10-15-2000

J. R. R. Tolkien and the Matter of Britain

Verlyn Flieger
University of Maryland

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

Part of the Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons

Recommended Citation

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

SWOSU

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

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

Abstract

Suggests that Tolkien's legendarium is in some ways modeled on the Arthurian story and that he had the Matter of Britain in mind as he worked on his own stories.

Additional Keywords

Tolkien, J.R.R.—Knowledge—Arthurian romances

J. R. R. Tolkien and the Matter of Britain

Verlyn Flieger

THE three great "Matters" of medieval literature were the Matter of Greece and Rome centering especially on Alexander, the Matter of France revolving around Charlemagne and his court, and the Matter of Britain focusing on Arthur and his knights. To these three, J. R. R. Tolkien has added a viable fourth. This is the Matter of Middle-earth, his mythological epic romance now published in twelve volumes as *The History of Middle-earth*. Tolkien's stated desire to create a legendarium he could dedicate "to England" led him to invent his own mythological cycle complete with creation stories, epic sagas, romances, lays, ballads and fairy tales. While he had all of European myth as influence and a number of mythological cycles as possible analogues, I suggest that it was the Matter of Britain that offered him his clearest model.

If Tolkien were here today he would probably protest my statement for he explicitly rejected the Arthurian myth as coming near his purpose. In a 1951 letter he described what was and, more important, what was not, for him, an appropriate mythology for England. His own myth he described as,

a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story—the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths—which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. It should possess the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, be redolent of our 'air' (the clime and soil of the North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe) . . . and while possessing . . . the fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic . . . it should be 'high', purged of the gross, and fit for the more adult mind of a land long now steeped in poetry. I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. (*Letters* 144-45)

He added,

Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English . . . . For one thing its

'faerie' is too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive. For another, and more important thing: it is involved in, and explicitly contains the Christian religion.

... [T]hat seems to me fatal. (144)

The concession that "of course there was and is all the Arthurian world" forestalls an anticipated argument that England already has its myth in the Arthurian legend. Tolkien has considered the Arthurian material, measured it against his own ambition, and discarded it. Or has he? The very fact that he raises the issue of "the Arthurian world" suggests that he is not just aware of its place in England's literary heritage, but of its place in his own as well, for both before and after he wrote the letter, Tolkien had tried writing his own version of Arthurian legend. At some time in the mid-1930's, more than a decade before he wrote the letter, he had begun a long poem which he called *The Fall of Arthur*. And in 1955, four years after the letter, he still cherished the hope of finishing it. "I write alliterative verse with pleasure" he wrote, and added, "I still hope to finish a long poem on *The Fall of Arthur* in the same measure" (*Letters* 219).

The unfinished poem is still in existence. Its relevance to the present discussion lies not just in its survival, but in Tolkien's comment that he "still" hoped to finish it. The disparaging comments quoted above notwithstanding, he was still engaged with Arthur. While it seems plain that he wanted to think of himself as creating, not as imitating, his very dismissal of Arthur is negative evidence of its power, for it shows that Arthur was in his mind. A comparison of the two bodies of legend—the rejected "Arthurian world" and Tolkien's own Silmarillion—shows similarities closer than mere coincidence, and suggests the Tolkien who wrote the letter was no more immune than the rest of his generation to the anxiety of influence. Although Tolkien's letter is at pains to define what constitutes a proper mythology for England, it also begs the question, for his description of his own myth makes it sound remarkably like the Arthurian world he so emphatically dispossessed. Both comprise "bodies of more or less connected legend." Both range from the "large and cosmogonic to the level of fairy tale." Both are "redolent of the clime and soil of Britain and the hither part of North West Europe." Both possess "the fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic." Both have some tales "drawn in fullness" and some tales only "sketched." Although these might seem mere generic similarities, Tolkien's juxtaposing of the two invites the comparison, and raises specific

questions about their relationship. What are the major points of similarity? Beyond the general resemblance, are there shared particulars that might indicate conscious borrowing? How well does Tolkien's own work stand up against his criteria for disqualifying the Arthurian world?

It can be argued that other European mythologies besides that of Arthur might fit Tolkien's general description. Tom Shippey has ably demonstrated similarities in shape and layering of composition to the poems and stories contributing to the Völsung material in the Poetic Edda and the prose *Völsungasaga.*[1] Norse is not the only example. Many so-called mythologies are made up of different kinds of narrative composed over centuries, and are the accumulated work of many hands. Another example is that of the combined mythologies of Greece and Rome. However, while this mythology is certainly a body of "more or less connected legend," I would eliminate it as an influence on the grounds that Tolkien had no particular affinity for what he called "Southern" myth, greatly preferring the Eddas and sagas of Iceland and Scandinavia. Moreover, Greek and Roman myth can hardly be said to be "redolent" of the air of Britain and North West Europe.

Norse mythology, however is a viable candidate. Tolkien wrote to W. H. Auden that he had once made "an attempt to unify the lays about the Völsungs from the [Icelandic] Elder Edda, written in the old eight-line fornyrðislag stanza" (*Letters* 379), a reference to his unpublished "Völsungakviða" and "Guthrúnarkviða"poems. His story of Túrin Turambar draws on the exploits of Sigurð the Völsung, most notably in Túrin's killing of Glaurung, explicitly modeled on Sigurð's slaying of the dragon Fafnir. The Völsung material certainly influenced Tolkien, but powerful though it is, it does not approach the chronological and compositional sweep of either the Arthurian material or Tolkien's own.

There is, of course, the *Beowulf,* which certainly informed his imagination. The Beowulfian themes of struggle against monstrous forces, the inevitability of failure, and the imminence of death are the backbone of *The Lord of the Rings*. More specifically and concretely, Tolkien's appropriation of Beowulfian language, architecture, customs, poetic tradition, and heroic code for his invented kingdom of Rohan is so direct and so obvious that it endangers the integrity of his sub-created world. Nevertheless, the *Beowulf* cannot be said to have provided a conceptual model for his mythos. Although it is undoubtedly part of some greater, now largely lost, bardic tradition, the poem itself is singular,

and can be associated with only a few scattered Old English poems—the "Waldere" fragment, "The Seafarer," "The Wanderer," and "Deor's Lament." It has literary parallels and references in other literatures, most notably Old Icelandic, but no family tree.

There is the Finnish *Kalevala*, which by Tolkien's own account inspired his long alliterative poem *The Lay of the Children of Húrin*. But while *Kalevala* influenced that particular work, it had less impact on his mythology as a whole, although it was a significant influence on his development of Elven language. The Finnish poems are primitive in origin, and do not approach the sophistication and complexity of the later medieval Arthurian narratives either in verse or prose. In addition, the poems were selected and arranged in a shape they did not originally possess by their compiler, who culled from a collection of over 85,000 songs fifty to edit, organize, and publish as *Kalevala*. So *Kalevala* too does not seem an apt conceptual model.

There remains the Arthurian legendarium. Remember that sometime in the 1930's, and while immersed in his own mythology, Tolkien had begun his own Arthurian poem. He was re-visioning Arthur even while en-visioning his own myth, and there is evidence that Tolkien was not only aware of the overlap, he was consciously employing it in *The Lord of the Rings*. Examples of character and episode abound. Tolkien's Gandalf out-Merlins Merlin, and indeed has cast his own retroactive shadow over that most famous of wizards. Frodo's final wounding by his nemesis and counterpart Gollum recalls Arthur's wounding by his anti-self Mordred in the battle of Camlann. The maimed Frodo's departure oversea from Middle-earth to be healed in Valinor explicitly echoes the wounded Arthur's departure by barge to be healed in Avalon. And Sam's protest at Frodo's decision to leave the Shire, and Frodo's explanation of its necessity, are reminiscent of the last exchange between the despairing Bedivere and his departing king.

I would add as well a more subtle reverberation that occurs early in *The Lord of the Rings* in Frodo's acceptance at Rivendell of the sword Sting, thrust "deep into a wooden beam" by Bilbo. The narrative records that "Frodo accepted it [the sword] gratefully" (294). He would most naturally have done this simply by pulling it out. Tolkien's immediate source was probably the Norse *Völsungasaga*, in which Sigmund the Völsung's withdrawal of the sword from the tree Barnstokk signals his emergence as a hero. Nonetheless, Frodo's "acceptance" of Sting at the beginning of his quest also re-enacts what is arguably

the most significant gesture in all of English literature, Arthur's withdrawal of the sword from the stone in the London churchyard at the beginning of his reign.

These likenesses notwithstanding, Tolkien listed specific objections to the Arthurian world. One: it was too "lavish and fantastical." Two: it was "imperfectly naturalized." Last and seemingly worst of all, it contained explicit Christianity. Let us see how well these criticisms stand up against his own story. I'll begin with Christianity and immediately concede the point. Unlike the Arthurian canon with its miracles, pious hermits, heavy-handed symbolism and allegorical preachiness, Tolkien's fantasy has no explicit Christianity. It is not preachy, it has no miracles, no holy hermits, no Grail, no didactic allegory, all of which is greatly to its credit. Further, I will agree with him that the inclusion of such material in his own mythology would have been "fatal" to its credibility and integrity, its inner consistency. Indeed, Tolkien wrote that he had "not put in, or [had] cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world" (*Letters* 172), making it clear that he consciously made every effort to keep religion out of his legendarium. Absence of explicit Christianity is the strongest supporting evidence for Tolkien's distinction between his myth and Arthur's.

Next, Arthurian versus Tolkienian faerie. This is more complicated. Tolkien's description of Arthurian faerie as too lavish, fantastical, incoherent and repetitive constitutes a sweeping condemnation of qualities on which he obviously had some strong views. But how lavish is "too" lavish? And who decides? Without illustrative examples, these are vague terms, and even with examples they are dependent to a large extent on the taste of the beholder. Tolkien's own fantasy has been subjected by the scoffers to the very same kinds of condemnation. A case could be made that his faerie is no less lavish or fantastical than is Arthur's. Both make use of wizards, little people, dragons, mysterious queens, enchanted fountains, shape-changers, time-warps, and magic talismans. The magic Fountain in Chretien's *Yvain* is no more fantastical than the Mirror of Galadriel, while one has only to range Gandalf against Merlin, hobbits against the ubiquitous dwarfs of Arthurian romance, Galadriel against Morgan le Fay, or the Silmarils and the Ring against the Grail to see the similarities.

If Arthurian faerie appeared incoherent to Tolkien that might be because the key to unlock its inner meaning has been lost. Incoherence and repetitiveness are matters of opinion, and what might seem lavish and fantastical

to an audience removed by centuries from the subject may be satisfyingly sub-creative to one closer in time to the source. Arthurian faerie derives primarily from Celtic mythology, which is certainly native to the "soil of Britain" but has been imperfectly transmitted by its Christian redactors. Their late and many times copied manuscripts are the witnesses to what that mythology might have been, but the manuscripts themselves are centuries removed from the origins of the tales. Tolkien's inability to perceive any formal vision underlying Arthurian faerie might be less a measure of its actual incoherence than of the faulty texts which are all he or anyone of his time had to go on. In this respect, his concern over incoherence might derive from a Germanic impulse to tidy up, rather than a Celtic inclination to let it roll.

As to repetitiveness, that also is in the eye (or ear) of the beholder, as the forceful, if possibly apocryphal comment on Elves by Hugo Dyson bears witness.[2] And whether Dyson liked them or not, Tolkien's immortal Elves—the Vanyar, the Noldor, the Teleri, the Sindar, the Wood-elves in all their hidden kingdoms and Elven fastnesses of Doriath and Gondolin and Nargothrond and Lórien and the Undying Lands—are as faerian, as otherworldly, as dangerously beautiful and typically Celtic a bunch as any who ever came out of a fairy mound, or peopled the haunted woodlands and enchanted keeps and castles of the Arthurian world.

Finally, naturalization to England. Whether either legendarium should be considered "naturalized"—perfectly or imperfectly—is a matter of opinion; but the Arthurian world is if anything the more naturalized of the two, deriving as it does directly from the indigenous Celtic cultures of the island of Britain. Furthermore, Tolkien's distinction between "the soil of Britain" and "English," contrasting a landmass with a language, seems arbitrary in light of the many-layered culture that English has become. The Celtic Arthur is no more or less "naturalized" than the Anglo-Saxon Alfred or the Angevin Henry II. They are all part of English history. For all Tolkien's distinction between Britain and English, the Arthurian legend is one of the foundations of English literature, English culture, and—increasingly with new information—English history. If England has a culture hero in the mythic sense of that term it is Arthur the Celt, not Alfred the Saxon. In this respect, it is surely the Silmarillion, far more than the Arthurian cycle, that would have to be naturalized, awarded a citizenship it was not born into.

Having weighed Tolkien's criticism of Arthur against his own mythos, I would like now to explore some similarities of structure and external history which, while they are circumstantial rather than deliberate, contribute to the close resemblance between the two Matters. Tolkien's references to tales "drawn in fullness" and tales merely "placed" or "sketched" is apposite here. Some of the Arthurian stories, for example *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the alliterative and stanzaic *Morte Arthures* and several of the romances of Chretien de Troyes, are finished works of art. Others, however—among them some of the most important, such as Chretien's *Perceval*—were either left unfinished by their author and later continued by other hands, or—like Robert de Boron's *Roman del Graal*—were lost or mangled and now exist only in a corrupt or fragmented state.

Comparatively few of the stories in Tolkien's mythos were ever finished, but we can certainly count *The Lord of the Rings* as a major accomplishment, comparable in its sweep to Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Of the many he left incomplete we can cite the account of Tuor's coming to Gondolin, one of the most provocatively unfinished of all his *Unfinished Tales*, as well as the many attempts to tell in prose and verse the story of Túrin. Of tales merely sketched there is the outline of tales appended to "The Lost Road" and "The Notion Club Papers," of which "King Sheave" is the only actual narrative, while the rest are sketched or in most cases only mentioned.

Both the verse and prose versions of the tale of Beren and Lúthien, probably the single most important story in the corpus apart from *The Lord of the Rings*, were never completed to Tolkien's satisfaction. Nevertheless, their presence in his myth may provide an added clue to the negative aspect of Tolkien's involvement with the Arthurian world. One phrase in his description of his own mythology, "purged of the gross," invites inquiry, for Tolkien does not explain what he means by "gross." Read in the context of his dismissal of the Arthurian world, it might be understood as a reference to the two adulterous love triangles of Tristan, Iseult and Mark, and Lancelot, Guinevere and Arthur which occupy so large a place in the story. There are no such situations in Tolkien's myth. There is, in fact, only one love story worthy of the name, that of Beren and Lúthien. Their love is neither forbidden nor illicit, and its successful outcome in Beren's quest for a Silmaril is a formative component of the entire myth.

Both cycles of stories are "redolent" of the clime and soil of the North West of Europe; Arthur's because that is where they started and where they found their highest expression; Tolkien's because that is what he intended them to be. In his O'Donnell Lecture, "English and Welsh," he stated unequivocally that, "The north-west of Europe . . . is as it were a single philological province, a region so interconnected in race, culture, history and linguistic fusions that its departmental philologies cannot flourish in isolation" (*Angles and Britons* 13). The interconnection of culture, history, and linguistic fusion cannot be ignored, either in Arthur's case or Tolkien's. Arthurian myth is the cumulative product of intense cultural and linguistic cross-fertilization. It was originally Celtic, shared among the related Celtic-speaking communities of Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany. Geoffrey of Monmouth made it a major part of his Latin *History of the Kings of Britain*. The Channel Islander Wace carried Geoffrey's history back into French; Layamon translated Wace into Middle English. Chretien and his followers brought the story back again to France. Anonymous English poets re-cast it into Middle English; and at last Sir Thomas Malory conflated all the material into one great whole.

Both legends display "that fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic." The Elven strongholds of Gondolin and Doriath are as beautiful, as glittering, and as gracious as the magical courts of Arthur's realm, and both recall Welsh and Irish faerie Otherworlds. Mirkwood may be Germanic in name but it is unmistakably Celtic in character, drawn straight out of the darkly haunted woods of Celtic legend and Arthurian romance. Like Fangorn and Lórien it could pass in a pinch for the magical Breton forest of Broceliande, a name, which, let us not forget, was the original form that later became Beleriand (*Lays of Beleriand* 160). Finally, the Arthurian stories are "linked to a majestic whole," while scope has certainly been left for "other hands and minds." Since the time of Arthur, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Malory, Lord Tennyson, T. H. White, and indeed Tolkien himself, have added to his story. And much as purists might dislike the idea, if Tolkien's publisher has anything to say about it, in the years to come there will undoubtedly be new stories of Middle-earth contributed by other hands and minds.

It is in this area of comparison, that of compositional and textual history, where the greatest kinship between the two myths resides. In the Introduction to her translation of *Lancelot*, a thirteenth-century French prose narrative, Jane Burns notes that for the early Middle Ages prose was "a mode of writing that

mimic[ed] the writing of chronicle" (history), whereas poetry was reserved for romances (fiction) (xxix). Chronicles dealt with the real world while romances created a world of the imagination. Prose, moreover, was meant to be read for elucidation or education while poetry, even when committed to writing, was meant to be chanted or sung as entertainment. It followed that a prose rewriting of an earlier poem lent its subject veracity. The result was that as part of a many-layered and ongoing process, the many Arthurian authors/redactors cast their material first as poetry and then to validate its authenticity, recast it as prose. The consequence, according to Burns, was a manuscript tradition "deriving ultimately from the cumulative efforts of successive authors, scribes, and reader/reciters" that "allowed texts to be constantly recast and rewritten in many variants" (xix). And finally, Malory conflated all the material into his great prose re-telling to demonstrate that, in the words of his publisher William Caxton, "there can no man resonably gaynsaye but there was a kyng of thys lande named Arthur" (Malory xiv).

Anyone familiar with the composition history of Tolkien's mythology can see that both intentionally and through the vagaries of his own creative process, Tolkien's stories followed this kind of temporal layering. The result is that his mythos, like Arthur's, has its own extended history of transmission, its own complex manuscript tradition of multiple and overlapping story variants in both poetry and prose. And although the progression is never straightforward we can, with caution, infer a movement from poetry to prose both in Tolkien's external chronology of composition and in the internal chronology of the myth itself. The Túrin story offers a good illustration. Although according to Christopher Tolkien, "[t]he development of the legend of Túrin Turambar is in some respects the most tangled and complex of all the narrative elements in the story of the First Age" (*Unfinished Tales* 6), we do have some chronology. The earliest version of the alliterative *Túrin* was "begun c. 1918" (*Lays* 3), while according to Christopher Tolkien the prose *Turambar and the Foalókë* was "in existence . . . by the middle of 1919" (*Book of Lost Tales II* 69).

Tolkien carries the conceit even further to provide a fictive "translation" into prose of a (presumed) Elvish version of the story, the *Narn i Hîn Húrin*, with the implication that the prose translation (in English) is a late redaction. Now *narn* is an Elvish verse form, so that strictly speaking any mention of "the *Narn*" must be supposed to refer to a specific poem in Elvish. There is no evidence that any poem about Túrin in Elvish exists. There is no *Narn*. What

Tolkien is creating here is his fictive version of the old "lost original" theory used by scholars to explain relationships between apparently separately arising, variant versions of a single story. A lost (and possibly oral) original is presumed by some scholars in order to explain the resemblance between no less than three of Chretien's romances—*Erec*, *Yvain*, and *Perceval*—and their Welsh counterparts *Gereint*, *Owein*, and *Peredur*. Shippey cites a Norse example in his discussion of Tolkien and depth, cited above. Arthurian literature is exceptionally rich in such instances, and Tolkien's application of the theory to his own mythos is a distinct Arthurian echo. The non-existent *Narn* adds what Shippey calls depth to a fictive manuscript tradition meant to be the work of successive authors, scribes, and reader/reciters, thus allowing texts to be constantly recast and rewritten in many variants. The fact that the successive authors, scribes, and reader/reciters (even of the ghostly Elvish *Narn*) were all Tolkien himself does not alter the fictional picture; it merely demonstrates once again, that art and life imitate one another.

Another example is *The Lay of Leithian*, of which an early fragment is quoted in the alliterative *Túrin* (*Lays* 107). The *Lay* was begun in 1925 (150), well before Tolkien's prose retelling, which was "finally completed" by the end of 1937 (*Lost Road* 295). Like the Arthurian romances of Chretien, the *Lay* is composed in a form generally associated with written composition, the rhymed octosyllabic couplet. But just as Chretien drew on earlier sources for his romances, the fictive poet of the *Lay* must be supposed to have drawn on earlier and probably oral versions of the story, while his own became the basis for subsequent prose rewritings. And the *Lay* is later sung by Strider to the hobbits at Weathertop, a presentation that reinforces its oral origin. As Shippey points out (277), there are no less than eight extant versions, ranging from two to two hundred pages in length.

Like the Arthurian material, then, many if not all of Tolkien's texts were "recast and rewritten in many variants" over the years. Within their internal, fictive chronology they were consciously intended to represent "the cumulative efforts of successive authors, scribes, and reader/reciters." Poems by Bilbo Baggins and Sam Gamgee are woven into *The Lord of the Rings*, and it is clear that they are meant to represent disparate poetic traditions. Though both poems are orally presented, the folkloric structure and diction of Sam's "Troll stood alone" clearly comes from a different stratum of society than Bilbo's poetic re-telling of the story of Earendil. It is worth noting that both Sam and

Bilbo are presented as the authors of their respective songs, that both have obviously composed them orally, and that both are implicitly building on already familiar material.

Not all the similarities I have pointed out between the Arthurian cycle and Tolkien's myth were necessarily deliberate and conscious on his part. The tangled and overlapping chronology of composition, especially, was simply a part of his creative process. It seems clear, however, that Arthur was in the back of his mind, or perhaps in the early, tentative beginnings, Arthur, along with other fragments of England's history, was in the front of his mind and only later retired to the back. Tolkien's process of naming, the very root and genesis of his invented languages, offers examples of both front and back positions. There is not just the shift from early Broceliande to later Beleriand, but from the early Avallon to the later Avallone to the still later Tol Eressea, all names for what remained throughout the naming process the "Lonely Isle." Not everyone will recognize the name Broceliande or hear its echo in the later Beleriand, but who has not heard of Avalon, the mysterious, isolated (not to say lonely) Isle where the wounded Arthur was taken to be healed?

Thus over the course of its long development Tolkien's legendarium, partly by design and partly by circumstance, took on the aggregate, overlapping Arthurian textual structure, as well as internal similarities of character and episode. The Matter of Middle-earth is not a rival to Arthur. It is a consort venture, more influenced and shaped by the Matter of Britain than Tolkien was willing to acknowledge. Resonating against the Arthurian corpus, the atmosphere, shape, and structure of Tolkien's mythos acquire validity, the texture thickens in density, qualifying it to stand next to the three great Matters as a legitimate and valid fourth—the Matter of Middle-earth.

Endnotes

[1] See his discussion of "depth" in *The Road to Middle-Earth*, pp. 274-275.
[2] In his biography of C. S. Lewis, A. N. Wilson pictures Dyson, faced with an Inklings evening devoted to a reading from Tolkien's mythos, exclaiming, "Oh fuck! Not another elf!" (217).

Works Consulted

Branston, Brian. *The Lost Gods of England.* New York and Oxford: OUP, 1973.
Burns, E. Jane. Introduction. *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation.* Vol. I. Trans. Carol J. Chase. New York and London: Garland, 1993.

Carpenter, Humphrey. *Tolkien: A Biography*. Boston: Houghton, 1977.

The Kalevala. Comp. Elias Lonnrot. Trans. Francis P. Magoun. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1963.

Malory, Thomas. *Works*. Ed. Eugéne Vinaver. 2nd ed. London: OUP, 1971.

The New Arthurian Encyclopedia. Ed. Norris J. Lacey. New York and London: Garland, 1991.

Shippey, T. A. *The Road to Middle-Earth*. 2nd ed. London: HarperCollins, 1982.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Book of Lost Tales, Part I*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Vol. I of *The History of Middle-earth*. 12 vols.1984-1996. Boston: Houghton, 1984.

—. *The Book of Lost Tales, Part II*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Vol. II of *The History of Middle-earth*. 12 vols. 1984-1996. Boston: Houghton, 1984.

—. *"English and Welsh."* *Angles and Britons: O'Donnell Lectures*. Cardiff: University of Wales P, 1963. 1-41.

—. *The Lays of Beleriand*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Vol. III of *The History of Middle-earth*. 12 vols. 1984-1996. Boston: Houghton, 1985.

—. *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter with Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton, 1981.

—. *The Lord of The Rings*. Boston: Houghton, 1991.

—. *The Lost Road*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Vol. V of *The History of Middle-earth*. 12 vols.1984-1996. Boston: Houghton, 1987.

—. "On Fairy-Stories." *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983. 109-61.

—. *The Silmarillion*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton, 1977.

—. *Unfinished Tales*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton, 1980.

Wilson, A. N. *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990.

2000 Mythopoeic Award Winners

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature
Tamsin by Peter S. Beagle

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature
The Folk Keeper by Franny Billingsley

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies
Roverandom by J.R.R. Tolkien
Edited by Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in General Myth and Fantasy Studies
Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness
by Carole G. Silver

The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature is given to the fantasy novel, multi-volume, or single-author story collection for adults published in 1999 that best exemplifies "the spirit of the Inklings." Reissues (such as paperback editions) are eligible if no earlier edition was a finalist. Books from a series are eligible if they stand on their own; otherwise, the series is eligible the year its final volume appears.

The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature honors books for younger readers (from Young Adults to picture books for beginning readers), in the tradition of *The Hobbit* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Rules for eligibility are otherwise the same as for the Adult Literature award. The question of which award a borderline book is best suited for will be decided by consensus of the committees.

The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies is given to books on Tolkien, Lewis, and/or Williams that make significant contributions to Inklings scholarship. For this award, books first published during the last three years (1997-1999) are eligible, including finalists for previous years.

The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies is given to scholarly books on other specific authors in the Inklings tradition, or to more general works on the genres of myth and fantasy. The period of eligibility is three years, as for the Inklings Studies award.