



# The World of the Rings: Language, Religion, and Adventure in Tolkien

*Jared C. Lobdell*

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## **The World of the Rings: Language, Religion, and Adventure in Tolkien** Jared C. Lobdell

Jared Lobdell examines Tolkien's methods and his worldview by following the thread of three influences: 1. the Edwardian adventure story; 2. the science of philology, or comparative languages; and 3. Roman Catholic theology. The "Edwardian mode" of adventure story (King Solomon's Mines, The Lost World) is one in which a small group of Englishmen make an expedition to foreign parts and find supernatural terrors awaiting them, finally returning home, mission accomplished. The architecture and narrative style of these adventure stories is followed completely in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's towering erudition in ancient Germanic and Celtic languages helps to explain his successful use of a mixture of period styles in his story-telling, as well as his amazing facility coining memorable names. Although Tolkien's stories betray a strong Christian conception of virtue and suffering, his Catholic background raises difficult problems for understanding the tales, with their heroes who are basically irreligious. Are these stories before the Fall of Man, or is there some other explanation for the absence of Christ? Lobdell pursues many subtle clues to arrive at a balanced answer.

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