a quick overview of the range of approaches taken to specific texts, genre topics, themes, disciplinary contexts, other authors, literary analysis or teaching topics, etc.

TABLE ONE: TOP 50 SUBJECTS 1952-2018

| SUBJECT                       | PUBLICATIONS | SUBJECT                     | PUBLICATIONS | SUBJECT                    | PUBLICATIONS |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| novel                         | 1,623        | mythopoesis                 | 70           | christianity               | 42           |
| the lord of the rings trilogy | 1,295        | fantasy fiction             | 69           | the fellowship of the ring | 42           |
| fiction                       | 588          | beowulf                     | 68           | invented languages         | 41           |
| the hobbit                    | 321          | williams, charles           | 65           | english language (modern)  | 40           |
| dramatic arts                 | 262          | language                    | 58           | old norse literature       | 40           |
| film                          | 261          | folk literature             | 57           | 400-1499                   | 39           |
| film adaptation               | 248          | linguistic approach         | 57           | bibliography               | 39           |
| jackson, peter                | 238          | american literature         | 52           | folk narrative             | 39           |
| the silmarillion              | 213          | 'on fairy-stories'          | 52           | elf                        | 38           |
| fantasy novel                 | 177          | 400-1099 old english period | 50           | german literature          | 37           |
| lewis, c. s.                  | 164          | pedagogical approach        | 49           | lord of the rings films    | 37           |
| prose                         | 141          | teaching of literature      | 49           | short story                | 36           |
| poetry                        | 131          | evil                        | 48           | hobbits                    | 34           |
| middle-earth                  | 112          | teaching approaches         | 46           | medievalism                | 33           |
| criticism                     | 85           | reception study             | 45           | heroism                    | 32           |
| myth                          | 80           | nature                      | 44           | marchen                    | 32           |
| 1800-1899                     | 74           | translation                 | 43           |                            |              |

**TABLE 2: TOP TEN SUBJECTS COMPARISON 20 YEAR PERIODS**

You can do comparisons by time periods as well: this table lists the top ten subjects for Tolkien scholarship by twenty year periods: 1952-1972; 1973-1993; and 1994-2014. Keeping in mind that any single publication will be indexed by multiple subjects, it's still possible to see some changes, for example, less work on Tolkien in the context of his fellow Inklings, Lewis, and Williams; more work on the film adaptations since Peter Jackson's live-action films; more work on Tolkien's individual publications, specifically *The Hobbit* and the 1977 *Silmarillion*.

| 1952-1972                         | Publications | 1973-1993                         | Publications | 1994-2014                        | Publications |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| <a href="#">lewis, c. s.</a>      | 17           | novel                             | 354          | novel                            | 1,081        |
| <a href="#">williams, charles</a> | 14           | the lord of the rings trilogy     | 226          | the lord of the rings trilogy    | 923          |
| 400-1099 old english period       | 6            | fiction                           | 122          | fiction                          | 378          |
| <a href="#">beowulf</a>           | 6            | the hobbit                        | 76           | dramatic arts                    | 235          |
| language                          | 6            | <a href="#">lewis, c. s.</a>      | 53           | film                             | 231          |
| <a href="#">paralinguistics</a>   | 6            | <a href="#">the silmarillion</a>  | 37           | film adaptation                  | 225          |
| folk literature                   | 5            | <a href="#">williams, charles</a> | 30           | <a href="#">jackson, peter</a>   | 219          |
| the lord of the rings trilogy     | 5            | myth                              | 26           | the hobbit                       | 186          |
| 1800-1899                         | 4            | poetry                            | 24           | <a href="#">the silmarillion</a> | 149          |
| novel                             | 4            | middle-earth                      | 23           | fantasy novel                    | 142          |

**TABLE 3: RECENT APPROACHES**

To find gaps in the scholarship, or what is not showing up on the Top 50 list, additional searches are necessary. In the case of Tolkien studies, these gaps are in what Drout and Wynne call "historico-literary analysis" or contemporary theoretical approaches relating to race, class, gender, and sexuality which is my major area of interest.

To generate the data for this table, I added additional subject terms relating to my areas of scholarly interest showing how many publications are indexed and the dates of the first and latest publications. The majority of work in these areas was published after Drout and Wynne's essay, and I expect to see more work being done in all these areas as Tolkien Studies grows in part because, as they acknowledged, these approaches reflect the current culture in humanities departments. Another reason I expect to see growth is that we are focusing on developing sessions and roundtables on these approaches at the Tolkien Studies area of the Popular Culture Association, with the goals of publishing theme issues in the online *Journal of Tolkien Research* as well as in print journals.

| Approach                | Publications | First Pub. | Most Recent Pub. |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------|------------------|
| Class SU                | 5            | 2004       | 2011             |
| Feminis# SU             | 8            | 1996       | 2015             |
| Fan SU                  | 27           | 2004       | 2018             |
| Female Characters<br>SU | 19           | 2003       | 2015             |
| Gender SU               | 13           | 1996       | 2015             |
| Homosexuality SU        | 7            | 2001       | 2015             |
| Queer SU                | 4            | 2001       | 2013             |
| Race SU                 | 11           | 2005       | 2017             |
| Women SU                | 21           | 1983       | 2015             |

**TABLE 4: PERIODS AND APPROACHES**

Another way in which Tolkien studies is changing involves periodization and approaches: it is no longer considered only a “medieval” text, of interest only to medievalists, whose work during the first fifty years of Tolkien scholarship is the foundation for today’s scholars. As interest in Tolkien studies crosses period boundaries, more work is being done on the text as a modern or even a postmodern text, although postmodern medievalism is a favorite phrase! The first and most recent publication dates show that this work is not replacing medievalist scholarship but is adding to it.

| Periods and Approaches                      | Total Pubs. | First Pub. | Most Recent Pub. |
|---|-------------|------------|------------------|
| medieval, medievalism                       | 52          | 1952       | 2017             |
| modern, modernism,<br>modernity             | 72          | 1971       | 2016             |
| postmodern, postmodernism,<br>postmodernist | 15          | 1990       | 2015             |

Before I move on to the fanzine portion of my talk, I just want to emphasize that this sort of exercise is only the start of a research process: subject searches do not and cannot substitute for engaged reading and re-reading of the scholarship. They are tools for researchers to get a sense of the scope of what is involved and to make better selections. However, I also would like to emphasize that spending time mousing around in the database often has serendipitous results that are similar to finding additional books in the stacks of the library. For example, when trying out the various search terms and checking the results for my tables, I found two articles that I had no idea existed and had to order by interlibrary loan: one is what appears to be the first publication on Tolkien and

postmodernism, the other a review of scholarship on medievalism and Tolkien that did not have “bibliographic” as a subject term.

The issues raised by bibliographic research have led me to another path that I have been wandering down in recent years: this path involves archival work in fanzine collections, such as the Tolkien Collection at Marquette University. The Marquette holdings are built on Tolkien’s original handwritten manuscripts for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* plus his typescripts and page proofs with corrections. Over the nearly sixty years since these were deposited at Marquette, archivists there have built up a large, unique, and remarkable collection of primary and secondary sources documenting critical and popular responses to Tolkien’s fiction. The archive possesses periodicals, published books, educational materials, fan collections, press clippings, newspaper reviews, conference and convention programs, and fanzines (“General Information”). Marquette is unique in this approach: neither Oxford University nor the Tolkien Estate has built a collection complementing the Tolkien papers they hold. Despite the unique nature of Marquette’s holdings and the 2004 conference on Tolkien scholarship held there which resulted in a published collection edited by Hammond and Scull, the Marquette Tolkien Archive remains under-utilized, and not only in regard to its primary collection but the secondary materials.

During 2014, I was lucky enough to spend a few days there while working on a grant proposal for the National Endowment of the Humanities for a seminar for university and college teachers, “Tolkien in America, 1965-2013.” The proposal was not funded, but reading the fanzines, many of them produced during the same decade I was first active in fandom, was fascinating. I worked primarily with the S. Gary Hunnewell Collection, consisting of hundreds of titles from multiple countries published between 1960 and the early 1990s. I worked with the microfilm versions which are permanently at Marquette, although I gather Hunnewell plans to donate the originals at some later time. This project will eventually lead to an essay on the reception of Tolkien’s fiction in the United States. Existing scholarship on reception has barely begun to move beyond anecdotes, or stereotypes of hippies and college students (Barker, Ricke and Barnett, Walmsley). The majority of the relatively few reception studies that have been published focus on Europe (Fimi, Garth, González, Griffin, Hooker, Shippey, Veldman, Werber). And while ground-breaking scholarship in media studies is being published on the impact of Jackson’s films (Barker and Mathijs, Mathijs, Mathijs and Pomerance), the gap in reception studies on the books is astonishing.

Martin Barker’s essay, “On Being a 1960s Tolkien Reader,” challenges the stereotypes of “60s Tolkien fans” which he argues occur because too often reception scholarship assigns a homogeneous identity to groups of readers

under the label of “interpretive communities” (85). As a British 1960s reader who was intensely involved in radical politics and the Liverpool radical poetry project, Barker blends reader response with adaptation and film studies approaches to analyze his response to Jackson’s films. He presents a series of questions for scholars to consider when working on a reception project that involves identifying and analyzing interpretive communities, including the issue of the extent that “1960s Tolkien readers” had connections with the pre-existing science fiction fandom, as well as existing within a variety of different cultural contexts including comics fandom, role playing games, environmental movements, and political activism, a claim which I have found support for in even my first foray through the fanzines, as well as in my personal memories of fandom in a Star Trek Outpost where we were likely to be discussing *The Lord of the Rings*, *Dune*, *Dr. Who*, *The Watchmen*, and *Monty Python* along with *Star Trek!*

I thought I would conclude today by talking about one of the fanzines, *Amon Din*, that intrigued me because of the extent to which the editor, Steve Porter, was interested in what I can only call critical or scholarly questions concerning Tolkien but also fantasy fiction. There is a definite sense that he sees fandom and the fanzine as creating a scholarly discussion on Tolkien which filled a gap at the time. The tension between ‘fandom as fun’ versus ‘srs. scholarship’ was shown by ongoing commentary over the relatively short time the ‘zine was in production. *Amon Din* was edited and published by Porter and his co-editor, J. Robert Gilbert, for the Tolkien Society of Treewood in Englewood, Colorado from 1972-1973. There are eight issues, ranging from three to six pages long, with one issue that is eleven pages. The title, *Amon Din*, was followed by a sub-title, “Hill of Silence Yet Beacon in the West” with an explanation in the first issue: “One reason we picked the ‘hill of silence’ name is because so often there are people who think Studies of Tolkien are useless yet they like *The Lord of the Rings* quietly.”

The goals of the club were to engage in “serious study” of *The Lord of the Rings* and other fantasy novels and their applicability to “the real world” in weekly meetings. The group was never very large, with reports of four to five people attending, and lack of attendance over summers. But even as small as Treewood was, members had different interests: in the first issue Porter says that “[s]oon we have to decide whether to delve into LotR accepting the history of Middle-earth as real, and then studying its languages and peoples, or to look at it as a professional work of art.” In the second issue, Porter reports that there are two classes of people attending the discussion group: those “who study linguistics and histories, and things out of the appendices. . . . The second class are those who study implications of ‘The Lord of the Rings’ in their own lives and the Real World.” He says he was once involved in the first kind of work and

is interested in the second approach but wants the group to welcome both types of fans.

Essay titles and topics include: "The Ties Between LOTR and the Music of Led Zeppelin"; "The Realm of Fantasy" discussing Eddison, Peake, Dunsany, and Lewis; "A Tale of Rings" about rings in Morris and Eddison, concluding that there "is a huge common well of lore from which masters of fantasy can draw." "Was Gollum the Chosen One" devotes two full columns to a discussion of the theme of the books in relation to Gollum, and the fact that so many of the heroes had the chance to kill him but did not, concluding that his continued existence implies guidance by the Valar and raises questions about free will. "Hobbits and the Ring" discusses why the story required hobbits who did not use the Ring to acquire power as the ones to carry it and then destroy it; "*The Silmarillion*" considers various rumors about eventual publication, including the 1965 information reported by Dick Plotz that had promised something in the next year. Several articles were published under the title "Concerning Linguistics." One focuses on the Elven languages with a "Glossary of Eldarin Tongues" and asks whether there was interest in studying Tolkien's invented languages, and another discusses Quenya and Sindarin with comparisons to Latin and other languages. "A History of Tolkienism" discusses the movement from the small "cult"-like fandom in the 1950s to the greater popularity and awareness of the work after the Ace paperback publication led to the authorized Ballantine edition. Porter includes history of the Tolkien Society of America, its eventual melding with the Mythopoeic Society, as well as different fanzines, showing the longevity of "Tolkien study." "The Power" discusses power of change that comes from reading the book over and over again, inspiring actions or "ways of thinking." Porter wrote that he saw book discussion groups as vital for readers to avoid stagnation, expressing it in mystical terms: "And all Amon Din and the group is about is the realization and acception [sic] of this power, which is going to continue forever, whenever someone reads the books for the first time" (2)

Reports on the book discussion group weeks indicate they discussed topics such as whether Orcs have souls, responding to publications on the topic at the time. Another discussion topic was people's favorite parts of *LotR*: specific chapters mentioned included "In the House of Tom Bombadil," "Treebeard," and "The Stairs of Cirith Ungol."

By the third issue, Porter was announcing new goals for the fanzine:

1. Study of Tolkien and Lewis' work
2. Publishing original stories by Gilbert and Porter "based on our private mythologies of Anerath (sp?) and Arcane"
3. News of the Tolkien Society of Treewood
4. Articles related to Appendices of *LotR*



The discussion group is reported as beginning to create a game, described as:

a thinking game following the lines of LotR, and so far we have decided it will concern setting problems to the players, and the best solvers will gain an advantage. Also the players will take characters from LotR and play for their goals. A game was made a few years ago called "The Conquest of the Ring" but it was more of the roll-the-dice kind, and had nothing at all to do with "The Lord of the Rings."

The last page from the September 2, 1973 issue, ends with Porter's announcement that as he was finishing up the issue he heard the news of Tolkien's death on the radio. He describes his shock and his immediate reaction of disbelief, and dedicates the issue to Tolkien. The last—and final issue—contains a number of tributes to Tolkien from fans.

Just spending the few days at Marquette that I did, reading through a small percentage of the fanzines in the Hunnewell collection, gave me the strong sense that Tolkien's fiction achieved its extraordinary popularity in the context of American cultural developments which his books in turn influenced. In other fanzines, I found debates about the anti-war protests and an on-going thread of strong environmental concerns, expressed not only in essays but in art, poetry, and fiction, as well as a common thread of the importance of Tolkien's fiction to the lives of these fans, a theme shared by the Tolkien fans I have met online and the Tolkien scholars.

I hope that this discussion of incorporating bibliographic research and archival research of fanzines into the study of Tolkien's work has been of use and interest! Like the Ents, I admit that academics take "a very long time to say anything" and hope it is "because we do not say anything [...] unless it is worth taking a long time to say" (III.4.465).

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