Higher Argument: Tolkien and the tradition of Vision, Epic and Prophecy

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Abstract
This paper attempts to place Tolkien's fiction in a distinctively English literary context: a tradition of visionary writing which strives toward national epic, existing from Spenser through Milton (and in certain respects, Blake) to Tolkien.

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Milton, for example, thought he was recon- stituting classical epic and tragedy into new, Christian artforms. Milton's "fiction" of Christian tragedy and epic has also been "worthwhile" to countless readers and critics. Whose "fiction" is better, Hunt's or Milton's? Darryl Tippens Abilene Christian University Terence Hoagwood, Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind: Traditions of Blake and Shelley. University: University of Alabama Press, 1985.236 pp. $23.50 (cloth). Hoagwood further endangers the critical validity of his study by his early arguments that the major influences on Blake's poetry came from a philosophic tradition which Blake consistently denounced as having petrified human imagination, the British empiricists. An epic hero is a larger-than-life mortal figure from history or legend. The hero, usually a warrior, participates in a journey, faces adversaries, forms alliances and returns home significantly transformed. The epic hero illustrates traits, performs deeds and exemplifies morals that are valued by that society. In his quest to assist the Danes, Beowulf exhibits bravery, physical strength and mental cunning when battling monsters, which makes him appear superhuman and far superior to the average man. His loyalty and generosity toward his subjects -- the Thanes -- and kingdom of Geatland were pa Deirdre Greene: "Higher Argument: Tolkien and the tradition of Vision, Epic and Prophecy". Virginia Luling: "An Anthropologist in Middle-earth". Charles E. Noad: "Frodo and his Spectre: Blakean Resonances in Tolkien". Gloriana St. Clair: "An Overview of the Northern Influences on Tolkien's Works". Gloriana St. Clair: "Volsunga Saga and Narn: Some Analogies". Chris Seeman: "Tolkien's Revision of the Romantic Tradition". Tom Shippey: "Tolkien as a Post-War Writer". Norman Talbot: "Where do Elves go to? Tolkien a...