

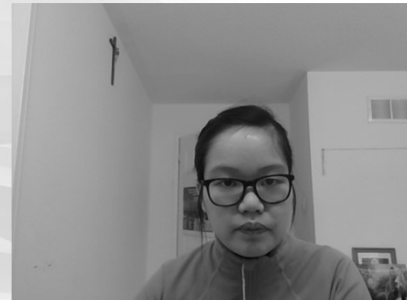
“A mere maiden”:

Describing Lúthien Tinúviel’s relationship
with dance and song across 5 manuscripts
through tf-idf scores and fuzzy matching



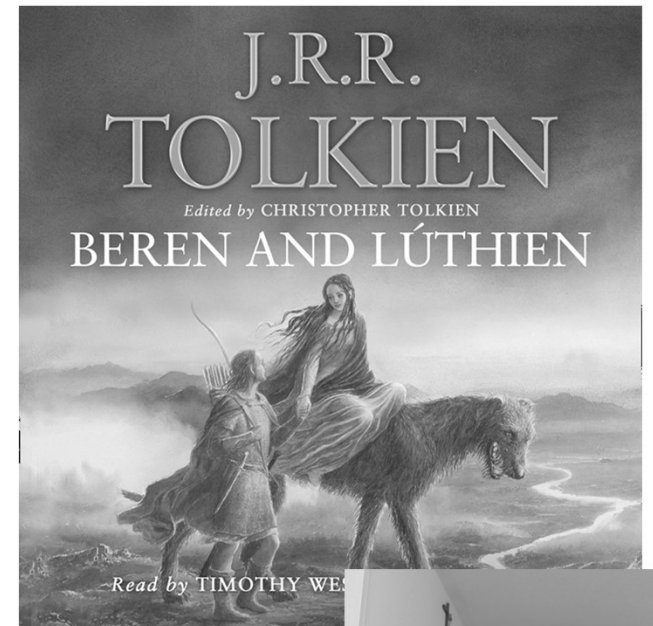
Overview:

1. Who is Lúthien Tinúviel?
2. Clare Moore's interpretation of Lúthien Tinúviel
3. Making Moore's hypothesis testable with
 - tf-idf scores
 - fuzzy matching (n-gram search)
4. Anticipated findings



1. Lúthien Tinúviel

- Fictional character in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-Earth
- Power comes from her femininity (debatable), especially dance and song
- The story of Lúthien was written in so many manuscripts that the way her character is described changes a lot – sometimes her power is just from dance, sometimes it's just from song
- Also complicated because Christopher Tolkien edited his father's manuscripts, changing how Lúthien is described



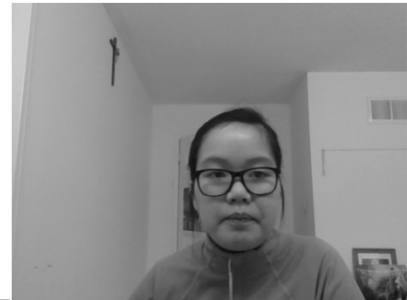
1. Lúthien Tinúviel

- The tale of Tinúviel (1917)
- The Lay of Leithian (1925)
- Sketch of the mythology (1926)
- Quenta Noldorinwa (1930)
- Quenta Silmarillion (published 1977, ed. by C. Tolkien)



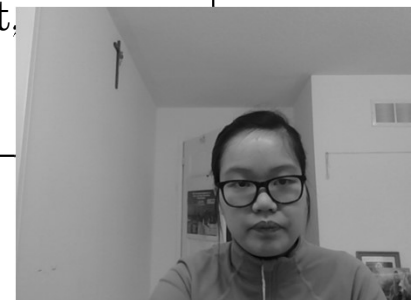
2. Clare Moore's interpretation of LT

- Methodology: compared 5 texts which all tell different versions of the Lúthien story. Focuses on the sources of Lúthien's power, i.e. song and dance. Used close reading (no computation, only quoted passages).
- Outcomes: found that earlier drafts showed Lúthien as less autonomous, less powerful. Subsequent revisions and drafts showed the evolution of the character into a powerful, active, and independent character who is central to the legendarium.



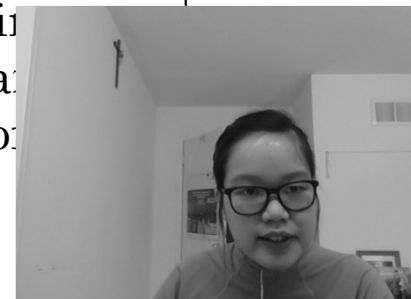
3. Making Moore's hypothesis testable

Moore's hypothesis	Test plan
"J.R.R. Tolkien's shift from dance [as the main source of her power] to song in this scene reveals a focal shift [...] Vink [...] noted that the ratio between song-related words shifts dramatically between versions, with a 4:1 song:dance ratio in the <i>Lay</i> compared to a 16:1 ratio in chapter nineteen of <i>The Silmarillion</i> ."	Term frequency of "danc*" (which includes "dancing," "dances," "danced," etc.) Term frequency of "sing*" and "song*" (which includes "singing", "songs") Potential error: "singd" meaning <i>burnt</i> . Run on all 5 different texts. Using tf along with idf, i.e. tf-idf Problems with tf-idf: frequency isn't always the best measure of how important a word is in a text, especially fiction



3. Making Moore's hypothesis testable

Moore's hypothesis	Test plan
<p>"The oscillation of who names Luthien – herself or Morgoth – reveals that J.R.R. Tolkien's development of Luthien's agency is not always a steady progression." I wonder if there are other direct passages of text that we can quote that show nearly exact same phrasing of words. That can help us find the "essential differences" between drafts' portrayal of the character, aside from song and dance alone.</p>	<p>Fuzzy matching using n-grams and regex, using several key scenes (climaxes) that occur repeatedly throughout the 5 texts, to identify what words changed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Beren's first encounter with Lúthien- Lúthien putting guards to sleep with song- Lúthien's battle against the monster Morgoth- The naming of Lúthien (herself or Morgoth) <p>Method here is similar to those described in Shmidman et al.'s paper identifying similar parallel passages across various versions of Jewish Talmud [2].</p>



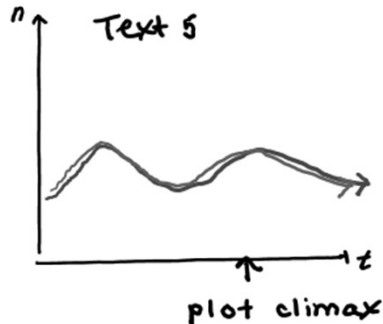
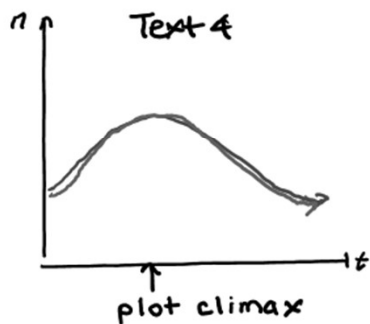
4. Anticipated findings

Narrative time vs. term frequency



- song-related words
- dance-related words

where t is narrative time
and n is number of
word occurrences



Text names:

1. Tale of Tinúviel
2. Lay of Leithian
3. Sketch of the mythology
4. Quenta Noldorinwa
5. Quenta Silmarillion

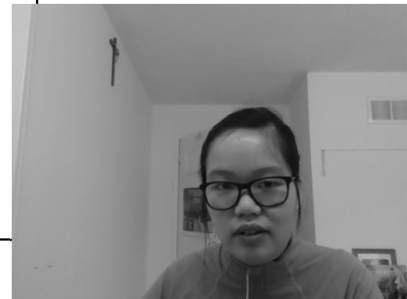


4. Anticipated findings

E.g. 1 taken from Beren's first encounter of Lúthien

E.g. 2 taken from Lúthien's conversation with Daeron

	Quenta Silmarillion, prose	Lay of Leithian, poetry
1	in the grass unfading still	unfading grass in the glades
2	'Death is the guerdon thou hast earned, O base born mortal, who hast learned in Morgoth's realm to spy and lurk like Orcs that do his evil work!'	of which I repent, baseborn mortal, who in the realm of Morgoth has learnt to creep in secret as his spies and thralls



Sources

[1] Moore, Clare. “A song of greater power: Tolkien’s construction of Lúthien Tinúviel.” *Mallorn: The Journal of the Tolkien Society*, Winter, 62, 2021, 6-16.

[2] Shmidman, Avi et al. “Identification of Parallel Passages Across a Large Hebrew/Aramaic Corpus.” *Journal of Data Mining & Digital Humanities*, 2018.

[3] Vink, Renee, and Friedhelm Schneidewind. “Dance and Song: 'The Lay of Leithian' between 'The Tale of Tinúviel' and 'Of Beren and Lúthien.'” *Music in Tolkien's Work and Beyond*, Walking Tree Publishers, 2019.

