

## About This Volume

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Robert C. Evans

This volume, like all the others in the Critical Insights series, is divided into several sections. It opens with an introductory essay by Franco Manni, an Italian scholar who brings an international perspective to his attempt to explain why the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien—especially his masterwork, *The Lord of the Rings*—is so appealing to so many people. The fact that Manni is not a native speaker of English is even more intriguing, because it reflects the larger fact that Tolkien is beloved throughout the world, not just in Anglophone nations. What are the reasons for his broad and enduring popularity? Manni cites fifteen distinct factors to explain why Tolkien’s works in general, and *The Lord of the Rings* in particular, have won such widespread affection and respect. He also compares and contrasts Tolkien’s writings with other aspects of contemporary culture that he finds far less appealing. Manni’s essay is then followed by a brief biography of Tolkien prepared by the volume’s editor. This biography also includes a detailed listing of other, book-length biographies that readers may wish to consult.

### Critical Contexts

The next major section of the book presents four different “Critical Contexts” that may be useful in approaching *The Lord of the Rings*. The first essay adopts a historical approach; the second surveys a variety of critical methodologies; the third uses a specific “critical lens”; and the fourth compares and contrasts *The Lord of the Rings* (often abbreviated *LotR*) with another important work of a similar sort. In the opening “historical” essay, Nancy Bunting, in a careful, painstaking example of historical scholarship, provides new insights into the ways Tolkien’s childhood may have influenced his later writings, especially *LotR*. It would be hard to find a better example

My first breathtaking reading of *The Lord of the Rings* (*LotR*) and then the many rereadings are associated in my mind above all with a stormy emotional chaos. Only later did the work's rich historical and philosophical insights stimulate my thinking. And this response is still the same today: if I open a book by (not on) John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, I do so not to feed my thinking (this is a secondary and not-sought-after consequence), but to make my inner being vibrate. I seek to stimulate an emotional "harpicordio"—a response of the heart, not the brain. The strings that vibrate are many and different in timbre, and the vibrating strings prove Tolkien's narrative mastery. He is a writer who has not one but many things to say and who has not one but many expressive resources for doing so.

And apparently this is an experience that is not mine alone. One proof of that claim is the enormous success of Tolkien's more narrative works (such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*) and the relatively cooler enthusiasm provoked by his works that emphasize narrative less strongly or not at all. Another proof of the love Tolkien's narrative writings can evoke is that some of his enthusiasts can almost seem a cult: they seek to build on the already-strong emotions elicited by their reading through such means as creating "virtual reality" "niches"; making trips to Northern Europe; attending Celtic "inns"; inventing role-playing games; forming quasi-Inklings clubs; drawing or painting illustrations; and crafting giftware.

Here, however, I would like to use thought to bring order to the stormy chaos of my own emotional responses, first by classifying the various emotions and then—something more difficult—by offering a critical reflection on them. I begin with the classification, reporting

for each emotion only a few examples among the many episodes that have provoked it in me when I read.

### **Classification: 15 Heart Strings**

There are, first, emotions often stimulated by epics, such as the ancient *Iliad* and the medieval Carolingian Cycle. The strongest, the “C from the chest,” I would call “**Heroic Emotion**,” when the reading makes me tremble, cry, raise my right arm and murmur: “Tolkien you are great!” It is when characters show two virtues stronger than death: Loyalty and Hope. In response to these moments, every bit of dreary materialism disappears, every petty mental scheme is abandoned, and the human heart, which the cosmos sometimes seems determined to crush, pierces the Walls of the Cosmos and reaches towards Eternity. This response is felt, for example, when Gandalf (Mithrandir) on the bridge of Moria blocks the Balrog with his withered old body and shouts, “You shall not pass!” and similarly when he blocks the Lord of the Nazgûl in Minas Tirith (*LotR*). The same reaction is felt when the White Knight arrives to save Faramir from the Nazgûl, or when King Théoden leads the charge of the Rohirrim: “Ride, ride to Gondor!” (*LotR*). The same feeling is aroused once more when, in the light of the sunset, on the mound of Elendil, the superintendent of Gondor, Cirion, swears, in Quenya, allegiance to Eorl the Younger in the name of the Valar and Eru, in the *Unfinished Tales* (*UT*). Or when, in the *Silmarillion* (*Sil*), Húrin defends the retreat against the giants of Gothmog, chanting and shouting “Aurë euntuluva!” [“The Sun will rise again!”].

Another emotional response might be called “**warrior excitement**.” This response is stimulated when the energies of good characters are tested when they use strength, skill, cooperation of talents, and venerable swords, and when they depend upon the favor of destiny. We feel this response, for instance, when the wolves are defeated by the cooperation of the swords of Aragorn and Boromir, by the ax of Gimli, by the arrows of Legolas, by the elemental spell of Gandalf (also known as Mithrandir) (*LotR*). We feel it when, in the *Lost Tales*, the various Elven Companies fight the infernal invaders as they rampage through the streets of Gondolin. We feel it when

CRITICAL  
CONTEXTS

## Speak Memory: Some Biographical Sources of *The Lord of the Rings*

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Nancy Bunting

“[I]t was almost exclusively upon *early* experience, sufficiently broken down by time, that [Tolkien] nourished the seeds of his imagination. Further experience was not necessary and it was not sought.” (Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien, A Biography [Bio]* 126, italics in the original)

Tolkien began writing what would become *The Lord of the Rings* in December 1937, after considerable urging from his publisher to create a sequel to *The Hobbit*. Tolkien then ran into a five-month writing block, during which he warned his publisher, “I am sure I could write unlimited ‘first chapters.’ I have indeed written many” (*Letters* 29). Tolkien, a “notorious beginner of enterprises and non-finisher” (for example, *The Silmarillion*), wrote that his completion of *The Lord of the Rings* “still astonishes me . . . I suppose, [I was able to finish it] because from the beginning it began to catch up in its narrative folds visions of most of the things that I have most loved or hated” (*Letters* 257).

This last statement suggests Tolkien, despite his protests to the contrary (see below), used autobiographical experiences in his writing which he said, “comes out of what you might call the heart, the emotional side, and what I should call the leaf-mould of the mind” (Lee, “Tolkien in Oxford” [hereafter TO] 158–59). Tolkien stated he wrote *The Lord of the Rings* “as a personal satisfaction . . . I was not thinking much of the profit or delight of others” (*Letters* 211). This leaf-mould of Tolkien’s heart emerges in the initial scene of Bilbo’s birthday party that matches and parallels the 1897 celebration for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in the town of

Moseley where Tolkien very probably participated in the festivities (Bunting and Hamill-Keays “Aunt Part II”). Fireworks, the presence of many family and friends, the food and drink, singing and music, and children’s toys and games as if it were a birthday party were a part both of the “long expected” 1897 Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and Bilbo’s birthday party. Tolkien also appears to draw on memories of a likely 1905 visit to Buckland Hall in Wales at the age of thirteen to construct the Shire’s Buckland. Tolkien’s near emotional “breakdown” of August 1938 (*Letters* 40) then set the stage for his sudden spurt of composing the three Old Forest chapters with the characters of Tom Bombadil and Old Man Willow.

### **Tolkien and Autobiography**

Tolkien made repeated and well-known strong protests that denied the importance of biography in appreciating his writings. For example, in 1957, Tolkien wrote, “I doubt its relevance to criticism. Certainly in any form less than a complete biography, interior and exterior, which I alone could write, and which I do not intend to write” (*Letters* 257, also 288).<sup>1</sup>

Whatever J.R.R. Tolkien said or wrote, he, in fact, appears to have routinely drawn on incidents and details from his life in his writings, just like other writers.<sup>2</sup> By the age of twenty in 1912, Tolkien was already using autobiography in his play *The Bloodhound, the Chef, and the Suffragette*, which was based on his anticipated reunion with his soon-to-be fiancée, Edith Bratt (*Bio* 59).

Tolkien used his memories to write *The Hobbit* (TO 140), including his experiences in Switzerland at the age of nineteen in 1911, which were used for “thunder-battle” in *The Hobbit*’s Misty Mountains (*Letters* 309). Belladonna Took, her sisters, and the Old Took in *The Hobbit* were all characters based on Tolkien’s mother, Mabel Tolkien, and her family of origin (*Bio* 175). The Brookes-Smiths, the organizers of the 1911 Swiss walking tour, are likely to have been the models for *The Hobbit*’s Sackville-Bagginses (Bunting and Currie 3).

Tolkien said the two millers from his childhood in Sarehole “went straight into *Farmer Giles of Ham*” (Grotta-Kurska 17,

Foster). He identified various characters in “The Notions Club Papers” with members of the Inklings, including himself as “Rashbold,” the English calque of his Germanic surname “Tolkien” (*Sauron Defeated* [SD] 150). The name “Dwaling” on the map of the Shire marks the ancestral home of “Dwalakonis,” the Gothic calque of the name “Tolkien” (Hooker, *Mathomium*, 49–51; *Letters* 357). Tolkien’s nightmare of the great wave became material for the Fall of Númenor and a dream in *Roverandom*.

Tolkien admitted, “Edith *Lúthien* . . . was the source of the story that in time became the chief part of the *Silmarillion*” (*Letters* 420, also 417). Tolkien had the names *Lúthien* and *Beren* from *The Silmarillion* carved on his and his wife’s headstone (*Letters* 420). His poem, *The Grey Bridge of Tavrobel*, was about their reunion when, in November 1916, he returned from the Western Front in France. Tolkien’s Elvish languages and mythology contain self-references, and John Garth identifies various Valar: Edith “almost certainly” with *Erinti* (“Qenya Lexicon” [hereafter QL] 36), Hilary with *Amillo* (QL 30), and Tolkien with *Lirillo* (QL 65) (*Great War* 128).<sup>3</sup>

For *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien wrote that he used his 1911 Swiss walking tour experience for the background of the crossing of the Misty Mountains and the peaks of *Moria* (*Letters* 391) and had someone in mind for the character *Lobelia* (*Letters* 229). He “bequeathed” his nightmare of the great wave to *Faramir* (*Letters* 213, *Return of the King* [RK] VI v 941). Otherwise, Tolkien was typically reticent about revealing sources for *The Lord of the Rings*.<sup>4</sup>

However, we know something of Tolkien’s method of utilizing sources, as indicated in “The Notion Club Papers.” Although members of the Inklings were the starting point or models for various characters in “The Notion Club Papers,” “the mirror is cracked, and at the best you will only see your countenances distorted, and adorned maybe with noses (and other features) that are not your own” (SD 148–49). Tolkien was not a copyist, but rather transformed his own experiences in his writings.

## Inventing Buckland

Tolkien and his younger brother Hilary took a railway journey for a fortnight's holiday in Wales, probably in 1905, with their new guardian, Father Francis Morgan (*Bio* 26, Grotta-Kurska 22). Father Morgan, whose caring and generous nature was well known (Bru 59, 65), had, on both his mother and his father's sides, business connections with the wine and sherry industry. On such a trip to Wales, Father Francis could undoubtedly call on these business and family connections. "Fr Francis also liked to visit the more opulent houses in the Parish . . . and he liked to say that although not wealthy himself, he had rich friends!"<sup>5</sup>

Father Francis's great-grandfather, Aaron Morgan (1742–1818), began the family's involvement in the sherry and port business. Aaron Morgan was on record claiming to be related to Charles Morgan, then Baron Tredegar and father of Godfrey Morgan (Hamill-Keays, "Analysis" 99). In 1905, Godfrey Morgan (1830–1913), hero of the 1854 Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War, Tory MP (Member of Parliament) for Breconshire 1858–1875, second Baron Tredegar 1875, raised to Viscount in 1905 resided mainly at Tredegar House, the centerpiece of the Tredegar Estate near Newport, Wales, though he maintained Mansion House in Brecon (Hamill-Keays, "Analysis" 99).

Father Francis may have intended to call on Baron Tredegar as a possible family connection to Aaron Morgan. In addition, Father Francis's great grandfather, Aaron Morgan, had a business association with Josiah Holford (1726–1817). The Holfords had been "merchant princes" in the London/Lisbon wine business. Both Aaron Morgan and Josiah Holford were on the committee formed to raise funds to alleviate the distress caused around Lisbon, Portugal during the Peninsular War (Hamill-Keays, "Wines" 3). In 1905, the Squire and Master of Buckland Hall was J.P.W. Gwynne-Holford (1832–1916), Josiah Holford's great-grandson (Hamill-Keays, "Wines" 3). Buckland Hall was the family mansion of the Gwynne-Holford family, who were major landowners in Breconshire and Carmarthenshire (Hamill-Keays, "Wines" 3). Gwynne-Holford and Baron Tredegar were men of their class and moved in the same

circles: both were old Etonians, both were commissioned into Lancer regiments, both served as Justices of the Peace on the same Bench and contemporaneous Tory MPs, and in 1901 President and Vice President of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society (Hamill-Keays, “Analysis” 102).

Father Morgan’s family and business connections seem to have been sufficient to have allowed a visit to the imposing Buckland Hall because of a considerable number of parallels between Buckland Hall in Wales and Tolkien’s Brandy Hall in *The Lord of the Rings*. The 1898 Elizabethan Revival mansion of the Welsh Buckland estate that sits against Buckland Hill seems to have been a model for Tolkien’s Brandy Hall that backs onto Buck Hill. Both have a ferry landing that leads to a steeply winding path up to the residence, as well as the presence of a North Gate and a river bridge in each Buckland (Hamill-Keays, “Analysis” 96). The impressive sight of light from some of the “about a hundred windows” streaming out of Brandy Hall (*FR I v* 96) may encode memories of the magnificent expanse of Buckland Hall’s windows lit by state-of-the art electric lights brilliantly cutting the surrounding countryside darkness in 1905.<sup>6</sup>

Further, Tolkien’s tragic night-time drowning of Primula Brandybuck and Drogo Baggins in the Brandywine echoes the distinctive story of the December 3, 1864, night-time drowning on the River Usk of Edward Cross of Buckland Hall, still mentioned in the local Welsh paper in 1909 (*FR I i* 23; *Return of the Shadow [RS]* 19; Hamill-Keays, “Analysis” 98).

When the first map of *The Lord of the Rings* is laid alongside a map of Breconshire Wales, the Welsh map’s unique topography could function as a template that would include the Usk River’s overall orientation and layout, an upstream island, the bends in the river, a ferry, and local names (Hamill-Keays, “Wines” 1).<sup>7</sup> Tolkien wrote, “I wisely started with a map” (*Letters* 177, also 168), and on the reverse of his 1938 Buckland map he added: “Genesis of *The Lord of the Rings*” (*RS* 43).<sup>8</sup> Tolkien’s seeming to trace the geography of Wales initiated a new, realistic, and reliable scale to his maps that allowed accurate calculation of travel and distances.

# CRITICAL READINGS

# Reading and Understanding Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*: A Survey of Critical Responses

Robert C. Evans

Why read J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*? Why read his many other works as well? These questions might seem rather pointless, especially because Tolkien's writings—particularly *LotR* (as the title is commonly abbreviated)—are among the most popular works of twentieth-century literature. Tolkien is known for having almost invented the modern fantasy adventure genre and for having inspired countless other writers. And, of course, the trilogy of films directed by Peter Jackson and released in the early twenty-first century have been among the most profitable movies ever made and have only added to the legions of people interested in Tolkien's writings.

But where can one go for deeper answers to my initial questions? And where can one find informed thoughts about Tolkien's popularity, the key themes of his works, the structure and artistic quality of his writings, and the various contexts from which his writings grew and to which they responded? Answers to these questions can be found in two key collections of criticism concerning Tolkien. The first collection, *Tolkien and the Critics*, was edited by Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo and was published in 1968. The second collection, *Understanding The Lord of the Rings: The Best of Tolkien Criticism*, was also edited by Isaacs and Zimbardo and was issued in 2004. Actually, the second volume is a sort of "updated" version of the first; it contains some of the same early essays but then adds several new ones. Taken together, these two books give some sense of "the best that has been thought and said" about Tolkien over a period of forty years.

## ***Tolkien and the Critics***

### **C. S. Lewis on Tolkien and Power**

The first essay in the earlier volume came from C. S. Lewis, a close friend of Tolkien and himself an important modern writer. Lewis's essay, "The Dethronement of Power," disputed the charge that Tolkien's characters were simplistic ("all either black or white"). Lewis argued, instead, that in *LotR*, "[m]otives, even on the right side, are mixed" and that "[h]eroic Rohan and imperial Gondor are partly diseased" (12–13). Tolkien's masterpiece, in other words, presents complex characters and situations. But Lewis also praised the design of the work, including the way it juxtaposes mighty conflicts involving thousands of combatants with the crucial story of two literally small beings (Frodo and Sam) on whom real success or failure depends. Lewis argued that a story focused simply on Frodo and Sam "would be hardly tolerable," especially when drawn out over hundreds and hundreds of pages (13), which is one reason that other, larger characters were needed. Lewis admired the "realism" of the book's battle episodes—a realism both he and Tolkien (veterans of World War I) could fully appreciate. And Lewis admired, as well, the way that in *LotR* "no individual, and no species, seems to exist only for the sake of the plot. All exist in their own right and would have been worth creating for their mere flavour even if they had been irrelevant" (14).

According to Lewis, *LotR* "teaches us that Sauron"—that is, evil—"is eternal; the war of the Ring is only one of a thousand wars against him," and it is "wise to fear his ultimate victory" (15). Lewis also argued that Tolkien tends to treat many of his characters as "imagined beings [who] have their insides on the outside," so that they are "visible souls" who think, feel, and act as we would expect elves, dwarves, and hobbits to think, feel, and act (15). He claimed that Tolkien, by treating common experiences and things in mythic terms, allowed us to see those experiences and things "more clearly" (16), thereby transforming our views of the "real" world by letting us see that world through the lens of his imagined universe.

## Edmund Fuller on Tolkien and Fantasy

Edmund Fuller praised *LotR* as realistic; compared its structure to that of the composer Richard Wagner's own famous "Ring cycle of operas" (18); commended Tolkien for drawing on archetypal myths while adding "something uniquely his own" (18); and wrote that Tolkien's hobbits are an "authentic contribution to the lore of imaginary species" (18). Fuller did relate hobbits to traditional "little people" but also saw them as "a distinct and fresh invention," comparing their Shire to England's Cotswold region (19). He saw Tolkien's *The Hobbit* as a work not written simply for children and asserted that the later "trilogy is an adult book, on any terms" (20). Fuller extolled the plotting of *LotR* as well as its varied tones, its eclectic styles, its effective imagery, the interlacing and steady development of its themes, and its use of different genres (21).

He contended that Tolkien's essay "On Fairy Stories" was relevant to any attempt to understand *LotR*; called that essay "the most profound and illuminating discussion of the subject I have ever seen"; and noted that the word "faerie," for Tolkien, means "enchantment" (22). According to Fuller, the section in *LotR* dealing with Tom Bombadil "is one of the most joyously lyrical" in the text "and contains, too, one of the finest of the work's many poems" (23). He compared Sauron to a fallen angel and a serpent (24); noted the work's emphasis on "a raw struggle between good and evil"; observed that various characters are tempted to embrace evil rather than oppose it (24–25); and suggested that Tolkien explored "that most ancient and insidious moral dilemma, the problem of ends and means"—a problem that forces us to try to decide whether we should adopt evil tactics to oppose evil (25).

"It is the nature of the Ring," Fuller claimed, "to give power according to the stature of its user—petty powers to the unknowing or inconsequential, vast ones to the strong and adept" (25), so that it is dangerous "even to the Wise" (26). The Ring corrupts partly by playing on pride (26), and Tolkien explores the different moral choices the ring poses (26–28). Fuller observed that one of Sauron's vulnerabilities is that he can not imagine that anyone would want to destroy the Ring, and Fuller also noted that *LotR* shows that

sometimes we must “choose between degrees of evil, and we are fortunate when we know that is what we are doing” (28). Frodo’s powers of endurance are challenged more and more the closer he gets to his goal (29).

Although Fuller thought that *LotR* depicts “no overt theology or religion,” he did see “[g]race . . . at work abundantly in the story,” implying the existence of some “Ultimate Power” and some places where Sauron has no influence. Thus, “the powers that Gandalf and the High Elves can bring to bear against Sauron clearly are derived from the Prime Source, Who is in some way identified with the Blessed Realm” (29). Fuller wrote that the “intricacy of Tolkien’s web of cause and effect, of the interactions of motives and wills, natural and supernatural, is extraordinary and—withstanding the frame of fantasy—profoundly realistic.” Fuller stressed Frodo’s extraordinary bravery, extolled *LotR* as a morally relevant work, noted its possible allegorical implications, and specifically suggested its relevance to the struggle against “Nazism and Communism,” with the Ring resembling the newly invented atomic bomb (32). “In both the Third Age and our world,” Fuller suggested, “evil is never defeated once and for all. Even men who fight evil devotedly are not themselves free of its taint” (33), and, in fact, one indication of Sauron’s power is the inability of his foes to unite. Tolkien satirized the Industrial Revolution, presented Frodo and Gandalf as partial foreshadowings of Christ (as reluctant messiah and as tempted and resurrected being, respectively), and actually described Gandalf, in an interview, as a resurrected “angel” (35). Fuller disputed accusations that *LotR* is dull, poorly written, and/or childish. He predicted that Tolkien’s writings would become even more popular than they already were when they were first published, concluding that Tolkien’s masterpiece “gives joy, excitement, a lift of the spirits” and “contains the kind of wisdom and insight that, if applied to the world we inhabit, might help our sore-beset race to hang on through the present shadows of modern Mordor into yet another age” (39). Fuller’s essay is, perhaps, one of the best ever written about Tolkien and *LotR*.

## **W. H. Auden on The Quest Hero**

W. H. Auden, asserting that “The Quest is one of the oldest, hardest, and most popular of all literary genres” (42), then listed several common traits of quest narratives (44–45). These include a hero who, helped by others, undertakes a long journey and faces various tests in pursuit of a precious object or person guarded by antagonists. Auden then discussed various examples of quest narratives before turning to Tolkien specifically, arguing that Tolkien sets *LotR* “neither in a dream world nor in the actual world” but in a credibly detailed “imaginary world” with its own laws and realities—a world in which everything makes sense according to the logic of that world (50). Tolkien gave his world a credible history, relevant named persons and places, a probable geography, and a functional range of accountable political systems, and although the work is rooted in Christian ideas, no religion is ever mentioned (49–53). Frodo, once committed to his quest, is “absolutely committed,” even though “the others who set out with him are not” (55), but Sauron makes the kind of mistakes an evil being might plausibly make because “[h]is primary weakness is a lack of imagination, for, while Good can imagine what it would be like to be Evil, Evil cannot imagine what it would be like to be Good” (57). Beings like Sauron do not merely seek domination but want to pervert the good to do evil (57–58). Ultimately, Tolkien—realistically and honestly—shows no permanent triumph over evil (60), but he also creates a modern quest tale that is perhaps unequalled in its credibility in so many different ways (61).

## **Hugh T. Keenan on *LotR* as a “Struggle for Life”**

Hugh T. Keenan, seeing *LotR* as fundamentally concerned with the theme of life against death and the ways this struggle is relevant to anyone’s childhood, argued that this focus helped explain the work’s “growing esteem” (62). According to Keenan, the issue of life vs. death is more relevant to the work than other proposed central themes, especially because humanity (according to Norman O. Brown and other Freudians), is not only “unconscious of its real desires and, therefore, unable to obtain satisfaction” but is also

# RESOURCES

## Chronology of J. R. R. Tolkien's Life\_\_\_\_\_

1892	John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is born on January 3 in the Orange Free State (southern Africa), where his parents were then living. His father was Arthur Reuel Tolkien (1857–1896); his mother was Mabel, née Suffield (1870–1904).
1894	“Ronald’s” younger brother, and only sibling, Hilary, is born on February 17.
1895	Mabel Tolkien and her children depart for England for a visit.
1896	Tolkien’s father unexpectedly dies of rheumatic fever in February. That summer, Mabel and her two sons begin living in Sarehole, a village in Worcestershire. Under the influence of his mother, Ronald develops a keen interest in nature and in reading.
1900	To the extreme displeasure of her Protestant family, Mabel converts to Catholicism.
1903	Tolkien wins a scholarship to the well-regarded King Edward’s School, Birmingham, where he had studied briefly before.
1904	Mabel dies from diabetes. John and Hilary remain fervent Catholics and are supervised, for the rest of their youths, by the guardian their mother had chosen for them: Father Francis Xavier Morgan of Birmingham, England.
1908	Tolkien meets Edith Bratt (1889–1971), a Protestant young woman three years older than himself. They fall in love, but Father Morgan soon forbids them to have any further contact until Tolkien is 21. In the meantime, Tolkien focuses on his studies, including an increasingly passionate interest in language and languages.

## Works by J. R. R. Tolkien\_\_\_\_\_

### Long Fiction

[All dates are dates of publication unless otherwise indicated]

1937	<i>The Hobbit or There and Back Again</i>
1954	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</i>
1954	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers</i>
1955	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i>
1977	<i>The Silmarillion</i>
1983	<i>The Book of Lost Tales 1</i>
1984	<i>The Book of Lost Tales 2</i>
1985	<i>The Lays of Beleriand</i>
1986	<i>The Shaping of Middle-earth</i>
1987	<i>The Lost Road and Other Writings</i>
1988	<i>The Return of the Shadow</i>
1989	<i>The Treason of Isengard</i>
1990	<i>The War of the Ring</i>
1992	<i>Sauron Defeated</i>
1993	<i>Morgoth's Ring</i>
1994	<i>The War of the Jewels</i>
1996	<i>The Peoples of Middle-earth</i>
2007	<i>The Children of Húrin</i>
2018	<i>The Fall of Gondolin</i>

### Short Fiction

1945	“Leaf by Niggle”
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## About the Editor

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