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Tolkien and the Age of Forgery: Improving Antiquarian Practices in Arda

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'If a young, perhaps a female author, chooses to circulate a beautiful poem . . . under the disguise of antiquity, the public is surely more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception.' (Scott, 1849, p. 16).

Literary forgery is not a title we commonly affiliate with J.R.R. Tolkien's mythical legendarium. Neither is it a term I wish to label him with. However, as Nick Groom has pondered, 'it is nonetheless interesting that he adopts the techniques of literary forgery' (2014, p. 294). When referring to the authorial conceit that ties *The Book of Lost Tales*, *The Silmarillion*, *The Red Book of Westmarch* and the less substantial texts that orbit the legendarium together, we are more inclined to use titles like 'framework', 'meta-textual frame', and 'depth' to describe Arda's historicity.[1] We perceive the text to exist simultaneously on two different planes: the fictional world of the story (the "secondary world") and the real world ("the primary world") (Pezzini, 2018, p. 49). The theoretical scope of Tolkien's world-building has therefore received significant attention and scholars have further examined the tools that Tolkien used to bring Arda to life.[2] However, what has been overlooked is how his world-building strikingly echoes the motivations and methodologies of two literary forgers who were writing in the 1760s – the epoch known as the Age of Forgery. James Macpherson (1736 – 1796) is renowned for his pseudo-Medieval Scottish mythology attributed to the figure of Ossian, and Thomas Chatterton (1752 – 1770) similarly created scores of manuscripts and paratexts that he purported to be original works by the imaginary Thomas Rowley and Turgot. All three writers considered themselves to have 'found' the mythologies that they built and dedicated them to their nations.

Of the two, Macpherson has received the most attention within Tolkien scholarship. Tom Shippey has argued that Tolkien would have seen Macpherson's Scottish forgeries as 'phony', a poor example of a myth cycle that mishandles its source material and stands far below Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* (1835), his favoured example of antiquarian scholarship (2007, p. 22). Yet other scholars have since drawn more positive connections between Macpherson's and Tolkien's mythologies, citing the sweeping, dramatic landscapes and reliance on 'Celtic'

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[1] For 'framework' see Fimi (2010, p. 128) and Tolkien (1984, p. 5). For 'meta-textual frame' see Pezzini (2018, p. 32). For 'depth' see Shippey (2005, p. 259) and Tolkien (1984, pp. 2 – 5).
[2] In particular see Nagy (2003, pp. 239 – 258), Flieger (2005, pp. 55 – 84), Flieger (2006, pp. 206 – 218), Nagy (2006, pp. 44 – 45), Oberhelman (2008, pp. 81 – 92), Brljak (2010, pp. 1 – 34), Thiessen (2014, pp. 195 – 207), Lee (2014, p. 61), Nagy (2014, pp. 112 – 116), Pezzini (2018, pp. 32 – 64).

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myth as key methods.[3] Jamie Williamson reminds us that Macpherson's Ossian texts were drawn from various 'Celtic' sources (Irish and Scottish) and Tolkien similarly 'built his initial fictional indigenous English mythology out of chosen bits of Germanic and Celtic (and other) tradition and a great deal of his own invention' (2015, p. 63). Although none of these studies have located evidence that Tolkien read Macpherson, it is strongly implied that Macpherson and Ossian were a part of the academic backcloth that Tolkien grew up with.

Comparatively, Chatterton has received little attention and his relationship to Tolkien is woefully under-represented. Nick Groom, Jamie Williamson, and Dimitra Fimi are the only figures to have thematically linked the Bristolian to Tolkien. Groom acknowledges that 'it is not clear that Tolkien ever studied Chatterton' but notes that he was later a colleague of David Nichol Smith, an eminent eighteenth-century scholar, and was supposed to supervise a thesis on Thomas Tyrwhitt, the first editor of Chatterton's work (Groom, 2014, p. 295). Williamson's attention on the subject is regrettably brief, calling Chatterton a 'clear precursor to the . . . elaborate invented languages of Tolkien' (2015, pp. 64 – 65). Fimi has produced the most fruit thus far, 'teas[ing] out similarities and parallels' between their methodologies of Medieval world-building (Fimi, 2016, p. 60).

Drawing on new, previously unpublished manuscript material from Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks, this article will expand and combine these two avenues of scholarship under the frame of the Age of Forgery. It will argue that Tolkien's legendarium draws heavily from the antiquarian methodologies of Macpherson and Chatterton. It conceives of all three as authors of feigned history who responded to the national anxieties of their contexts. At the heart of their respective mythologies lies the desire to provide their distressed nations with historical and national identities. The modes of transmission are key to their success (or failure) as Macpherson promotes the virtues of the oral tradition and Chatterton, having learnt from his predecessor's perceived short-comings, sides with the authority of the written word. Tolkien's position enabled him to judge the values and quality of Macpherson's and Chatterton's distinctly different mythologies. He picked, modified, and improved on the antiquarian practices that had been prevalent during the Age of Forgery. Indeed, extent echoes of Macpherson and Chatterton are not coincidences, they are deliberate improvements on previous antiquarian material that marries rather than segregates methodologies. In this manner, Tolkien ultimately transformed the work of the

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[3] See Shippey (2007, p. 22), Robson (1986, p. 234), Gaskill (1991, p. 6), Rosebury (2003, pp. 3 & 22), Groom (2014, pp. 294 – 295), Dawson (2005, pp. 108 – 118), Hunter (2005, pp. 61 – 72), Williamson (2015, pp. 63 – 64) and Bugajska (2014, pp. 159 – 168).

antiquarian literary forgers into what structuralists would call the codes and conventions of modern fantasy literature.

The article will begin with an overview that will establish how the contextual worlds of Macpherson, Chatterton, and Tolkien mirror one another in terms of national anxieties. In order to fully understand how Tolkien and his contemporaries understood the forgers, it will then place them within the contextual scholarly spheres of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries while analysing Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks. Turning its attention to the texts themselves, it will approach Macpherson and Tolkien, and Chatterton and Tolkien separately, examining the methodological similarities and developments within *The Book of Lost Tales* (1910s – 1930s), *The Hobbit* (1937), and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954 – 1955).

The Worlds of Macpherson, Chatterton, and Tolkien

The 1760s saw a surge in antiquarian activity that pertained to the reclaiming of the British literary tradition. Previously, Thomas Gray had rejected the Hellenic muse in 'The Bard' (1757) for a native one and the paucity of Medieval British texts generated a belief that a more substantial body of literature survived somewhere and needed to be found. This desire was so strong that writers started to present their work as spurious antiquarian finds. Horace Walpole's short-lived preface to *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) declared that the novel had been 'found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England' (2014, p. 5). The English translation of William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) erroneously presented the original text as Arabic, when Beckford had created the story and originally written it in French. This trajectory led to greater forgeries by a wealth of figures across Britain: Iolo Morganwg, Macpherson, Chatterton, and William Ireland to name just a few.[4] From the surge of national interest in its literary past and tradition, Macpherson and Chatterton forged respective histories and mythologies in an effort to 'explore imaginatively the idea of authentic regression into the past' in order to reclaim it and revive Britain's national tradition (Haywood, 1986, p. 30).

Much like Lönnrot, Macpherson undertook field research. He collected native Scottish ballads from the Highlands before redacting and translating them into the Ossian mythology. Set in the third-century Scottish Highlands during the reign of Fingal, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) was followed by two 'epics':

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[4] It is not within the scope of this paper to explore Tolkien's connections to all of these forgers. However, 'Tolkien's Celtic Library' at the Bodleian evidences that he was familiar with Morganwg. He owned an edited version of *Iolo Manuscripts* (1888) (edited by Taliesin Williams) and John William's publications of *Barddas* volumes 1 (1862) and 2 (1874).

Fingal (1761) and *Temora* (1763). They presented the Scottish as *the* British people with *the* rich and untapped national history that Britain had been searching for. Ossian was proclaimed the 'Homer of the North' and across Europe, the texts were lauded over by significant cultural figures.[5] Macpherson permeated the texts with a deep melancholy that nostalgically recalled the glory of Highland Clan culture that had degenerated down the centuries and was finally destroyed by the Highland's defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The choice of the third century was strategic as it allowed Macpherson to 'turn the Highlands into one enormous echo chamber, evoking an emphatically oral world' that reflected contemporary views on the value of the oral tradition (Trumpener, 1997, p. 70).

However, not everyone was convinced of Ossian's authenticity and the permanence of the oral tradition from which it supposedly originated. Samuel Johnson led the assault against Macpherson and demanded that the Scot reveal his sources. Macpherson failed to do so and thus began the tirade against Macpherson's ingenuity, use of language, and source adaption that was still ongoing during Tolkien's student days at Exeter College, Oxford. Macpherson's failure to produce tangible evidence was a warning for later forgers to take greater efforts when fabricating history.

Thanks to William Wordsworth's 'marvellous Boy' description and Henry Wallis's oil painting *The Death of Chatterton* (1856) Chatterton is well-known as the iconic youthful artist (Wordsworth, 2008, p. 262; l. 43). His suicide at the age of seventeen has however been contested by Groom in *The Forgers Shadow*; he has argued that the 'myth' of the act 'became part of the very genesis of Romanticism' (2002, p. 12). In Chatterton's very short life he forged a plethora of manuscripts by the fifteenth-century monk Thomas Rowley and tenth-century Anglo-Saxon Turgot, producing a treasure-trove of texts and paratexts that mythologised Bristol in Britain's literary tradition. This imagined world came from his frustration with the decline of English culture and tradition after the Norman Conquest. He found 'insufficient materials for his fertile mind' in the church of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, so he started to 'invent his own' materials with the intent of reclaiming England's forgotten glory (Groom, 2014, p. 294). As much as Macpherson was a writer of Highland identity, Chatterton was a poet of English identity (Groom, 2002, p. 170).

Chatterton's letters attest to his dissatisfaction with England after 1066. He strove to archaicise Rowley's and Turgot's work with a pseudo-Medieval script

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[5] Such as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Gottfried Herder, Gottfried August Bürger, Johann Heinrich Voss, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Madame de Staël, François-René Chateaubriand, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, Napoleon Bonaparte, Alphonse de Lamartine, Franz Schubert, George Sand, Felix Mendelssohn, and Johannes Brahms.

that the Romantic poet John Keats would later call the 'purest English' (1935, p. 425). Whereas Macpherson embodied the extremes of the oral tradition, so far so that it brought into question his work's authenticity, Chatterton swung the other way. The aligning of Rowley with the invention of the printing press and manuscript culture was a deliberate choice; the posterity and tangibility of the manuscript meant that Chatterton's claim to historical authenticity was more secure. Although Macpherson and Chatterton 'acted as discoverers of "buried" MSS, of literary "monuments"', Chatterton's obsession with forging the actual evidence surpassed Macpherson's own mythological achievements and anticipated Tolkien's own (Haywood, 1986, p. 22). Chatterton told the spurious tale that he had found and translated the texts of the 'Battle of Hastings', 'The Tournament', and 'Ælla' and claimed that Rowley had translated them from the originals of Turgot in the tenth century. They were therefore products of their time's nationalism and act as precursors to Tolkien's own response to twentieth-century England's yearning for a mythology.

The nationalism that permeated the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century was not just located in Britain. The hunt came 'after the Napoleonic wars' when 'the nations or proto-nations of Europe became engaged in what was almost an "arms race" to provide themselves with national literary traditions that would cement their claim to having always existed' (Shippey, 2004, p. 147). In 1871, Germany became a unified state; Italian irredentism was still ongoing and would not become fully realised until 1918. On the run up to the Great War 'most of the populations participating . . . already felt to some degree a sense of national identity' (Mann, 2013, p. 174). The empires of the three Great Powers: Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire all blended national identities with imperial ones to form a unified nationalism. It was very easy to 'tug at the strings of national identities' and spark a patriotic reaction 'across the classes' of a nation (Mann, 2013, p. 175).

The promotion of nationalism and patriotism in the British school curriculum meant that Tolkien's own school, King Edward's, Birmingham was saturated with national pride. During an inspection by The King Edward's Board of Education in July 1905, the inspectors applauded how boys in the First Form 'did good essays on Patriotism' (Gross & Matthews, 1905, p. 7), and again on 25th August 1906 how many students 'took a rather provincial patriotic tone about England, as if there were no other countries in the scale of civilisation' (Gross & Matthews, 1906, p. 17). Tolkien no doubt partook in classes like this as he moved up to the First Form in the Autumn term of 1907 (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 15). The patriotic attitude of the school would find resonance in Tolkien's letter to Christopher Wiseman on 16th November 1914, in which he considered the unifying forces of the T.C.B.S. to be 'religion, human love, the duty of patriotism,

and a fierce belief in nationalism' (quoted in Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 63). The education reports and Tolkien's letter therefore echo the larger concerns around the waning state of the British Empire and the global push for national pride.

Closer to home the 'rising Welsh and Scottish nationalism during this period w[ere] additional reason[s] for the focus on English nationalism' (Fimi, 2010, p. 54). England's students and writers reacted to this period of national upheaval by deliberately promoting the country's might in their writing 'as if there were no other countries in the scale of civilisation', simultaneously fuelling a powerful English nationalism and separating them from their 'Celtic' neighbours. Much like Macpherson's Highlands and Chatterton's England, Tolkien's England found its history to be lacking a mythological identity altogether. Although 'the Anglo-Saxons had been rediscovered and praised as the ancestors of modern England . . . [there was] very scanty mythological material from the literature of this "great people"' which frustrated Tolkien and the T.C.B.S. (Fimi, 2010, p. 54).

Macpherson, Chatterton, and Tolkien reacted to the intense national drives of their periods by creating complete mythologies for their deprived nations. Tolkien would reflect on the aim of *The Book of Lost Tales* in his 1951 letter to Milton Waldman in which he originally planned to dedicate his mythology to England (2006a, pp. 144 – 145).

Tolkien's Undergraduate Notebooks

Tolkien's education at Oxford introduced him to a vast range of medieval texts and traditions in Britain. Through them he was able to observe how the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had compartmentalised the Middle Ages; adapting and romanticising it for each century's gain (Tolkien, 2006b, p. 173). Humphrey Carpenter considers the 'General Literature / General Miscellaneous' notebook to contain a 'few sketchy notes' that show 'no indication that [Tolkien] had more than a passing interest' in the topics covered (2002, p. 99). However, this notebook grants us a fuller picture of what the Oxford curriculum included.

In his first year Tolkien was exposed to the Age of Forgery. This came from David Nichol Smith's lecture series 'Johnson and His Friends' that started on Wednesday 15th October 1913 (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 53). On Wednesday 22nd October, Smith lectured on Samuel Johnson's criticism of Macpherson and Ossian and provided sufficient bibliographical information for his students to take away and investigate further. Tolkien took notes for this lecture and although they focused heavily on Macpherson, Chatterton was

included in the list of forgers:

[BODLEIAN LIBRARY MS. TOLKIEN A 21/4: GENERAL LITERATURE /
GENERAL MISCELLANEOUS, FOLS. 10 – 11]

Folio 10

Ossian ∴
    Johnson's criticism (one of the few critics)
Wordsworth's critic.<ism>
Influence of Ossian. on later poetry (Byron)
controversy . JS Smart. "James MacPherson"
The age of forgery. Chatterton: Horace Walpole.
Castle of Otranto. Ireland .(WH. Skeat. places)
James MacPh.<erson> 1736-1796. amid rain sky
tutor. (of T. Graham). holidaying at Spar of Moffat
in S.Scotl.<and> born Inverness. – univ<ersity> aberdeen
Edinburgh
Dr Blair. Fingall.
Fragment of A. Highland Poetry. 1760.

Folio 11

10 fragments. Celtic scholars find only 2 that have any trace of reality. ∴
Fingal an ancient epic in 6 books "1761".
Name Ossian (Oise) a real name. he made
him a contemp<orary> of the emperor Caracalla.
Temora in 8 book 1763.
This is the bulk of Ossianic poetry ∵—————∴
. ———————— .
They went forth to battle but they always fell.
Sylva Gadhelica ——————
No one denies a certain windy moonlight
Kind of poetry in parts of Ossian. Byron Goethe
etc could not have been so far deceived..
There may be much memory of reality.
Macph<erson> born about Culloden. ~~1745~~
It has real scenery <u>of a Kind</u>.. [6]

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[6] These three words are underlined four times.

Strong strain of litt<erary> reminiscence.
(Milton a great source)

The lecture is a key moment in Tolkien's developing fascination with myth as it provided him with a list of previous writers who had attempted to feign history and literary culture. Although there is no evidence that Tolkien borrowed any copies of Macpherson or Chatterton, there was nothing preventing him from reading about these writers. The notebook mentions the author J.S. Smart, whose 1905 book *James Macpherson: An Episode In Literature* was accessible to students at Oxford. It is evident that Smith's lecture derives from Smart's book, referencing it as a recommendation for students to consult. Tolkien appears to have also copied down quotations that resonated strongly with him: 'They went forth to battle but they always fell.' is the misquoted line from Ossian 'they came forth to war, but they always fell' (Macpherson, 1807, p. 244). This contains a poignant thematic echoing of the Northern courage that Tolkien admired so much in Northern mythology, using it to enrich his own fiction as early as the 1910s. The noting of Ossian as a 'real name' and his temporal positioning as a 'contemp<orary> of the emperor Caracalla' evidenced to Tolkien that Macpherson was tying his mythology into authentic Celtic and Roman history. This of course preceded Tolkien's own attempt to link his own mythology with authentic English history (Hengest and Horsa) only a few years later. Although he would reference the *Kalevala* as a key influence, his earlier exposure to Macpherson's mythological framework for Scotland will have surely piqued Tolkien's interest.

The biographical information will have brought to Tolkien's attention how Macpherson was trying to preserve a disappearing Scottish heritage, such as he would soon try to preserve a lost English heritage. The parallel in their motives stem very much from their shared sense of cultural loss. Macpherson's 'regret for a great and heroic past, not lost beyond all recall, and of lamentation for the warriors of an earlier time whose day of glory [wa]s gone' strikingly anticipates the mourning in Chatterton's Rowley texts and Tolkien's own for England's lost Faërie culture (Smart, 1905, p. 29). It was the landscape within the stories as much as the stories themselves that grounded them. The 'mountain torrent, the dark rock in the ocean, the mist on the hill, the ghosts of heroes half seen by the setting moon' that make up Macpherson's mythology helped to build the Romantic Nationalism of the late nineteenth century that later permeated *The Book of Lost Tales* (Beers, 1899, p. 310).

The mention of Chatterton in the undergraduate notebook is also highly significant. It shows that Chatterton was as much a part of the British literary backcloth as Johnson and Macpherson and that Tolkien will have had some

awareness of him as a Literature and Language student. The Smith October 1913 lecture proves that the poet was taught (if briefly) at Oxford in the 1910s as part of the Age of Forgery.

During the *fin de siècle* and early twentieth century, Chatterton had developed two personas in the public eye. The first was cultivated by the literary critics and philologists, who broke his work down and exposed his ignorance of Middle English. In particular, Walter Skeat's philological essay shed immense light on the origins of what he called the 'Rowley dialect', demystifying a key element of Chatterton's mythology (1872, p. xl). In his editions of Chatterton's work, Skeat controversially swapped the language around so the footnotes were made up of the medievalisms and the modern English became the language of the poems. Skeat's editorial decisions started a trend in Chatterton scholarship, editions by Henry D. Roberts (1906) and Sidney Lee (1906) followed Skeat's example. To Skeat and others, Chatterton was simply a juvenile forger and second-rate language adapter.

The second persona was promoted by the artists. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Oscar Wilde were two members of an 'impassioned generation of artists and writers who established the conviction that Chatterton's works had positively redirected the course of English poetry' (Bristow & Mitchell, 2015, p. 15). They anticipated Groom's argument that Chatterton was a 'poet of English identity' (2002, p. 170). As Rossetti would insist, not knowing Chatterton was 'to be ignorant of the *true* day-spring of modern romantic poetry', his work was to be revered and admired, not cast aside as juvenile rubbish (2010, p. 186). In 1906 Francis E. Clark argued that English in the early twentieth century owed much to the 'boy poets' Chatterton and Keats (1906, p. 265).

As a student philologist Tolkien could have sided with Skeat, but as a fellow poet, creator of 'feigned history' and medievalist, he would have appreciated Chatterton's efforts and methodology in reconstructing the lost Anglo-Saxon past and drawn parallels with his own attempt to do the same thing from 1915 onwards.[7] Tolkien also shared a distaste for French influence. In the King Edward's Debating Society meeting of 4th November 1910, he had deplored the Norman Conquest. The 'influx of polysyllabic barbarities' from the French had 'ousted the more honest if humbler native words' and Tolkien, much like Chatterton, called for a 'return to something of Saxon purity of diction – "right English goodliness of speechcraft"' in order to maintain the *English* heritage in a

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[7] Tolkien was familiar with Skeat around the time of Smith's lecture as he was borrowing his editions of Chaucer from Exeter College library.

period of anxiety over national identity and freedom (MacSwiney & Payton, 1910, p. 95).

When it came to the framework that Tolkien would use for his mythology, he would go beyond the work of Macpherson and Chatterton. They had worked with homogenous methods: the former celebrating the power of the oral tradition and the latter learning from Macpherson's controversy and relying on the security of the written word for historical transmission. With over one hundred and fifty years between the Age of Forgery and Tolkien, the twentieth-century author was able to critically reflect and weigh up the pros and cons of both methods. The result was a mythology that was built around a 'mixture of oral and literate cultures', balancing both approaches and building on them simultaneously (Lee, p. 2014, p. 59).

The Oral Tradition: Young Nations and Immortality

Deidre Dawson has identified how Macpherson and Tolkien both saw language as 'the key to reviving, recovering, or reconstructing an ancient culture and mythology' (2005, p. 109). Macpherson thought his contemporary Highlanders 'stood outside contemporary civilisation, preserving in their remote wilds the freshness of early life, their own ancient language, their own picturesque costume and simple habits. They even retained, unimpaired by the contagion of luxury, all the valour of the race that had defeated the Romans themselves' (Smart, 1905, p. 5). They were 'preserving the last relics of the ancient culture' of the Celts (Stafford, 1988, p. 97). The failure of the Romans and Normans to colonise Caledonia (the Roman name for the Scottish Highlands) elevated them in Macpherson's view because their history had remained uncorrupted, unlike the rest of Britain. In his Ossian mythology he aimed to remind his contemporaries just how powerful their ancestors were by making a Caledonian recount the wars of Fingal.

According to Katie Trumpener the true subject of the Ossian mythology 'is not epic heroism but the vicissitudes of oral tradition' (1997, p. 75). Macpherson demonstrates that 'oral performance functions precisely to keep the past alive' (Trumpener, 1997, p. 76). Contemporary works like Thomas Blackwell's *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753), and Robert Wood's *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1769) argued that the oral tradition had merit and endurance; it did have the capability to carry the weight and memory of a race or state. These publications helped cultivate a 'rising generation of authors, nurtured on accounts of the fiery eloquence of native speakers, [who] were increasingly willing to speculate that the oral tradition could

give rise to literature of outstanding merit' (Hudson, 1996, p. 167). For Blackwell such fiery eloquence could not be found in modern society as 'a language thoroughly polished in the modern Sense, will not descend to the *Simplicity* of Manners absolutely necessary in *Epic*-Poetry' as it has made 'many Words *obsolete*, it coops a Man up in a Corner, allows him but *one Set* of courtly Phrases, and deprives him of many significant Terms, and strong beautiful Expressions' (1735, p. 60). Epic poetry was made in a 'rude Community' only 'a little advanced' where letters were not commonly used (Blackwell, 1735, p. 42). As a result, Homer's 'Poems were made to be *recited*, or sung to a *Compan*y; and not read in private, or perused in a Book, which few were then capable of doing' and Blackwell subsequently called for his contemporary readers to listen to Homer's works for 'his Style . . . cannot be understood in any other light . . . lest we put ourselves in the place of his Audience' (Blackwell, 1735, p. 122).

Works like Blackwell's enthused the public with a renewed passion for the oral tradition and the memories of the cultures it brought with it. Macpherson aided in revitalising the popularity of the tradition with just his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*. But Scotland was not the only country to have produced such as rich oral history. The Finns, Scandinavians, and Germans which Johnson will have called 'barbarous' people had produced the *Kalevala*, *The Poetic Edda,* and the *Nibelungenlied* from their own oral traditions, displaying just how capable they were of transmitting tales of extensive length while keeping their integrity. Tolkien worked with these particular texts for the majority of his life and will have seen Macpherson as partaking in the 'barbarous' tradition of immortalising the tales of one's nation by injecting one's prose with oral techniques.

Macpherson's methods mimicked those of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ballad collectors like Lönnrot. Tolkien was clearly aware that Macpherson had, like Lönnrot, conducted field research, collected, and consulted his native ballads, as his undergraduate notebooks identify that 'Celtic scholars find only 2 that have any trace of reality.'[8] His later reading of Campbell's *Popular Tales of The West Highlands* will have positively shifted Tolkien's understanding of Macpherson's method as the book identified that Macpherson had built his mythology on the Red and Black Books of Canranald. There were important historical documents from Clan Donald's heritage that had been compiled from ballads and other surviving tales from the Highlands by Niall MacMhuirich (Red Book) and Christopher Beaton (the main compiler of the Black Book) and transcribed into Gaelic script. It is worth noting here that whereas it has been identified that the Red Book of Hengest is a (if not the) source for Tolkien's *Red*

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[8] As was noted about Smith's lecture, this information was lifted from Smart's book (1905, p. 94).

Book of Westmarch, there is a strong correlation between Tolkien and Macpherson.

For Tolkien, this framework was exactly what he needed. The similarities between Tolkien and Lönnrot's work has been thoroughly covered, yet it cannot be denied that his framework for *The Book of Lost Tales* runs closer to Macpherson's. [9] Eriol did not take part in the myths but is still a named character who is interpolated into English history as the father of Hengest and Horsa and undergoes character development in the work. Tolkien's similar fascination with the oral tradition's power is deeply rooted in his mythology. It is intimately tied with cultures that are, similarly to Macpherson's Scotland, 'young' but vigorous and energetic or ancient (Fimi, 2010, p. 149).

Perhaps the most prevalent example of a youthful culture that relies on the oral tradition is the Rohirrim. It is also the culture that most poignantly recalls Ossian's Highlands. Aragorn reflects that the Rohirrim are 'wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 430). In contrast to the Elves, the 'living memory' of the Rohirrim is limited (Honegger, 2019). To them, the 'raising of [Edoras] is but a memory of song' and when Aragorn chants 'Where now is the horse and the rider?' Legolas's comments reflect centuries of Ossian scholarship: 'That, I guess, is the language of the Rohirrim . . . for it is like to this land itself; rich and rolling in part, and else hard and stern as the mountains . . . it is laden with the sadness of Mortal Men' (Tolkien, 2007, pp. 507 – 508). The language itself is interlinked with its land, just as Ossian's mournful tone is interlaced with the sounds and movements of the Highlands. Rohan's culture thrives on this solemn, wilder model of a youthful society that Fimi has called 'closer to the stereotype of the Northern "barbarians"' that is 'perceived as a stronger "race"' (2010, p. 149). The Rohirrim's oral tradition is saturated in Ossianic melancholy. Even when Théoden improvises verse it is foreboding and laced with the semantics of death:

> *Arise, arise, Riders of Théoden!*
> *Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter!*
> *spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered,*
> *a sword-day, a red day, ere the sun rises!*
> *Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!* (Tolkien, 2007, p. 838).

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[9] See Flieger (2005, pp. 27 – 31) and (2004, pp. 277 – 283), Shippey (2001, xv – xvi, 64 & 250), (2004, pp. 154 – 160) and (2005, p. 297), West (2004, pp. 285 – 293) and Gay (2004, pp. 295 – 303).

Although the verse can be read as a celebratory battle cry, it is also portentous of the many Rohirrim that will fall, including their King. In this fashion it reads much like the line from Ossian that Tolkien misquoted in his undergraduate notebooks: 'they came forth to war, but they always fell' (Macpherson, 1807, p. 244). Even later when the song of the Mounds of Mundberg is recited, the heavy alliteration and melancholy aesthetic channels the 'sadness of Mortal Men' that permeates Rohan's oral tradition.

In complete contrast to the Rohirrim can be found the oral culture of the Hobbits. Casting aside the former's mournful verse, Tolkien shows a very different side of the oral tradition by having the Hobbits recite or sing verse in order to brighten their spirits (Kelly, 1972, p. 172). From the cheery 'Ho! Ho! Ho! To the bottle I go!' to the fragments of verse used to 'encourage' the Hobbits during their escape from the Shire and the Black Riders, the Hobbits' approach to the oral tradition is far removed from the Ossianic melancholy, injecting its readers with hope and joy (Tolkien, 2007, p. 112). Perhaps the most powerful use of the oral tradition by a Hobbit is when Sam is searching for Frodo in Cirith Ungol:

> The torch, that was already burning low when he arrived, sputtered and went out; and he felt the darkness cover him like a tide. And then softly, to his own surprise, there at the vain end of his long journey and his grief, moved by what thought in his heard he could not tell, Sam began to sing. . . . He murmured old childish tunes out of the Shire, and snatches of Mr. Bilbo's rhymes . . . and then suddenly new strength rose in him, and his voice ran out. (Tolkien, 2007, p. 908).

If the torch symbolises extrinsic hope then Sam's performance evidences the power of intrinsic hope. He finds new motivation and bravery through the songs of his people. Indeed, Sam uses the tunes to forge his own set of lyrics that look forwards to new life, not backwards into the dark past:

> *In western lands beneath the Sun*
> *the flowers may rise in Spring,*
> *the trees may bud, the waters run,*
> *the merry finches sing.*

> *Or there maybe 'tis cloudless night*
> *and swaying beeches bear*
> *the Elven-stars as jewels white*
> *amid their branching hair.*
> *Though here at journey's end I lie*
> *in darkness buried deep,*
> *beyond all towers strong and high,*
> *beyond all mountains steep,*
> *above all shadows rides the Sun*
> *and Stars for ever dwell:*
> *I will not say the Day is done,*
> *nor bid the Stars farewell.* (Tolkien, 2007, pp. 908 – 909).

Derived from the ballad form (a poetic form deriving from the oral tradition), the iambs bounce with energy and the anaphora catalogues the various natural elements that Sam recalls. It is again used in the second half of the verse to emphasise that 'beyond' all darkness stands the symbolic Sun and Stars. Tolkien is able to evidence in moments like this that the oral tradition need not be a historically weighted methodology that only recalls and laments the past, it can also channel courage and hope that looks to the future. It can further help us understand the present and express events in modes that bring cheer and joy. A being's mortality therefore influences the way they draw on the oral tradition. However, a being's immortality can imbue the oral tradition with an altogether different feeling.

Besides the Rohirrim and the Hobbits, Tolkien's faëries from *The Book of Lost Tales* and later Elves preferred to use the oral tradition because of their immortality and living memory. In *The Book of Lost Tales*, long tales are effortlessly recited at will by the faëries with intricate details, names and lists that show the faëries pride in their already long history, just like Ossian. The faëries and Elves superior memory and immortality meant that they could accurately relay their history for generations. The story tellers were still elders which is in-keeping with a sense of realism as it reflects the age of Ossian and the story tellers in Highland culture (Stafford, 1988, p. 13). When he was working on *The Lord of the Rings*, the Elves still maintained their reliance on the tradition and took pride in their superior abilities.

By removing the 'human limitations' of mortality for the faëries and Elves, Tolkien built on Macpherson's view that oral delivery is infinitely more intense than reading an account (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 146). As Vairë reminds his audience, Eriol and the reader, the Cottage of Lost Play was 'builded of good

magic . . . and here old tales, old songs, and elfin music are treasured and rehearsed' (Tolkien, 1983, p. 20). 'Rehearsed' proves that the tales are frequently shared to keep the past very much alive in the present. The recounting of these traditions in the Cottage of Lost Play and much later in Rivendell's Hall of Fire make them both 'locus[es] of memory' for the mythology, empowering the Elves with tradition and history that, in the case of *The Book of Lost Tales*, would feed down and become Britain's own (Oberhelman, 2007, p. 485).

The immortality of the faëries and Elves meant that it was possible to employ orators who had a living memory of the events they were narrating. This directly recalls Ossian's living memory of the Highland's decline. Utilising a character's living memory makes their narration more nuanced, laden with depth and meaning. When Elrond recalls the '"splendour of their banners"' of the Last Alliance, he embellishes thus: '"my memory reaches back even to the Elder Days. Eärendil was my sire, who was born in Gondolin before its fall; and my mother was Elwing, daughter of Dior, son of Lúthien of Doriath. I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories"' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 243). An elf's living memory adds incredible gravitas to their tales. It generates the weight that Tolkien would later refer to as 'a past that itself had depth and reached backward into a dark antiquity' in his 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics' lecture of 1936 (2006b, p. 27). The 'impression of depth' grants works of historical and poetical importance like *The Aeneid*, *Beowulf* and even Macpherson's Ossian mythology, a suggested history that the writer is not completely divulging to his audience; a 'coherent, consistent, deeply fascinating world' (Shippey, 2005, p. 259). It links to the lays and ballads that fed the ancient epics. Elrond and the memory of the Elven race offer this depth, adding dramatic effect to Elrond's story.

However, when it comes to the history of the Ring, it is concealed by an air of obscurity as only 'a part of his tale was known to some there, but the full tale to none' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 243), Elrond's living memory only achieves so much, it has to be married with Gandalf's antiquarian work in Minas Tirith to form a complete tale. Characters are not completely convinced by the oral identification of the Ring and relies on Gandalf's unearthing of Isildur's scroll where he describes the Ring to confirm the tale (2007, pp. 252 – 253). In the Council of Elrond then, Tolkien perfectly balances the importance of these two methodologies, showing how they complement and complete the other.

Tolkien continued to build on Macpherson by using orators that far surpass Ossian in age. If, in Highland Scotland, only old men could recite ballads and epics then 'there was no time to lose: it must be recovered before it vanished for ever' (Stafford, 1988, p. 115). A chilling description from Ossian conveys this: 'then comes a voice to Ossian, and awakes his soul! It is the voice of years

that are gone! they roll before me, with all their deeds! I seize the tales, as they pass, and pour them forth in song' (Macpherson, 1807, p. 319). A mortal's preoccupation with the death of a narrative is overcome by granting the oral tradition to the immortal faëries and Elves. His early intention to have Heorrenda write up Eriol's (his father's) writings from his time in the Cottage of Lost Play and for the Irish and Welsh to tell 'garbled' renditions of the 'true tradition of the fairies' further evidences Tolkien's intention to associate the power of the oral tradition with immortal beings (1984, p. 291). It is further telling that *The Silmarillion* closes with the line: 'an end was come for the Eldar of story and of song' (Tolkien, 1999, p. 366). Just as the passing of the faëries in *The Book of Lost Tales* signalled the end of the oral tradition, here too the passing of the Elves at the end of the Third Age coincides with the end of the living memory that made the Elvish oral tradition so powerful.

This power does not only work on the reader, but on characters within the tale. Whereas Ossian's narrative is emotional heavy and is supposed to conjure a deep nostalgia for its reader, the Elvish verse in the Hall of Fire has a much greater impact on Frodo. The effect is otherworldly and greatly surpasses what Ossian and Macpherson could wish for:

> At first the beauty of the melodies and of the interwoven words in elven-tongues, even though [Frodo] understood them little, held him in a spell, as soon as he began to attend to them. Almost it seemed that the words took shape, and visions of far lands and bright things that he had never yet imagined opened out before him; and the firelit hall became like a golden mist above seas of foam that sighed upon the margins of the world. Then the enchantment became more and more dreamlike, until he felt that an endless river of swelling gold and silver was flowing over him, too multitudinous for its pattern to be comprehended; it became part of the throbbing air about him, and it drenched and drowned him. Swiftly he sank under its shining weight into a deep realm of sleep. (Tolkien, 2007, p. 233).

Tolkien luxuriously indulges Frodo's experience with strikingly Keatsian tones. The entire experience of the oral tradition is intimately linked with the Romantic

mental flights and synaesthesia of Romantic lyrical poetry that scholars during the early twentieth century prominently associated with Keats.[10]

Cultures like the Highland Clans, Rohirrim, Shire Hobbits, High Elves of Rivendell, and remnant faëries in the Cottage of Lost Play all utilise the oral tradition to bring the lost past to life in the present. To orally present a tale gave the words energy and tension that could not be encountered when written on the page. Tolkien employed the methodology to great effect in *The Book of Lost Tales* and *The Lord of the Rings*, aligning the oral tradition with the immortal faëries and Elves. This gave it a stronger purpose as they did not need to rely on textual transmission. Their long lives allowed them to surpass the mortal anxieties of Ossian. They did not need to capture songs because they lived already within the collective Elven memory.

But as was identified earlier, Tolkien balanced the importance of the oral tradition with textual transmission. The authorial conceit that surrounds the chain of authors, editors, redactors, and transcribers of *The Red Book of Westmarch* and *The Book of Lost Tales* evidences Tolkien's marrying of the oral with the written.

Textual Transmission and Mortal Anxiety

A long line of eighteenth-century antiquarian collectors 'learned from [Macpherson's] mistakes' in order to avoid the label of 'forger', including Allan Ramsay, Thomas Percy, David Herd, Thomas Evans, Joseph Ritson, John Pinkerton, and Sir Walter Scott (Groom, 1999, p. 73). In the eyes of his disparagers, Macpherson had manipulated his material to the point where providing tangible evidence in *Temora* was not enough to convince them of its deeply entrenched indebtedness to the Highlands oral past. The ballad and folk-tale collectors at the time made extensive use of what written records they could get their hands on, proving that they had not simply made up their edited and published material. In the late eighteenth century 'the transmission of the past was literary' (Haywood, 1986, p. 120) and 'the handling of the source was crucial to the antiquarian reception of literature and its incorporation into the canon' (Groom, 1999, p. 62).

The oral mode of historical transmission lost favour and collapsed under the pressure to evidence antiquarian findings. Haywood has evaluated how Chatterton advanced and developed Macpherson's experimentations with the past for this exact reason (1986, p. 175). Just his Ossianic imitations alone prove that he was processing and trying to aesthetically replicate Macpherson. The rising

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[10] I have written extensively on this in chapter one of *The Romantic Faëry: Keats, Tolkien, and the Perilous Realm* (2020) https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/40585

controversy around the authenticity of the Ossian epics further emphasised to Chatterton that the manuscript was everything. In fact, the weight that the eighteenth-century antiquarians placed on the validity of the manuscript tipped the scales too far, leading Chatterton to make 'historical fiction out of historical fact' from which his mythology for Bristol grew (Haywood, 1986, p. 121).

Chatterton promulgated the notion that the invading Normans had 'destroy'd all the Saxon MSS, Paintings &c that fell in their Way; endeavouring to suppress the very Language' (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 264). Counter to David Hume and the views of the other 'Modern Virtuosos' on the 'barbarous' quality of Saxon literature and culture, 'it is certain we are indebted to to [*sic*] Alfred & other Saxon Kings for ye wises of our Laws & in part for ye British Constitution' (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 265). Chatterton finalised his case by explaining that the 'motive that actuates me to do this, is, to convince the world that the monks (of whom some have so despicable an opinion) were not such blockheads, as generally thought and that good poetry might be wrote, in the dark days of superstition as well as in these more enlightened Ages' (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 251). In this manner he took after Percy, who yearned to 'show that among the dross of the Dark Ages some literary gems existed' (Haywood, 1986, p. 123). In *Reliques of English Poetry* (1765), Percy was 'attempting to "literate" the Goths, he gave written sources authority over oral sources, and printed texts over manuscripts' (Groom, 2006, p. 183). This would not only influence Chatterton but be later picked up by Tolkien, who was keenly invested in presenting the overlooked grandeur and literary scope of the Middle Ages through various modes of historical transmission.

His early fascination with the Gothic language is one example of his experimentation with historical transmission. The dominance of the Roman Empire and its wide-spreading imperial conquest were, to Tolkien, responsible for the 'ruin of Gaul and the submergence of its native language (or languages) arts and traditions . . . dooming to obscurity and debate the history of perhaps the most remarkable of the Cymric speaking peoples' (quoted in Hammond & Scull, 2017b, p. 741). The sparse extent fragments of Gothic drove him to 'regret the past' and the 'vanishing of their tradition, literature, history, and most of their tongue' (quoted in Hammond & Scull, 2017b, p. 741). In response he tried to reconstruct the language, carefully distinguishing between the 'historically recorded Gothic and his own reconstructed', which came to fruition in the poem 'Bagmē Blōma' (1936) (Hammond & Scull, 2017b, p. 741). Arden R. Smith has noted how only thirty-eight of the fifty-five words in the poem can be historically attested, meaning seventeen words came from Tolkien's *Gautisk* (2006, p. 271).

When creating the medieval spellings of Rowleyese, Chatterton drew on genuine Middle-English dictionaries much like how Tolkien based his languages

on Welsh, Finnish and other primary world languages, using dictionaries and primers as source material to dress his 'words in medieval armour' (Groom, 2019).[11] Chatterton crafted 'calligraphy; produced his own complex medieval manuscripts, maps, sketches, and heraldry; loaded his pseudo-antique writings with prefaces, footnotes, appendices, and glossaries; and then wove authentic material into what was his predominantly imagined fifteenth-century world' (Groom, 2014, p. 295). To a reader of Tolkien these will all sound familiar as they are the techniques that are used to immerse readers into Arda.

Tolkien frequently employed protagonists who were storytellers, editors, or translators as a strategy to deepen the historical texture of his stories. As Fimi notes, this is not 'dissimilar from Chatterton's layers of ancient Bristol history via Rowley and Turgot', or, we may add, Macpherson's (2016, p. 52). Whereas Chatterton sought to merely authenticate his work through his own authorial conceit, Tolkien improved on Chatterton's practice by amalgamating his knowledge of Medieval manuscripts with his own fiction. Like his mythological characters, he was in charge of 'bringing ancient works and forgotten authors back to life' and ensuring the past lived on (Shippey, 2014, p. 41). 'The Golden Book of Heorrenda', which recorded the tales of the Elves by Eriol's third son, Heorrenda, and 'The Book of Lost Tales' by Ælfwine are the texts that were translated into *The Book of Lost Tales*. *The Red Book of Westmarch* contained *The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings*, and other paratextual details and had a long history of textual transmission. Bilbo Baggins was its first author, who handed it to his nephew, Frodo Baggins, who gave it to his friend Samwise Gamgee. It then travelled to Minas Tirith for antiquarian editing and expansion before finally returning to the Shire for paratextual marginalia (Tolkien, 2007, pp. 14 – 15). Flieger has called Tolkien 'the last in the line' of 'transmitters, translators, redactors, scribes, and copyists' in the genealogy of *The Red Book of Westmarch*; he 'inserted his own name into the header and footer on the title-page of *The Lord of the Rings* (and thus into the history of the "book"), not as the author of the book but as its final transmitter/redactor' (2012, p. 42).

Tolkien presents his texts as antiquarian artefacts that have been 'filtered down to us through many minds, many disagreements, many rejections', much like *Beowulf*, Macpherson's Ossian mythology, and Chatterton's Rowley texts (Shippey, 2007, pp. 161 – 162), proving the tales' antiquity and converting them from 'tales and narratives' into 'historical artefacts' (Noad, 2000, p. 32). The reader is further reminded that they are reading a 'found' text by references to *The Red Book of Westmarch*: 'In presenting the matter of *The Red Book of Westmarch*,

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[11] According to Skeat: John Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708) and Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Brittanicum* (1730) (1872, p. xlii).

as a history for people of today to read, the whole of the linguistic setting has been translated as far as possible into terms of our own times' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 1133). Like Macpherson and Chatterton, Tolkien was deeply invested in presenting his works as found historical artefacts that had come from ancient texts.

It was in the 1960s when Tolkien started to conceive of Arda in a denser and more tangible antiquarian manner, creating new paratexts that complimented his narratives and cultures. He had already spent 'a considerable amount of time creating three pages from *The Book of Mazarbul*' with the intention of incorporated them into *The Lord of the Rings*, but the cost of printing them in colour meant that Tolkien's vision did not come to fruition in his lifetime (Fimi, 2016, p. 57). He later realised that the three pages contained an 'erroneous extension of the general linguistic treatment' he gave *The Red Book of Westmarch* (Tolkien, 1996, p. 299). The inhabitants of Arda at the point of *The Lord of the Rings* spoke the Common Speech. This is what Tolkien claimed to translate into English, keeping the other languages: Elvish, entish, and dwarvish, intact. However, 'the text he had transcribed in runes and Elvish script was actually in modern English' (Fimi, 2016, p. 59).

Catherine McIlwaine's companion book to the 2018 exhibition *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* is a welcome help here as it not only illustrates Tolkien's antiquarian experiments of the 1960s but also contains all three facsimiles from *The Book of Mazarbul* in colour. The task for Tolkien was a 'labour of love' (Fimi, 2016, p. 57) and McIlwaine fondly describes how he 'burnt the paper with the edges with his pipe, pierced holes along one side to resemble the holes where the parchment would have been stitched to the binding and washed them with red paint to resemble bloodstains' which echoes the techniques Chatterton used to age his own documents and give them the air and look of historic authenticity (2018, pp. 348 – 349).

When Tolkien returned to the matter of the Silmarillion he spent time doodling on newspapers, developing 'designs for brooches or clasps' and ceramics for the Númenóreans (McIlwaine, 2018, pp. 188 – 194) and 'drew heraldic devices for the main characters or houses in his legendarium' (McIlwaine, 2018, pp. 236 – 238). He also 'had a lifelong interest in calligraphy, which he attributed to his mother's influence' and can be drawn from his reading of Edward Johnston's popular *Writing & Illuminating, & Lettering* (1906) (McIlwaine, 2018, pp. 186 – 187). Similarly, Chatterton '"*fell in love* with the illuminated capitals"' at a young age when his own mother was tearing up old books to put on the fire and later when he consulted old manuscripts that lay around St Marys (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 22). Tolkien was also familiar with the medieval manuscripts that the Bodleian held. The *Ancrene Wise* and Old English *Exodus* are both examples of physical manuscripts that he will have

handled, consulted, worked, and lectured on which contained such illuminated capitals.

His passion for calligraphy shone brightest when he was creating *Tengwar* and *Cirth*. Of Eldarin origin, these allowed Tolkien's languages to inhabit a written world that was connected to and complimented the oral. Even in *The Hobbit* Tolkien relied on Nordic runes to build the dwarf alphabet, giving them historical authenticity. The dust jacket of *The Hobbit* and the title pages of *The Lord of the Rings* rely on these existing written modes to convey secret paratextual messages that unseat Tolkien as the 'author' of the texts. The *Tengwar* that featured on the Ring (Tolkien, 2007, p. 50), the Doors of Durin (Tolkien, 2007, p. 305) and the Appendices (Tolkien, 2007, pp. 1119, 1124, & 1125) in *The Lord of the Rings* attempted to cement the languages in history, imprinting and recording these cultures onto tangible and historical objects.

Tolkien's external management of his work also saw him utilise these writing systems when replying to fan letters (2006a, pp. 132, 223 & 224). His letters, by extension, were a tool to excessively tease his fans about the grandeur of the First and Second Ages, controlling how much information about the stories and characters was released to the wider public. His expansive letter to Milton Waldman is just one of many where he enthusiastically provided deeper insights into Arda's mythic past. Indeed, in a letter to Hugh Brogan on 18th September 1954, he included contextual and editorial comments that strongly echo what has been argued throughout this article:

> I have tried to present a kind of legendary and history of a 'forgotten epoch' . . . Middle-earth is just archaic English for ἡ οἰκουμένη, the inhabited world of men. It lay then as it does. In fact just as it does, round and inescapable. That is partly the point. The new situation, established at the beginning of the Third Age leads on eventually and inevitably to ordinary History. (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 186).

He made it very clear that he preferred 'history, true or feigned' and gave each fan a reward of sorts for their curiosity (Tolkien, 2007, p. xxiv). For Tolkien letters were crucial paratextual components to the posthumous life of the mythology. He hoped that his work and letters would inspire others to continue the story.

The Hobbit and *The Lord of the Rings* are brimming with examples where characters rely on manuscripts and the written word. Bilbo is bound by the written contract that Thorin and Company present to him and even when he hands the

Arkenstone over to Thranduil and Bard, he recalls the contract that legally classes him as a 'burglar' (Tolkien, 1995, p. 244). Additionally the Hobbits and Aragorn also have to decipher Gandalf's runes on a stone at Weathertop so they can deduce where he might be. Cartography is infectious and maps present characters with more than just directions. Pippin and Gandalf fall into dispute about the Fellowship's whereabouts and the entire quest to Erebor relies on cryptic moon runes on Thror's map. Maps are integral to the progress of the companies in both texts and the success of their quest. Without its secured posterity, these quests may never have succeeded (or begun). They further serve as paratextual artefacts as they are placed on the inside covers of both publications. Yet this was not Tolkien's original plan for Thror's map as it was supposed to be placed mid-text. He wanted to produce the moon letters on the back of the map which would appear when the reader held the page up to the light (Rateliff, 2013, p. 118). Anticipating *The Book of Mazarbul*, Tolkien sought to enrich *The Hobbit* with experiments in antiquarian publishing.

As Tolkien granted the oral tradition and its effects primarily to the Elves and primitive, mortal cultures, he channelled Man's and the Hobbit's mortal anxieties through their antiquarian dependency on the written word. In *The Book of Lost Tales* it is only when a mortal human, Eriol, and a half-man half-faërie, Heorrenda, hear the lost tales that the idea of transmitting them into writing even occurs. To Tolkien it is only mortal memory that requires the textual transmission of the oral tradition, reflecting their limited life spans and their anxieties over posterity. Even in the 'Tale of Ælfwine' it is the human who proceeds to copy down the Elvish history. This is of course how he planned for his English mythology to have survived down to the early twentieth century. His 'chains of transmission', like Chatterton's alter-egos Rowley and Turgot, deepens and reinforces the historicism of his mythology (Fimi, 2016, p. 52).

Tolkien's central stance on the written and oral traditions came to its climax in *The Lord of the Rings*. Here he was able to channel mortal anxiety over narrative posterity into Bilbo, the now-turned-antiquarian Hobbit. He goes on a 'holiday' to Rivendell with the intention of completing his book (*The Hobbit*) and once there, requests Aragorn's help to finish his poetic setting of Eärendel's travels – yet another example of a mortal transmitting the tales of the immortals onto the page (Tolkien, 2007, p. 233). He even asks Frodo to bring back 'all the news you can, and any old songs and tales you can come by' for 'I should like to write the second book' detailing Frodo's adventures (Tolkien, 2007, p. 278). His final words to Frodo in Rivendell is a nod to the field work of Percy, Scott, Lönnrot, Macpherson, and many other eighteenth-century antiquarians who travelled in order to record ballads and songs for their cultural projects. By the end of *The Lord of the Rings* we are given the final title page for *The Red Book of*

Westmarch, a collective text that was 'intended to echo the great medieval manuscript books' of the Northern hemisphere such as the White Book of Rhydderch, the Black Book of Carmarthen, the Yellow Book of Lecan, the Red Book of Hengest, and the Red and Black Books of Canranald (Flieger, 2012, p. 43).The italics are Bilbo's sketches and the rest is Frodo's:

> *My Diary. My Unexpected Journey. There and Back Again. And What Happened After.*
>
> *Adventures of Five Hobbits. The Tale of the Great Ring, compiled by Bilbo Baggins from his own observations and the accounts of his friends. What we did in the War of the Ring.*
>
> <div align="center">THE DOWNFALL
OF THE
LORD OF THE RINGS
AND THE
RETURN OF THE KING</div>
>
> (as seen by the Little People; being the memoirs of Bilbo and Frodo of the Shire, supplemented by the accounts of their friends and the learning of the Wise.)
>
> Together with extracts from Books of Lore translated by Bilbo in Rivendell. (Tolkien, 2007, p. 1027).

Tolkien passes the books off as Bilbo's and Frodo's actual work. His *Red Book of Westmarch* 'takes us into metafictional territory, where Tolkien playfully collaborates with historical authors, translators, and editors that he himself created, treating his own work as if it were written by someone else' much like Macpherson and Chatterton with their respective alter-egos (Croft, 2018, p. 192). Words like 'compiled', 'observations', 'accounts' and 'translated' give *The Red Book of Westmarch* the antiquarian air of Percy's *Reliques*, Macpherson's translations and Chatterton's 'Antiquities', placing it strongly in the antiquarian tradition and making it a descendent of the Age of Forgery.

Bilbo's role in the forging of *The Red Book of Westmarch* caused him much angst and the various titles betray his fears of not finishing his work. Much like Tolkien with the Silmarillion, or Ossian with Fingal's lineage, Bilbo agonizes over the completion of his book. Phrases like 'if I am spared' and 'I am getting very old' mirror Ossian's mortal plight in trying to keep the Caledonian traditions alive in his old age (Tolkien, 2007, p. 238). Bilbo exclaims 'Don't adventures

ever have an end? I suppose not. Someone else always has to carry on the story. Well, it can't be helped. I wonder if it's any good trying to finish my book?' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 232). Although Bilbo is an exemplary employer of the oral tradition, when building *The Red Book of Westmarch* he has no interest in it. As he gets older he sounds more like Ossian, he seizes whatever tales he comes across (whether Elven or not) and pours them not into oral song, but written song. The reflective phrase 'someone else always has to carry on the story' neatly summarises Tolkien's efforts to conjure a universe where a wealth of storytellers have added to the story of Arda. In a way, Bilbo is anticipating the longevity of *The Red Book of Westmarch*, for the Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* records that 'the original Red Book has not been preserved, but many copies were made' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 14), noting the importance of the Thain's Book as the first. Its history of 'interwoven multivalent, identifiable source-traditions . . . and voices [therefore] produce the effect of age' and crucially lend the text antiquarian authenticity (Painter, 2016, p. 125). For Bilbo and Tolkien, the editor (many of whom appear in the life of *The Red Book of Westmarch*) counted very much as a storyteller. Janet Croft notes that to Tolkien editing meant collaborating 'with the long-dead original author or transcriber of the piece', which allows a work to cultivate a history of its own (2018, p. 177).

The long history of *The Red Book of Westmarch* deliberately builds on the manuscript culture cultivated by Chatterton and the antiquarians of the eighteenth century. Tolkien posits himself as one of Bilbo's and Frodo's literary descendants in the authorial chain and in so doing marries the internal history of Arda with its role as an antiquarian artefact in the primary world. By publishing the text and drawing the reader's attention to the monumental task of 'translating' and arranging the book, Tolkien confirms the legendarium's historical validity. The reader is pivotal to reviving and maintaining the forgotten history of Arda by purchasing the physical book and keeping it on their bookshelf. The act of reading the texts that come from *The Red Book of Westmarch* therefore elevates Arda's secondary reality so that it becomes a part of the primary world.

The Antiquarian Imagination

Macpherson, Chatterton, and Tolkien all reacted to the gap in their nations' literary heritage by filling the void with their own mythologies. Although Tolkien eventually moved away from his national pursuits, his early ambitions in *The Book of Lost Tales* mirror Macpherson's and Chatterton's antiquarian methodologies in cultivating a feigned history. Having learnt about the two literary forgers at Exeter College, Tolkien was well placed to have researched their works further before commencing his own mythopoeic project.

Tolkien's antiquarian approach to his legendarium strongly channels the quotation from Sir Walter Scott that opens this article. It is undeniable that Tolkien's work has 'enriched' the literary world and as Shippey summarised at the opening of *Author of the Century*, 'the dominant literary mode of the twentieth century has been the fantastic' (2001, p. vii). To achieve what he did, Tolkien revived the antiquarian methodologies from the Age of Forgery for his legendarium. He harmonised the extremes of the oral tradition and written word as modes of historical transmission so that they complimented and built on each other within the primary and secondary worlds. Individually, he improved on the methodologies of Macpherson and Chatterton by offering more nuanced, tragic, and powerful forms of the oral tradition and integrating the importance of cartography, calligraphy, and archival research into the plots of his works. Beyond this Tolkien layered the history of his legendarium with tangible paratexts that can to this day be found in the Bodleian Library and Marquette archives, allowing his work to exist as a single antiquarian treasury that marries the secondary world with our primary world.

It is not overreaching to consider Tolkien's fresh and blended antiquarian methodology as the perfect template for the fantasy genre more largely. Fantasy throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has relied on the historic validity and gravity that Tolkien's methodology has exemplified to forge its own histories and sub-creations. Works from Ursula K. Le Guinn's *Earthsea Cycle* (1968 – 2001), Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time* (1984 – 2013), George. R.R. Martin's *The Song of Ice and Fire* (1996 – present), J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* (1997 – 2007), and Christopher Paolini's *The Inheritance Cycle* (2003 – 2011) to name just a few all employ Tolkien's blended antiquarian methodology that has its roots in the literary forgery of the 1760s. There is therefore significant scope to re-evaluate how fantasy literature has derived its motives and methodologies from a period of literary and cultural history that thrived on historical and mythic forgery.

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