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Abstract

Compares the nature and function of the riddles in *The Hobbit* with their source in such Anglo-Saxon riddles as those collected in *The Exeter Book*, which were meant to provide spiritual instruction as well as mental exercise and a dose of humor.

Additional Keywords

The Exeter Book—Relation to *The Hobbit*; Riddles—Religious aspects; Riddles in *The Hobbit*; Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*—Riddles



From Under Mountains to Beyond Stars

The Process of Riddling in Leofric's *The Exeter Book* and *The Hobbit*

Christopher L. Couch

"But such reflections are -- useless -- I had almost said criminal -- unless they teach us to prepare for eternity, since otherwise they cloud our present happiness without guiding us to a future one."

Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

Elizabeth Jennings in *Christian Poetry* describes Old English or Anglo-Saxon poetry as "that body of verse in the vernacular [that is, Old English] which was produced from the seventh century to the Norman Conquest" (20)¹. She further exhorts, "This is a period of time which has, I believe, been too often regarded merely linguistically or historically, with the result that its literary value[s] have been very much neglected" (Jennings, 20). *The Exeter Book*, "the greatest anthology of Old English" poetry" (Diamond, 206), contains nearly a hundred Anglo-Saxon riddles -- carefully and delightfully crafted word games, works that undoubtedly teased and amused their original audience. But serving as they do in a volume of works that cover sober themes and provide definite, mainly religious instruction -- and sitting in the library of a bishop, Leofric of Exeter, who was devoted to developing a learning, sharing religious community -- it is possible to acknowledge and celebrate the Exeter riddles as forms providing more than entertainment (not forgetting in the first place that the riddles are fun)? I would offer that these riddles provide learning (in addition to amusement) much as any other tool in the literary tradition of its time, certainly in *The Exeter Book*. And the riddles provide instruction in a lively, engaging way, "teaching" awareness of realities beyond the "normal" reality which most of us acknowledge we inhabit through not only identifying the riddles' solutions but more importantly participating in the solving of the riddles.

Roughly nine hundred years after the death of the bishop who contributed *The Exeter Book* to the cathedral library (at Exeter), J.R.R. Tolkien composed a riddle contest to resolve a dark, tense encounter between heroic and villainous characters in *The Hobbit*. George W. Boswell identifies Tolkien's use of riddles as one of "the materials and... techniques of folklore" (44). On the importance of the riddles in *The Hobbit*, Kathryn F. Crabbe comments:

When Tolkien makes his puns and asks his riddles in *The Hobbit*, he is not only

having his joke and making allusions to conventions of Anglo-Saxon and Middle-English literature, he is also involving the reader in the very way that language itself works and provides an enjoyment of its own. (59)

Tolkien himself thought the riddle-game important enough to identify in his stories as time-honored and binding. It seems evident that Tolkien knew the Anglo-Saxon riddling tradition, especially as it is expressed in *The Exeter Book*; so, pursuant to this essay, is it also possible that Tolkien was inspired by this tradition in the making of his own riddles? If this is so, then I would offer overall that the process I see at work in the Anglo-Saxon riddles also functions successfully in *The Hobbit*. The riddles are not only clever; they also encourage growth and awareness. For Bilbo Baggins on his adventure and for the reader of the novel, participation with the riddles is an opportunity to learn about as well as enjoy not only language (as Crabbe suggests) but also alternate views of reality -- or alternate realities to view. And, as I have already stated, this opportunity is similarly presented through the Exeter riddles.

In the introduction to his translation of *Anglo-Saxon Riddles of The Exeter Book*, Paul F. Baumann says of the time of the Anglo-Saxon riddles' writing that it was "in that transitional middle-world between pagan and Christian, when those men who were sufficiently trained to write English verse could look both ways and feel no hesitation in mingling the sacred and profane" (xii). An apparent paradox existed regarding the possibilities for both composing and interpreting Anglo-Saxon riddles: the high and low, sacred and mundane, meaningful and even bawdy live side by side in the riddles. If this is so in the writing and the solving (or possibilities for solving) of these riddles, cannot paradoxes also exist in appreciating the riddles themselves? Granted, riddles were a clever, engaging form of Anglo-Saxon entertainment; but at the same time they were more. They were very likely an instructive device. What I am arguing at this point is that riddles, through their poetic, metaphoric nature, provide and promote, and provide practice for, the capacity to accept differing ways of viewing reality -- or more importantly accepting the existence of different realities. Not only does the worldly, regular reality exist: abstract realities do, too. And the riddles are an entry into this perspective: to begin with, through the characterization of

the solutions (no longer is a plow merely a plow: it is a personage with often grand characteristics and capabilities). In other literature of that time, "The Seafarer" and "The Wanderer" for example, it is quite clear that an appreciation of another reality is encouraged: the spiritual realm of heaven which all persons should strive to attain. I believe the riddles as well encourage this view of a reality better than the one we live in day by day. If nothing else, the practice of dealing in the metaphoric reality of riddles should I think "connect" with accepting and understanding the spiritual reality. Here I will look at only a couple of the Exeter riddles -- particularly those with ordinary solutions -- and try to show how the abstract realities they invoke ultimately point toward heaven and heaven's God.

That riddles have metaphoric value has not gone unnoticed (prior to this essay). In fact Craig Williamson argues for an element of Anglo-Saxon riddles in addition to the metaphoric, that of the metamorphic:

The old English riddles are a metaphoric and metamorphic celebration of life in the eye of the Anglo-Saxon. Metaphoric because each riddle creature takes on the guise of another: the nightingale is an evening poet, mead is a wrestler... Metamorphic because in the natural flow (of the riddle) all creatures shift shapes: the horn turns from twinned head-warrior of the wild aurochs to battle-singer or mead-belly... (Foast, 3)

Williamson's assertions appear to argue for appreciating the riddles as process as well as puzzle. Finding the solution is one thing, but involvement with the riddle on the way to solving it means delving into the character created and the various perspectives and attitudes offered by the riddler. Williamson maintains that not only may we become involved in the riddle, we may turn into it, so to speak: "what we guess is what we have become" (Foast, 9). While the treatment of riddles may not always be so all embracing or even historically appropriate -- the original folk dealing with riddles may not have seen them quite in Williamson's way -- the argument does seem sound for viewing the riddles as an activity or process in and of themselves. Indeed since the solutions are often plain, our attention should be drawn all the more to consider the texts of the riddles and find meaning within these texts as well as their answers.

Riddle 14 in *The Exeter Book* directly challenges and invites involvement with itself:

In battle I rage against wave and wind,
Strive against storm, dive down seeking
A strange homeland, shrouded by the sea.
In the grip of war, I am strong when still,
In battle-rush, rolled and ripped
In flight. Conspiring wind and wave
Would steal my treasure, strip my hold,
But I seize glory with a guardian tail
As the clutch of stones stands hard
Against my strength. Can you guess my name?

The use of "ic" and "min" (first person in the original Old English) plus the interrogative at the riddle's end invite the reader or solver to identify with and participate in the riddle. In addition to the use of first person pronouns and the direct question, the riddle offers other elements for the solver's involvement and relating. As Marie Nelson asserts: "not having human subjects... does not mean that the

riddles are not about the human condition" (291). Certainly the war imagery can be related to by the person attempting to solve the riddle; the audience originally enjoying the riddles would be very well aware of the realities of war. So "rage" in "battle" would be a familiar occurrence and phrase, as would "grip of war," "battle-rush," and "treasure" and "glory" -- the rewards of war. But in this riddle there is no actual battle; instead the solution, anchor, wages a figurative campaign against storm and sea. Yet it is a struggle, one of which can be appreciated in light of the struggle of any person to complete any number of tasks and the desire to receive acknowledgement, a kind of "glory," when the task no matter how mundane or domestic is done.

Riddle 11 appears initially both baffling and amusing:

I saw six creatures scratch the ground,
Their four lively sisters strutting around;
The house of each, pale skin on shell,
A fine, filament robe hung on a wall,
Well-seen. Though each had been stripped
Of a gossamer skin, none was nude
Or raw with pain; but quickened, covered,
And brought to grass and grain by God --
They pecked, strutted, and stripped sod.

Actually this riddle isn't very hard to figure; the answer is begged early on with "six creatures" that "scratch the ground" given plus four others, siblings to the first "creatures," that also are "strutting around." This information along with the fact that these beings each came from a "house" which was a "shell" reveal that the riddle is about ten chickens (four hens and six cocks possibly). Since we have the answer fairly soon in the game, then what is left to do? A good bit, really. From the start we are invited by the riddler to experience that which has borne the riddle -- and to see this experience in the riddler's way. "I saw," the riddler states, creatures whose shells are not only houses; but each shell is a "fine, filament robe hung on a wall./Well-seen." Metaphor is placed on metaphor here, and if we are to deal with the riddle we must deal not only literally but figuratively as well. Thus the literal world is not the only one here. Outside of the riddle we may see ten chickens scratching in the yard; inside the riddle they become beings that wear robes of "fine, filament."

The literal world, then, is being left behind. But the perspective in the riddle becomes more than solely metaphoric, and the trappings of characters and setting become more than poetic surrogates for the literal. When "each had been stripped/Of a gossamer skin, none was nude/Or raw with pain..." (5-7). As a physical procedure, this is amazing. It is something, of course, that in the regular human world (molting snakes notwithstanding) does not happen, that someone should lose their skin and remain alive afterward. But we are in a world now where this kind of miraculous activity can happen. But is this variant world of the riddle different without direction, random in its not normal possibilities? Not at all. The creatures are "quickened, covered, and brought to grass and grain by God..." (7-8). God is credited with making the creatures remain alive and unharmed after losing their gossamer skins, and they are "quickened" (from "quick" in the sense of being alive) by being "covered" (literally, with down or feathers) and nurtured by God. In the Old English text the phrase in line 9b is "Hraegð bið geniwad" which may be translated as "raiment is renewed," and this notion of renewal

becomes key in considering the ultimate motivation of the process of the riddle. In the riddle we are taken from the normal world to the metamorphic one, where things are abstract and very irregular, where a chicken's shell is made of filament and gossamer and the flaying of skin does not render pain. From the metaphoric world, though, we move to the theocentric world where poetic miracles become divine manifesting. God is in control here, not only as creator but as maintainer as well. Thus he can make these creatures, remove them from their initial, secure state, and nurture them along once "renewed." The world of God is under his will.

The idea of renewal, of course, is Scripturally sound. Resurrection is assured for Christians who believe in the first resurrection, that of Christ; and resurrection for the saints is likened to a change of apparel: "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:52b-53). And so a spiritual parallel is applied to the process of the riddle. As the beings in the riddle may be "renewed" by God -- or will be renewed, since "bith" can be used to indicate future tense -- so may or will Christian believers be renewed even as Christ was first "renewed" through resurrection (he is described as being in new, white "raiment" in Matthew 28).

Even as it is important to be aware of the possibility of entry into the spiritual world, in the riddle and mainly for those dealing with the riddle, we who are experiencing this riddle are yet mortal; and so it ends earthbound: "They pierced, strutted, and stripped and." Back to the mortal, regular world where chickens scratch in dirt. But not without having benefited from the challenge of considering worlds in addition to this one. And if the spiritual possibilities, finally, are to be of any use then they must be thought of and applied in the here and now.

Historically, it's not unlikely that the original contributor of riddles to the library of Exeter Cathedral may also have been a key user of them. *The Exeter Book* which Leofric compiled and gave to the cathedral library contained literary works such as "The Seafarer," "The Wanderer," poems on the Christ, and the Exeter riddles. But Leofric was no mere bibliophile. It seems quite evident that he was an active, decisive person who among other things had a keen devotion to the enhancement of education for the clerics and clerical students of his diocese. He was a figure important enough to rate mention in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, though the year of his ascension to his bishopric is confused between 1044, 1045, and 1047 (*Chronicle* 108-109). According to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Leofric was effectively direct and decisive: "Finding his diocese in a backward state, for it had often been plundered by pirates, he visited it diligently, preached to the people, instructed the clergy, and built several churches. His life was decorous, and he was zealous in the discharge of his duties" (1942). When Leofric established his cathedral at Exeter it was after having appealed directly to Pope and king and moving with their approval; the king presided over the installing ceremonies.

At Exeter Leofric wrought much. He built his see and enhanced the diocese overall, securing lands, rights, and furnishings for parishes, their churches, and the cathedral (*National Biography* 942). Frank Barlow, writing on "Leofric and His Times," states that the era of Leofric "was a time of the first stirrings of

what were to become a major reform movement and a spectacular educational advance to be noticed in the western church" (4) and that "England was not immune from this awakening" (5). Barlow also reveals that though Leofric gave to the church many furnishings as well as many books, he was not a lavish: "Leofric started with a bare church and provided the necessities" (13). Thus we are given a man inclined to be generous but not extravagant, who was vitally preoccupied with duty, community, and education. Presumably, then, anything given to his community would be for use and not mere appreciation. Such as *The Exeter Book* with the various works compiled in it, among them the riddles.

It seems quite evident that Tolkien would have known Exeter riddles even as he knew other works in *The Exeter Book*. He might have first encountered Exeter riddles when he poured through Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader* in his early studies (Carpenter 63). He was impressed with and even inspired by particular lines appearing in the Christ group of poems that are part of the Exeter volume. In his writing Tolkien was clearly influenced by Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Icelandic, and (overall) germanic sources in his writing. That he might be aware of and draw from the Exeter riddles thus seems a very likely possibility.³

As with the riddles in *The Exeter Book*, we need to be active in Tolkien's riddles in *The Hobbit*. In the chapter "Riddles in the Dark" we find Bilbo under the mountains, free from goblins yet quite lost. "I should not have liked to have been in Mr. Baggins' place," comments the narrator on Bilbo's predicament (*Hobbit*, 81). Yet we are in Mr. Baggins' place, or we should be. The narration and especially the direct comments from narrator to reader invite the reader into the cove with Bilbo, about to encounter "by the dark water" at the mountains' root Gollum, "a small slimy creature" (*Hobbit*, 82). In fact the narrator apparently feels compelled to mollify our sensation at this point and in this place -- especially if we are young readers -- by advising us not to fear too greatly for Bilbo or us in this unpleasant surrounding:

Now certainly Bilbo was in what is called a tight place. But you must remember it was not quite so tight for him as it would have been for me or for you. Hobbits are not quite like ordinary people;... they are more used to tunneling than we are, and they do not easily lose their sense of direction underground -- not when their heads have recovered from being bumped. (*Hobbit*, 80-81)

Still, if these remarks do not entirely succeed in bringing us into the tale the word games should. But one more presaging comment is given to set up the competition to come: "... they [hobbits] have a fund of wisdom and wise sayings that men have mostly never heard or have forgotten long ago" (*Hobbit*, 81). Placed here, this revelation lets us know that what is ahead will require wisdom, what we are about to hear will be wise and clever.

Within Tolkien's lore riddling is of ancient age and merit. Robert Foster notes in *A Guide to Middle-earth* that it is a "game of set and sacred rules" and that: "The Riddle-game seems to have been played throughout Middle-earth, and was included in the guardianship of the Valar [the protectors of creation]" (216). When the contest between Bilbo and Gollum is over, consideration must be given in the narration on the outcome, especially Bilbo's "winning" question:

"And after all that last question had not been a genuine riddle according to the ancient laws" (*Hobbit*, 90). And apparently the debate on this outcome is not easily let go of; it needs commenting later on in *The Fellowship of the Ring*: "The Authorities, it is true, differ whether this last question was a mere 'question' and not a 'riddle' according to the strict rules of the Game; but all agree that, after accepting it and trying to guess the answer, Gollum was bound by his promise" (*Ring*, 21). Referring to works outside Tolkien's (though having effects on his), Ruth S. Noel notes: "It may seem incongruous that two such enemies [Bilbo and Gollum] should duel for their lives with a game of riddles, but there are precedents in ancient myth" (33).

The solution of the riddles that Bilbo and Gollum exchange tend, as with the Exeter riddles, to be ordinary -- mountain, teeth, wind -- certainly not things that are difficult to know or understand in and of themselves. And so again it is the texts of the riddles that beg our attention and fascination. For Bilbo, of course, the concern is survival. While these riddles are not given in the form of the solution speaking for itself, nonetheless the solutions do have qualities that are unusual -- among these qualities consciousness and will. Teeth become "Thirty white horses on a red hill" that "chomp" and "stamp" and then "stand still" (*Hobbit*, 85). The dark, another solution, consciously "lies behind stars and under hills" and is responsible for killing laughter and even ending life (*Hobbit*, 86). By their own will mountains rise up; and in the most "hard and horrible" riddle, time with seemingly total awareness (and without compunction) "devours" all, "Slays king, ruins town, And beats high mountain down" (*Hobbit*, 88). The extraordinary qualities of the solutions not only make them tricky to identify; the solutions become creative configurations for the person participating in the riddles to ponder. Thus a different way of thinking is encouraged, a new world is discovered beyond the ordinary in which regular items have wills and designs of their own.

Reveling in awareness of this "additional" world is not the only benefit from participating in the riddling process in *The Hobbit*. The contest also becomes a matter of and for growth. For Bilbo this episode serves as a sort of dire rehearsal for an even more harrowing contest yet to happen: his conversation with the dragon Smaug. At the time of this latter encounter, Smaug is undefeated and quite ruthless. Yet Bilbo finds that he not only can escape the Dragon (and his paralyzing spell) but enjoy the victories of a stolen cup and the last word as well (though not the last lick of flame). Actually Bilbo in this exchange makes himself into a riddle, using metaphors and titles for himself: "I am he that buries his friends alive and drowns them and draws them alive again from the water. I came from the end of a bag, but no bag went over me [here a pun referring to Bilbo's home address plus the fact that when all the dwarves were put into sacks by trolls, Bilbo evaded this "bagging"!] (*Hobbit*, 235). The dragon warns, "But don't let your imagination run away with you!"; yet the narrator correctly identifies and praises Bilbo's talents: "This of course is the way to talk to dragons... No dragon can resist the fascination of riddling talk and of wasting time trying to understand it" (*Hobbit* 235). In "The Four-Part Structure of Bilbo's Education" William H. Green argues that Bilbo's movement through the novel is not cyclical, even though Bilbo begins and ends at the same place, but spiral (134): the hobbit is not as he was by the adventures' end. Green contends that Bilbo goes through a series of "oppositions" and

"returns" in his maturation; and in the main I agree with Green -- and with Gandalf who claims, "Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were" (*Hobbit*, 313). Specific to the context of this study, I see Bilbo enduring and winning the riddle contest as, among other things, his learning that he can get himself out of predicaments by using his wits. Thus Bilbo is enlarged through the competition and through Bilbo the reader is enlarged.

So though the turning point for Bilbo in the course of the story may be seen and agreed upon to be when he kills the spider -- and here Bilbo does learn that he can effectively wield a weapon and initiate and lead a successful campaign for the company -- I think the riddling with Gollum may be an even earlier occurrence to note Bilbo growing. Through the riddling, I believe, Bilbo learns overall that he can think not only cleverly but metaphorically and "irregularly" -- that is, beyond the confines of his Hobbit world -- and can survive strange, foreboding places and beings. The reader also may apply this skill or sense in her experience, at least in her appreciating the Middle-earth of the novel. Maybe in appreciating her own earth as well.

A number of comparisons, as have been noted, appear to be evidenced in the two sets of riddles, Tolkien's and those of *The Exeter Book*. Of course, Tolkien's riddles are shorter, generally. But both sets of riddles are composed of relatively brief lines with consistent metric, and Tolkien's riddles often tend toward the alliteration which is formulaic of the Exeter riddles. Both avoid allegory. Of Anglo-Saxon verse in general as well as riddles in particular, Jennings asserts: "Early English poetry in the vernacular seldom bores with too much allegory or too much moralizing..." (24). With regard to his own work, Tolkien states: "It is neither allegorical nor topical" (*Ring*, 6). And as I have been arguing both sets and traditions of riddles invite and require participation -- by characters and readers for Tolkien and for Leofric perhaps the religious community at Exeter -- and can effect increased awareness of worlds added on to the mundane and ways of thinking that are creative and helpful. And both the riddles of Tolkien and Leofric are fun -- amusing and artful.⁴

But the ultimate end of the Exeter riddles, that of appreciating and aiming toward the spiritual, Christian realm of heaven: does this end at all compare with *The Hobbit* riddles? I could simply say no and move on to another point. Tolkien did not intend *The Hobbit* to be read as a Christian story, certainly not a Christian allegory; and I think such a specific, doctrinaire reading would be difficult to construct and argue. Yet in discussing Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*, the overarching expression of his crafted and consistent mythology (a mythology which has within itself hobbits), Humphrey Carpenter notes:

Some have puzzled over the relation between Tolkien's stories and his Christianity, and have found it difficult to understand how a devout Roman Catholic could write with such conviction about a world where God is not worshipped. But there is no mystery. *The Silmarillion* is the work of a profoundly religious man. It does not contradict Christianity but complements it. (191)

So it may be misdirected to say that there is no religion or religious value in *The Hobbit*. As it is a story of good and evil it is a religious or at least a

moral story. The author of the tale was a Christian, and he did not deny this conviction in his telling. This is not to say he did not circumnavigate the specificity of Christianity, however. Paul H. Kocher discusses "the moral tone of the adventure" of Tolkien's work (*Master*, 24) and about Tolkien's religious intention (commenting here specifically on *The Silmarillion*) asserts:

Account must... be taken of the fact that as a devout Catholic Tolkien rejected much of the world outlook assumed by Norse-Icelandic mythology, although this rejection did not prevent him from admiring the artistic power with which it was often stated, and even accepting into *The Silmarillion* those of its contents most closely akin to Christianity, or those which he could transform into Christian acceptability. (*Reader's Guide*, 4)

Crabbe observes that what Christians know as grace as "a divine influence" is manifested in Tolkien, particularly and emphatically in *The Hobbit*, as "luck" (50).

The riddle contest with Gollum indicates a larger than human or hobbit reality especially in the last "genuine" riddle, that whose answer is time. Time consumes "all things" and is therefore recognized as at work in Middle-earth. While this is not necessarily and specifically a Christian notion, it does show that there is an acknowledgement by the inhabitants of this realm that there are super forces. Thus while we are not told of heaven directly through these riddles, we are reminded of things larger than us that do exist and must be respected.

Both works and occasions of riddles, too, appear in dark times. And offer relief. In *The Hobbit* the dark is physical and emotional. In Leofric's time the darkness was much the same, brought on by war, sickness, ruin, and the fear of isolation. Both times are rife with fear and tension. The riddles break up the suspense and the foreboding or at least make them endurable by giving moments of wit, poem, and pleasure of posers -- and even providing possibilities for resolutions to the problems and perils at hand.

I intend for this essay not to be as much a source study as an analysis and celebration of a form of poetry that -- in manifestations quite old and rather new -- succeeded both in entertaining and in exploring the realities we are in and have about us. In what may seem a paradox of fun and philosophy, the riddles of Exeter and those of Tolkien can provide significant benefits for the hearer or reader. And after all, though the riddles may point toward heaven and things supernatural, they firstly and finally point toward those of us who become involved in them. The riddles that Leofric compiled were for the advantage (and entertainment) of learning Christians. The riddle contest that Tolkien composed is for the enjoyment and edification of readers: though even within Tolkien's lore a relation between hobbits and humans, however enigmatic, is spoken of. And as Tolkien stated and Carpenter cites: "Middle-earth is our world" (91). Boswell's article on Tolkien's riddles concludes and affirms that using "folklore items" is a sound way for "the more creative artists" to begin crafting "masterpieces": "Thus may an author build to the stars, because his foundation is stable and sure" (49). I offer that the riddles themselves, provided by Leofric and by Tolkien, "build to the stars" from earth -- or under earth beneath mountains, as it were, in Bilbo's

case -- as well. We who become involved in the process of riddling move from the ordinary world to the celestial or supernatural one, remaining earthbound -- but now more mindful of the humorous, poetic, and larger wonders available to us -- all the while.

NOTES

- 1 Much of this study is taken from or extends from another I prepared (as yet unpublished) entitled "The Practice of Riddling and Riddles of Practice." I am grateful to Dr. Anita C. Wilson of Miami University of Ohio for her direction, advice, and friendly support in my endeavors with riddles, especially those of the Anglo-Saxons.
- 2 The editions of the Exeter riddles used here are those by Craig Williamson. Old English texts are from his edition of *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*. Translations are from *A Feast of Creatures: Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Songs*. For this paper I have selected riddles whose solutions are domestic and fairly straightforward; according to Williamson these riddles have single answers that are relatively uncontested.
- 3 T.A. Shippey in *The Road to Middle-Earth* notes that the "time" riddle delivered by Gollum in *The Hobbit* is based on the "old age" riddle given by Saturn in the Old English poem *Solomon and Saturn II* (112n). I may also mention at this point a major mechanical difference between the riddles of Exeter riddles and those of Tolkien: Tolkien's riddles rhyme while the Exeter riddles do not. Alan Bold, in his essay appearing in *J.R.R. Tolkien: This Far Land*, marks Tolkien's rhyming as a defect in his verse: "Tolkien was not writing poetry; he was at the mercy of rhyme" (147).
- 4 I believe I need to make it clear that Leofric did not write the Exeter riddles; he is credited with compiling and contributing to the cathedral library the riddles and other works that make up *The Exeter Book*.

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double of the Blackbury River; the fact that there are two Rosies in the story, and that Pierce manages to get them confused; etc.

The narrative is open-ended, so that a sequel is possible -- almost probable, since we have only gone through three of the twelve astrological houses that serve as the novel's symbolic framework. Whether it will stand on its own or be extended in the future, this many-faceted, delicately woven tale should fascinate anyone who is asking the ultimate questions about meaning and mythopoeia.



A TOLKIEN INDEX

A *Working Concordance*, the first volume of Dr. Paul Nolan Hyde's comprehensive index of the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien, was first made available at the 18th Mythopoeic Conference and is now being offered to the general membership of the Mythopoeic Society and other interested parties. It is a compilation of names, places, things, and language elements together with volume and page numbers of (almost) every occurrence. Volumes indexed include *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, *The Book of Lost Tales* (I & II), *The Lays of Beleriand*, *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, *The Road Goes Ever On*, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, *The Monsters and the Critics*, and Tolkien's "Guide to the Names in the Lord of the Rings" included in Jared Lobdell's *A Tolkien Compass*. The index also includes a complete listing of the Old and Middle English words used by J.R.R. Tolkien including the lengthy passages of Old English given in *The Shaping of Middle-earth*. It is soft-back, spiral bound, 163 pages, double column format.

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Apologizes to Benjamin Urrutia. The review "Our Bodies, Our Elves", in *Mythlore* 50 was written by him.

From Under Mountains, from page 13

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Courtly Love, from page 45

troop back to their master." (Ibid., p. 44.)

So the mad, gallant, foolhardy experiment is over. But Western civilization will never be the same. Woman will never again be seen as merely a piece of property or an object of barter. She is a human being -- a person -- whatever she may do or fail to do. And if she cares to stand on her dignity, she is a lady, with all a lady's prerogatives. As Lewis puts it,

To leap up on errands, to go through heat or cold, at the bidding of one's lady, or even of any lady, would seem but honorable and natural to a gentleman of the thirteenth or even of the seventeenth century; and most of us have gone shopping in the twentieth with ladies who show no sign of regarding the tradition as a dead letter." (Ibid., p. 7)

A lady, any lady, retains something of her ancient authority -- just how much no man can be quite sure. It is hers to have and to hold. She can forfeit her title to honor only by conduct unbecoming a lady, of which, to be sure, no wise woman would ever be guilty. Courtly love is Western man's heritage; it still flows in his bloodstream. "Neither the form nor the sentiment of this old poetry," says Lewis, "has passed away without leaving indelible traces on our minds." (Ibid., p. 1.)

NOTES

1. C.S. Lewis, *Poems* (London: Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., 1964), p. 133.
2. C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936; Galaxy Books (paper), 1958), pp. 25-26.
3. Charles Williams, "The Figure of Arthur," in *Tales-in-sin through Logres* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (paper), 1974), p. 240.

Minor, Early References, from page 42

West, Richard C. "The Tolkienians: Some Introductory Reflections on Alan Garner, Carol Kendall, and Lloyd Alexander." *Oricrist* No. 2 (1968), pp. 4-15. [These writers are regarded as Tolkienian primarily for the reason that each has followed Tolkien's example and invented his own mythology.]

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