# THE MYTHOPOETICS OF J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S WORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF LITERARY MYTHMAKING

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**Annotation.** *The article examines J. R. R. Tolkien's mythopoetics within the context of literary mythmaking. It traces the cultural sources of his work—Norse, Celtic, Germanic, Old English, and Christian traditions—and highlights features such as sub-creation, archetypes, symbolic female figures, nature as a mythological force, and the concept of eucatastrophe. Tolkien's mythmaking is shown as a unique 20th-century model that shaped the fantasy genre and became a lasting cultural phenomenon.*

**Keywords.** *Tolkien mythopoetics literary mythmaking fantasy archetypes eucatastrophe philology mythology culture*

**Introduction.** The theme of mythopoetics in 20th-century literature occupies a special place, since it was during this period that writers consciously turned to archetypes, folkloric and biblical images, creating new myths. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is one of the brightest representatives of this trend. His works not only defined the development of the fantasy genre but also set new directions for global cultural consciousness. The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that Tolkien's mythmaking became an example of how a writer can create a secondary world that functions as a genuine mythology.

The purpose of this article is to examine the features of Tolkien's mythopoetics in the context of literary mythmaking, to identify its origins, key characteristics, and cultural significance.

**Literary Mythmaking as a Phenomenon.** Literary mythmaking is understood as the process of consciously creating an author's own myths, based on

archetypical plots but representing a new artistic system. Unlike ancient myths, which were born in oral tradition, literary mythmaking exists in the context of written culture and reflection. It fulfills not only the function of sacred narration but also of aesthetic and philosophical comprehension of the world.

In 20th-century world literature, various strategies of mythmaking can be distinguished. For James Joyce, myth serves as a structure for analyzing modernity (Ulysses); for Thomas Mann, it is a means of interpreting biblical stories (Joseph and His Brothers); for Gabriel García Márquez, it becomes a way of merging the magical with the real. Tolkien is unique in that he not only reworks existing myths but also creates a complete secondary reality.

**Origins of Tolkien's Mythopoetics**

Tolkien drew inspiration from several cultural layers:

– Norse mythology (Eddas, sagas of gods and heroes);

– Celtic myths and fairy legends;

– Germanic epic (The Song of the Nibelungs);

– The Old English epic Beowulf, which Tolkien studied as a scholar and considered an important source of imagery;

– The Christian tradition, with its emphasis on the struggle between light and darkness, sacrifice, and hope.

Furthermore, as a philologist, Tolkien created artificial languages (Quenya, Sindarin), which could not exist without cultural context. For him, language and myth are interconnected: each language reflects a particular history and worldview of its people. This makes Tolkien's mythopoetics profoundly elaborate and coherent.

**Features of Tolkien's Mythopoetics.**

1. Secondary World. Tolkien introduces the concept of "sub-creation" – the author's creation of a secondary world, autonomous yet internally consistent. Middle-earth appears not as a backdrop but as a living universe with its own geography, history, and chronology.

2. Archetypes and Symbols. Tolkien's texts are filled with archetypical figures: the hero's journey (Frodo), the wise mentor (Gandalf), the returning king

(Aragorn). The One Ring symbolizes the universal problem of temptation and power.

3. Female Figures. Galadriel, Arwen, and Éowyn embody different aspects of feminine power: wisdom, loyalty, and warrior courage.

4. Nature as a Mythological Character. Forests, rivers, and mountains in Tolkien's world are animated and become part of the struggle between good and evil (e.g., the Ents in The Lord of the Rings)

5. Eucatastrophe. Tolkien introduces the concept of the "happy ending" perceived as a miracle. This aesthetic category emphasizes the Christian idea of hope and salvation.

**Tolkien and the Tradition of Literary Mythmaking.** Tolkien occupies a special place in 20th-century literature. His mythmaking not only created new stories but also established a model for the entire fantasy genre. Unlike modernists, who used myth as a metaphor for contemporary life, Tolkien created a new myth comparable in scale to ancient ones.

His influence extends beyond literature to cinema (Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings), video games, and fan culture. Thus, Tolkien's mythopoetics became a cultural phenomenon of the modernera.

**Conclusion.** Tolkien's mythopoetics is an example of how, in the 20th century, literature is capable of creating new myths that unite people and set cultural benchmarks. He synthesized mythological traditions, philology, and Christian worldview, constructing a world that continues to live outside the text. His mythmaking proved that myth does not disappear in modern society but transforms into new forms.

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