



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

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

Volume 15
Number 2

Article 2

Winter 12-15-1988

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Recommended Citation

Thompson, Kristin (1988) ""*The Hobbit* as a Part of *The Red Book of Westmarch*," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 15: No. 2, Article 2.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol15/iss2/2>

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"The Hobbit as a Part of *The Red Book of Westmarch*"

Abstract

Sees the conception of the hobbits and *The Red Book of Westmarch* as crucial in allowing Tolkien to "contain his inventive process" and prevent infinite proliferation of unfinished material.

Additional Keywords

Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Hobbits; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Hobbits—As historians; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Hobbits—As narrators; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Hobbits—As viewpoint characters; Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*—Framing devices



"The Hobbit as a Part of The Red Book of Westmarch"¹

by Kristin Thompson

The fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Hobbit* would seem a propitious opportunity for examining its pivotal place in J.R.R. Tolkien's overall "Middle-earth" cycle. Christopher Tolkien's ongoing project to publish the various drafts of the Middle-earth material has now passed the point in his father's career when *The Hobbit* was written, and as a result, some major aspects of that career have now become apparent.

One striking fact about Tolkien's *oeuvre* is that, aside from *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and a few short pieces, all the Middle-earth writings remained unfinished – and even those two novels were revised as the process of re-writing the whole cycle continued. Indeed, we now have far more unfinished material than finished works in print, with more drafts to come.²

My most basic argument here will be that the initial nature of Tolkien's project, as far back as the teens led almost inevitably to a vast cycle of unfinished, virtually unfinishable works, and that the reason for this lies in the fact that he began the narratives as background for his invention of languages. Secondly, I shall suggest that the creation of Hobbits, accidental though it was in relation to the older mythological material, was crucial in helping Tolkien to contain his inventive process by using a specific set of nar-

rating figures. I shall then go on to discuss how the creation of Hobbits led to the concept of *The Red Book of Westmarch* as a way of unifying the entire Middle-earth cycle in a single work. Finally, I shall explore briefly the question of why the device of the *Red Book* failed to allow Tolkien to finish his project.

Tolkien did not begin his literary creative process as most authors do, by planning situations and characters and then finding the language in which to present them to the reader. He was, after all, first and foremost an historian of language. Clearly, to Tolkien, the invention of languages was itself a form of artistic creation; in his lecture on language invention, "A Secret Vice," he speaks of "composing a language, a personal system and symphony that no one else was to study or hear." In a remarkable passage, he goes on to distinguish between non-artistic language invention (as practiced, for example, by children) and the non-practical, artistic type of private language-invention which he practiced.³ The process of such invention was, of course, potentially infinite, since any language can be expanded indefinitely through the addition of new words, and the inventor can add dialects, historical change, and so on. Tolkien recognized this fact and spoke of "An art for which life is not long enough, indeed: the construction of imaginary languages in full or outline for amusement, for

the pleasure of the constructor or even conceivably of any critic that might occur.⁴ Moreover, Tolkien did not limit himself to one language, but proliferated them as he went along, from Quenya to Sindarin and finally to the various other fragments of languages that crop up in *The Lord of the Rings*.⁵

In inventing his own languages, Tolkien felt compelled to create peoples to speak them and historical circumstances in which those peoples could live. According to Tolkien,

...the making of language and mythology are related functions; to give your language an individual flavor, it must have woven into it the threads of an individual mythology, individual while working within the scheme of natural human mythopoeia, as your word-form may be individual while working within the hackneyed limits of human, even European phonetics. The converse is indeed true, your language construction will breed a mythology.⁶

In the foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien explicitly stated that the material on the Elder Days "was primarily linguistic in inspiration and was begun in order to provide the necessary background of 'history' for Elvish tongues." (LR, Vol. I, P. 5.)

Yet if the invented languages were potentially infinite, so would the narratives that were based upon them be. Tolkien apparently began with no sketch of an entire narrative. There were no constraints upon him, and the limitless generation of languages and their histories would encourage the concomitant invention of more and more narrative material. This is the pattern we see throughout Tolkien's life: the temptation to start new tales, one after another. While these usually remained unfinished, Tolkien also felt obliged to revise his basic mythological material time and again to conform with the newer histories. Note also Tolkien's attempts to go beyond the last events of *The Lord of the Rings*. It is also the case that Tolkien seemed to assume that his fantasy world's history must be complete, running from its creation to its destruction. Probably no author has ever attempted to cover such a vast time frame in a work of fiction.

In short, the potential fictional world was infinite. Tolkien clearly recognized this obstacle and attempted to contain the project. He broke the mythology down into more limited sub-projects: the tale of Lúthien and Beren, the *Valaquenta*, the *Akallabeth*, and all the variants of these tales, whose working-out occupied him at intervals through his entire adult life. As mythic structures, these tales were usually told by a highly impersonal, omniscient narrator.

This type of narration posed an additional problem, however. A narrator who knew all could potentially tell all, with no end to the tales. Now, however, it has become apparent that from an early stage in his writing, Tolkien

also sought to create an "ordinary" character through whose point of view he could filter the history of Middle-earth. In developing this narrator, Tolkien took the conventional approach of using a character who is virtually the opposite of omniscient; he is a person who knows very little of the situation being described, but who comes into it and is rapidly introduced to all its salient aspects. His process of learning becomes that of the reader as well. In the earliest tales, this figure was the human being, Eriol (in *The Book of Lost Tales*). He visited the Elves from abroad and provided the occasion for them to tell him (and us) the myths of their race. Eriol, however, was only a passive auditor, participating in a static story-telling situation in the Room of the Log Fire. The result was a frame story with a string of embedded short tales, similar to the early, proto-novelistic forms of such works as *The Decameron* and *The 1001 Nights*. *The Book of Lost Tales* offers many delights, of course, not the least being the evocative name of the site of Eriol's introduction to Elvish life, the Cottage of Lost Play. Eriol himself, however, is not a particularly interesting character, and Tolkien dropped him in later revisions of the same myths. The poetic form seems to have been the next device he employed to unify the tales, as in *The Lays of Beleriand*, which cover the approximate period of the 1920s. The problem of finding a narrator remained.

The Hobbit provided the break-through for Tolkien in that, in the protagonist of a children's tale, he invented a point-of-view character who could participate in the historical events he recorded. Bilbo did not simply sit by the fire and hear tales of the events which he later recorded in his memoirs, *There and Back Again*. (Ironically, Bilbo's "retirement" to Rivendell eventually made him into that kind of passive recorder, as he undertook his massive *Translations from the Elvish*.) Like Eriol, however, he was portrayed as a fairly ignorant fellow at the beginning, one who is thrust into a world about which he knows virtually nothing. Again, his crash course in the larger geography and history of Middle-earth provides our own introduction to that marvellous land. The very success of Bilbo as a narrator is evidenced by the fact that, by using him, Tolkien finally finished a novel – albeit one whose relation to his larger mythological project was initially tangential. Tolkien himself seems to have realized the wider usefulness of Hobbits only when demands for a sequel led him to create a Third Age for Middle-earth in *The Lord of the Rings*.

In the sequel, Tolkien linked the experiences of the Hobbits more firmly with his larger historical and linguistic project; now they could, as a group, act both as participants in the action and as provincial, ignorant characters, learning about the wider world as a result of their seemingly accidental involvement in great historical events. The result was a further narrational development in Tolkien's project; the Hobbits became the authors of *The Red Book of Westmarch*.

The device of the *Red Book* permitted Tolkien to repre-

sent himself simply as the editor and translator of far older material which originated with various Hobbits; these writings were often in turn derived from other writings upon which the Hobbits based their own works. *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, though written in third person by a seemingly impersonal narrator, were presented as actually being the memoirs of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins, with additional material added by their friends. (Indeed, on the whole, the books do stick close to the Hobbits' viewpoints.)

In taking this approach, Tolkien was drawing upon a device common in traditional fiction writing: the "found manuscript." In such fiction, the writing purports to be a single manuscript or a group of texts which the author implies that he or she is editing. The idea dates back at least to such novels as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* (1740 and 1747-48 respectively), and indeed the epistolary novel is the form most dependant upon the found-manuscript conceit. The notion of the found manuscript was popularized in the course of the nineteenth century. For example, Charles Dickens's *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836-37) purports—rather unconvincingly—to be "carefully collated from letters and other MS. authorities" of the Pickwick Club; the narrator refers to himself as "the editor of these papers" (Chapter 1). By the later decades of the century, popular genres like adventure, fantasy, and detective stories were using the device frequently. H. Rider Haggard's *Allan Quartermain* novels (1800s) purport to be Quartermain's memoirs, written for his son's sake, and later conveyed to a publisher by a friend. Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912) consists largely of a series of dispatches from the protagonist, reporter Edward Malone, to his newspaper. In *Dracula* (1897), Bram Stoker proved ingenious in finding ways to base his entire narrative on the various characters' journals and letters, going to the extent of making Mina Harker a student of shorthand and typing, so that she could record the various conversations. The period in which Tolkien was growing up and beginning his own writing was probably the heyday of the found manuscript as a device in fiction, and it is not surprising that he should have adopted it.

Of course, as a philologist, Tolkien embroiders upon the device suitably. He represents himself not as simply the editor of the *Red Book*, but also as its translator. In his "Note on the Shire Records," he relates in detail what the *Red Book* was, how it was copied and various versions were preserved, how material was appended to it over the years by later generations of Hobbits, and so on. As he describes the *Red Book*, it consists in part of the material "translated" as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*—but these actually make up a relatively small portion of the whole. About halfway through "The Grey Havens," the last chapter of the trilogy, Frodo gives Sam the original *Red Book*, "a big book with plain red leather covers." It has some writing in Bilbo's hand, but most is in Frodo's. "It was divided into chapters, but Chapter 80 was unfinished, and

after that there were some blank leaves" (LR III, p. 307). This volume was meant to include only Bilbo's and Frodo's memoirs, not Bilbo's *Translations from the Elvish*. Taken together, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* contain 81 chapters. We must presume, on the basis of the material in the appendices, that Sam wrote the end of Chapter 80 and all of 81 ("The Grey Havens"). The drafts of the unused epilogue to *The Lord of the Rings* show Sam writing up this material and filling Elanor in on subsequent events in the lives of the surviving members of the Fellowship.⁷

In the "Note on the Shire Records," however, Tolkien describes the *Red Book* in more detail, and there it becomes clear that he intended it to include far more material than the volume of Bilbo's and Frodo's memoirs:

But annexed to it and preserved with it, probably in a single red case, were the three large volumes, bound in red leather, that Bilbo gave him [Frodo] as a parting gift. To these four volumes there were added in Westmarch a fifth containing commentaries, genealogies, and various other matter concerning the hobbit members of the Fellowship. (LR, Vol. III, p. 23).

This description relates to the passage in the novel itself where Frodo leaves Rivendell on his way back to the Shire, and Bilbo gives him "three books of lore that he had made at various times, written in his spidery hand and labelled on their red backs: Translations from the Elvish, by B.B." (LR, Vol. III, p. 265) Tolkien makes it clear that this original copy of the *Red Book* has not survived, though various copies have. The most complete copy is the one written in Gondor c. S.R. 1592 (F.A. 192) for Pippin's great-grandson. This copy has a complicated history, having been made by a court scribe from the Thain's Book, which was in turn a copy of the original *Red Book*, given by Pippin to King Elessar when he retired to Gondor in F.A. 64. The copy made for Pippin's great-grandson was the only one which contained two key texts: "The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen" (which is attributed to Barahir, Faramir's grandson) and a complete copy of Bilbo's *Translations from the Elvish* (LR, Vol. I, p. 24.).

Aside from this complex provenance of the *Red Book* (which I have simplified somewhat here), Tolkien describes the libraries which Merry and Pippin created at their respective homes, Bucklebury and Tuckborough. These contained "much that did not appear in the *Red Book*." At Brandy Hall, Merry collected primarily works on Eriador and Rohan; he also wrote books himself, including *Herblore in the Shire* (which is quoted extensively in the Prologue section "On Pipeweed"). *Reckoning of Years*, and *Old Words and Names in the Shire*. The latter two we can assume were the sources of some of the chronologies and calendars in the appendices, and of some of the linguistic disquisition there. The library of Great Smials also had other non-Shire history books; Pippin and his descendants collected

many manuscripts written by scribes of Gondor: mainly copies or summaries of histories relating to Elendil and his heirs. Only here in the Shire were to be found extensive materials for the history of Númenor and the arising of Sauron. It was probably at Great Smials that *The Tale of Years* was put together, with the assistance of material collected by Meriadoc.

A footnote adds that *The Tale of Years* is reproduced only in "much reduced form" in Appendix B. Tolkien adds that Merry received help in his historical work by visiting Rivendell "more than once"; he consulted with Celeborn, who lived there for some time after the other Elves departed into the West (LR, Vol. I, pp.24-5).

The "Note on the Shire Records" is thus central to Tolkien's remarkably systematic attempt to represent *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as found manuscripts. Essentially everything in the appendices, as well as the main texts, can be traced to an author (or at least to a descendant of a specific character). In most cases these are Hobbits, though in the case of "The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen," the author is a Man.

All of the material in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, including the appendices, however, belongs to the first volume of the four that constituted the *Red Book*, or to the appended *Hobbit* volume. What of those three volumes of *Translations from the Elvish*? Were they intended to be *The Silmarillion* and all the other material relating to the First and Second Ages? In the foreword to *The Book of Lost Tales, Part I*, Christopher Tolkien says he thinks so, and cites Robert Foster as agreeing:

In *The Complete Guide to Middle-earth* Robert Foster says: "*Quenta Silmarillion* was no doubt one of Bilbo's *Translations from the Elvish* preserved in the *Red Book of Westmarch*." So also I have assumed: the "books of lore" that Bilbo gave to Frodo provided in the end the solution: they were "The *Silmarillion*." But apart from the evidence cited here, there is, so far as I know no other statement on this matter anywhere in my father's writings.⁸

It is indeed surprising that Tolkien wrote so little concerning the relation between Bilbo's *Translations from the Elvish* and the mythology concerning the First and Second Ages. The equation of the two, if indeed Tolkien made it, was a monumental change in the conception of his overall project. Most probably Tolkien did indeed consider that the various volumes of the *Red Book*, taken together, offered him a way of drawing his historical tales of the Elder Days into a single, more or less unified work, which would also include *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The *Red Book*, in short, offered him a way of finishing his project. He could use Bilbo and the other Hobbits as limited-point-of-view figures who could record and translate the myths, which would in turn come down to Tolkien, the modern-day translator.

We may never know for sure if this was in fact Tolkien's

intention, but I for one do not doubt it. It follows logically from the use he made of Hobbits as narrating figures in the two completed novels. Moreover, there is, I think, some additional evidence within the novels themselves for this view. Just as Tolkien wrote a Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* that systematically created a set of manuscript sources for his own "translations," he also put references to the writing of those manuscripts into the narratives. Perhaps the key reference occurs during the Council of Elrond, when Elrond recounts the history of the Ring to the group: "Then through all the years that followed he traced the Ring; but since that history is elsewhere recounted, even as Elrond set it down in his books of lore, it is not here recalled." His narrative covers the history of Númenor, the return of the Kings to Middle-earth, and the Last Alliance (LR, Vol. I, p. 255). Surely the phrase, "that history is elsewhere recounted" implies that Tolkien felt he would eventually be publishing his other mythological narratives, and that that text would be "even as Elrond set it down in his books of lore." But were Elrond's writings among the ones that Bilbo used in his translations? Almost certainly they were. The most specific description of Bilbo's *Translations from the Elvish* comes in the "Note on the Shire Records": "These three volumes were found to be a work of great skill and learning in which, between 1403 and 1418, he had used all the sources available to him in Rivendell, both living and written. But since they were little used by Frodo, being almost entirely concerned with the Elder Days, no more is said of them here" (LR, Vol. I, p. 24). This passage makes it clear that Bilbo's writings do not deal with the more recent mythology of the Third Age, but with the same older material that is covered by *The Silmarillion* and the other unfinished tales. Moreover, *The Fellowship of the Ring* is full of references to Elvish tales and to Bilbo's writings. In "The Shadow of the Past," Gandalf tells Frodo that he may someday hear the tale of the Last Alliance "told in full by one who knows it best" (LR, Vol. I, p. 61); we can only assume that this means Elrond, the only living character who was there (aside from Cirdan, with whom the Hobbits never get a chance to talk). At Weathertop, Aragorn similarly tells the Hobbits that he cannot relate the story of Gil-galad there, but that they might hear it "told in full" at Rivendell (LR, Vol. I, p. 203). Once Frodo meets Bilbo again, the latter reveals that he has spent most of the time since he left the Shire at Rivendell, writing his book and making up poetry (LR, Vol. I, p. 243). Later, Aragorn and Gandalf study "the storied and figured maps and books of lore that were in the house of Elrond" – some of which, as we have seen, must have been written by Elrond himself (LR, Vol. I, p. 290). Finally, in the days before the Fellowship sets out on its quest, the Hobbits "sat together in the evening in the Hall of Fire, and there among many tales they heard told in full the lay or Beren and Lúthien and the winning of the Great Jewel" (LR, Vol. I, p. 290). This motif of a tale "told in full," used here for the third time, implies that at Rivendell a complete knowledge of the past survives – one which is available nowhere else. The Hobbits make use of it, at this point and later. The situation of the Hall of Fire recalls that of the Cottage of Lost Play, where Eriol sat in the Room of

the Log Fire learning the history of the Elves. The Hobbits are in the process of becoming historians.

Bilbo, of course, is the first to turn historian. When he leaves Bag End for the last time, he is carrying the "leather-bound manuscript" which will become the *Red Book* (LR, Vol. I, p. 40). While camping on the way to Weathertop, Sam recites part of "The Fall of Gil-galad," and we learn for the first time that Bilbo is a translator of Elvish poetry (LR, Vol. I, p. 198). Clearly Bilbo has become keen on old tales and poems; he asks Frodo to "bring back all the news you can, and any old songs and tales you may come by. I'll do my best to finish my book before you return. I should like to write the second book, if I am spared" (LR, Vol. I, p. 291).

At first, Frodo only plays at being a writer, "Mr. Underhill," on his trip out to Rivendell. Gradually does of real Elvish history and of serious adventure make him into an actual writer and historian, just like Bilbo. The same results appear in the other Hobbits, and the history of Middle-earth comes to be seen through Hobbit eyes. As Christopher Tolkien aptly put it, "To read *The Silmarillion* one must place oneself imaginatively at the time of the ending of the Third Age – within Middle-earth, looking back: at the temporal point of Sam Gamgee's 'I like that!' – adding, 'I should like to know more about it.'"⁹

Ideally, yes, Tolkien would have revised all the earlier tales, somehow filtering them through the viewpoints of the Hobbit-historians. They were, after all, as he conceived them, closer to human scale than were the heroic Elves, or Wizards, or Dwarves, or Men: "It is plain indeed that in spite of later estrangement Hobbits are relatives of ours: far nearer to us than Elves, or even Dwarves" (LR, Vol. I, p. 11). They might provide the human-scale viewpoint from which to assimilate the heroic tales of the past. In spite of this, Tolkien was never able to find a way to use them to unify the vast, unfinished mythological tales and to place them in a single work alongside *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

For one thing, of course, the Hobbits had not participated in the earlier history, and hence their advantages as narrators of the late Third Age material disappeared when they became mere historians. Bilbo and Merry sitting at Rivendell recording Elvish legends offered little advantage over the original, static conception of Eriol. There was simply an innate formal incompatibility between Tolkien's vast, unfinished legends on the one hand and his two completed novels on the other. The novels covered short time periods – essentially one year each, aside from brief introductory and concluding material. Each was also told largely from a limited viewpoint. There was simply no way to transfer the advantage of Hobbit-narrators into the older legends. These covered such vast time-periods that they could not be told in such leisurely detail, and they certainly offered no human-scale point-of-view figures.

It seems evident, however, that Tolkien hoped to work out some solution to this dilemma. He described the *Red*

Book as four main volumes, plus an additional book of appended material. Of the four volumes, the entire *Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* occupy only the first. Tolkien thus allowed himself three very large volumes for the Elvish material. We might imagine the material on the Elder Days running three times as long as the history of the War of the Ring – if Tolkien had been able to find some way of integrating all the material into one vast work. In the event, of course, this proved impossible. The potentially infinite inventiveness implied by his initial conception back in the teens remained there until the end. Instead of the Hobbits limiting and unifying the mythology, the mythology had forced the Hobbits to grow as point-of-view figures.

The basic contradiction within his project – the potentially infinite invention of history against the need to find a limited-point-of-view narrator to cut short that inventing process – can be seen in the amazing changes in the Hobbits themselves.

As they are first created, at the beginning of *The Hobbit*, they are extreme cases of limited point of view. They are provincial, in that they do not travel and do not seem to read much. We get the impression, both here and in the early parts of *The Lord of the Rings*, that the Hobbits have a largely group-oriented, oral culture – evidenced by their frequent birthday parties and pub gossip. It is also notable that the Bree residents are astonished to discover that "Mr. Underhill" is writing a book, of all things. The device of having the Hobbits travel and have adventures would seem to provide an ideal method for giving a limited view of the history and culture of Tolkien's larger world.

Yet Tolkien's urge to keep on inventing his world and its history made him change the Hobbits completely by the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. They become, in effect, the semi-official historians of Middle-earth. Three dynasties of historians grow up: Sam's, Merry's, and Pippin's families. Each founds a library and travels to gather books and oral tales. Tolkien even assigns each family a "specialty" in a different area of Middle-earth. Pippin and his heirs concentrate on Gondor, Merry on Rohan and the Elves, and Sam – though this is less specific – on the Shire and the North Kingdom. Interestingly, none of these other places provides archives that cover the same cross-section of Middle-earth's history. We might expect Minas Tirith to become the main archival repository; it is, after all, the main city on the continent in the Fourth Age, and Gandalf specifically tells Aragorn to "preserve what may be preserved" (LR, Vol. III, p. 249).

Gandalf also, however, in effect appoints Bilbo to be the historian of the War of the Rings at the Council of Elrond: "I should say your part is ended, unless as a recorder. Finish your book, and leave the ending unaltered! There is still hope for it. But get ready to write a sequel, when they come back" (LR, Vol. I, p. 283). Bilbo and the other Hobbits go further, expanding their subject to cover the entire history of Middle-earth, the Western Lands, and Numenor.

MYTHOPOEIC CORE READING LIST

Mythlore frequently publishes articles that presuppose the reader is already familiar with the works they discuss. This is natural, given the purpose of Mythlore. In order to be a general help, the following is what might be considered a core reading list, containing the most well known and frequently discussed works. Due to the many editions printed, only the title and original date of publication are given. Good reading!

J.R.R. Tolkien

The Hobbit, 1937; "Leaf by Niggle," 1945; "On Fairy-Stories," 1945; *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* 1954; *The Two Towers* 1954; *The Return of the King* 1955; *Smith of Wootton Major* 1967; *The Silmarillion* 1977.

C.S. Lewis

Out of the Silent Planet 1938; *Perelandra* 1943; *The Hideous Strength* 1945; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* 1950; *Prince Caspian* 1951; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 1952; *The Silver Chair* 1953; *The Horse and His Boy* 1954; *The Magician's Nephew* 1955; *The Last Battle* 1966; *Till We Have Faces* 1956.

Charles Williams

War in Heaven 1930; *Many Dimensions* 1931; *The Place of the Lion* 1931; *The Greater Trumps* 1932; *Shadows of Ecstasy* 1933; *Descent Into Hell* 1937; *All Hallow's Eve* 1945; *Taliessin through Logres* 1938, and *The Region of the Summer Stars* 1944 (the last two printed together in 1954).

AN ENGLISH LEXICON BY PNH

Both volumes of Paul Nolan Hyde's comprehensive indexes are still available for members of the Mythopoeic Society and other interested parties.

Volume I, *A Working Concordance*, is in its second printing with a revised format. This printing features lower-case entries which improves readability for those who had difficulty with the upper-case typeface of the first printing. The Index contains all invented language occurrences with volume and page numbers for each occurrence. All of the published works of J.R.R. Tolkien up to and including *The Shaping of Middle-earth* are indexed. Of special interest is the indexing of all of the Old English passages.

Volume II, *A Working English Lexicon*, is an alphabetical listing of the English words used to translate invented language elements, together with volume and page numbers of (almost) every occurrence in all of the published writings of J.R.R. Tolkien including *The Lost Road*.

Both Indexes are soft-backed, spiral bound, in double column format. Copies of either index may be obtained by sending \$20.00 per copy plus \$2.00 shipping and handling to Paul Nolan Hyde, 2661 E. Lee St., Simi Valley, CA 93065. For British and European orders, please include \$7.00 shipping and handling (Air Mail insures rapid delivery and minimal damage from the infamous U.S. Postal Service).

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This considerable transformation in the Hobbits' cultural orientation reflects Tolkien's dilemma: his desire, on the one hand, to curb his own limitless inventiveness by finding restricted narrators; on the other, his need to go on inventing, with the accompanying necessity to remove all limits on his Hobbit narrators. Ultimately, he tried to make them as omniscient concerning this created world as he was himself. In the end, *The Red Book of Westmarch* did not enable him to give us a lengthy, completed, unified saga of Middle-earth and environs. That task was impossible to accomplish. The Hobbits and the *Red Book* did at least, however, give us two completed novels. I think the *Red Book* also, as Christopher Tolkien suggested, put us all in a firmly Hobbit-ish, late-Third-Age perspective from which to view all the vast quantities of unfinished material. In that sense, as in so many others, the accidental invention of Bilbo Baggins was a major event. It was, to use Gandalf's words in yet another lovely unfinished tale, "A chance-meeting, as we say in Middle-earth."¹⁰

[Editorial note: this paper was presented at the 1987 Mythopoeic Conference at Marquette University, with minor revisions thereafter]

Endnotes

1. I would like to thank Richard West, Tatum Santoski, and Charles B. Elston for their help during the researching of this paper.
2. Though Christopher Tolkien has pointed out that if the nearly completed *Quenta Silmarillion* had been accepted for publication in 1937, his father probably would have been able to finish it fairly quickly. (In a letter to the author, 12 September 1987.)
3. J.R.R. Tolkien, "A Secret Vice," in *his Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), pp. 200-201.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
5. There are fourteen in all, according to Ruth S. Noel, in her *The Languages of Middle-earth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980). See also Jim Allen, ed., *An Introduction to Elvish* (Somerset: Bran's Head Books, 1978).
6. Tolkien, "A Secret Vice," pp. 210-211.
7. The epilogue manuscript material is in the Tolkien collection, Department of Special Collections, Memorial Library of Marquette University.
8. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Book of Lost Tales*, Part I, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 6.
9. Tolkien, *The Book of Lost Tales*, Part I, p. 4.
10. J.R.R. Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), p. 326.

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