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Reviews

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REVIEWS

C.S. LEWIS, POETRY, AND THE GREAT WAR: 1914-1918. John Bremer. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2012. xxi + 244 pp. Hardcover \$65.00; electronic versions at various prices (e.g., Kindle \$51.99 and Nook \$37.04). ISBN: 978-0-7391-7152-3.

JOHN BREMER, who wrote a "BRIEF BIOGRAPHY" OF LEWIS for *The C.S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia* in 1998—it ran for fifty-six pages—in this book has turned his focus on a particular period in Lewis's life. For example, in 1998, Bremer wrote, "After his hospital stay [for his war wounds] Jack was sent to a convalescent home. Because none was available in Ireland, where, as he told Albert [Lewis, his father], he would have preferred to go, he chose to be sent to Ashton Court, near Bristol and the home of Janie Moore" (29). But here is the new treatment:

After a month in London, Jack was moved to a convalescent home outside London, to Ashton Court, Long Ashton, Clifton near Bristol. Some of his biographers state that he wanted to be moved to a convalescent home in Ireland and asked for that so that he could be near his father. This is a filial and pious sentiment but has little justification as far as I know. He had asked Albert to visit him, asked, even pleaded with him several times, since his return to England, but Albert had refused to budge from Belfast. Warnie offers the explanation that Albert could not break his routine but (since the initial excuse had been "bronchitis") it is more probably the case that he was just being stubborn and resentful. After all, Jack had preferred Janie Moore to him only seven months earlier. I consider it certain that Albert was being what the (less polite) English call "bloody-minded." It is much more probable that Jack lied and had asked to be moved to a convalescent home near Bristol, where Janie Moore had relatives and a place to stay. (51-52)

This shows the basic strength of Bremer's book: he has thought seriously about the biographical and psychological situations, and he states his conclusions as his own openly. Some will reject this approach, wanting to be given just the facts, fearing that Bremer has misread some details. No doubt he has. But his basic reading of Lewis's repression during the years of the Great War (World War I, to Americans) is clearly true, in this reviewer's estimation.

The above gives an erroneous impression if one believes the book is just a psychological study. Bremer has essentially three topics: (1) a short introduction to the Great War and a biographical account of Lewis during the war, sometimes correcting the earlier study of the topic (Gilchrist); (2) a survey of the war poetry, culminating in a contrast of Lewis with Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves as war poets; and, overlapping these, (3) Lewis's character. The weakest area comes in part of (2), in a survey of Lewis's poetry; but the rest of the book is generally satisfactory and, in part, excellent.

With some background in the introduction and appendices A and B, Bremer spends three chapters on the war: 1. The Great War, 3. Jack and Warren Lewis during the Great War, and 4. C.S. Lewis and the 1st Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry. The first chapter is essentially a summary of the war in the area in which Lewis served. The third chapter traces the war-related activities of the brothers; at first, for Lewis, this means commenting on the lack of references to the war in his letters, with some indications that he is more concerned with the war than he intends to show. (Or, in light of the conclusion of the book, one should say that Lewis represses his feelings about the war but occasionally his feelings show through.) Bremer also discusses the beginning of the affair with Janie Moore and, outside of the time limits of his chapter, the continued (later, non-sexual) relationship with Moore until her death. Chapter 3 is mainly based on the letters Lewis wrote at the time, with supplements—some from W.H. Lewis's writings. Chapter 4, on the other hand, is largely based on the official military history of the battalion by Major V.H.B. Majendie as included in the regimental history by Everard E. Wyrall. This gives precise details of Lewis's locations. (Disagreements with Gilchrist's book on the period, *A Morning after War: C.S. Lewis and WW I*, can be traced through Bremer's index, but the major passage appears in the introduction, xxi-xxvii—Bremer discounts Gilchrist's style, sweeping generalizations, and understanding of one of the poems.) Bremer's account of Lewis in the war is the best available. But one should note that Alister McGrath in his new biography says flatly that Lewis was wounded by a German shell, without mention of Lewis's belief that it was an English shell which fell short (71). Not everything is settled.

The chapters on war poetry and Lewis's (to a large degree) non-war poetry are 2. The Poets, 1914-1918; 5. Jack and *Spirits in Bondage*; 6. Roger von

Ranke Graves (1895-1985): A Brief Biography; 7. Siegfried Loraine Sassoon (1886-1967): A Brief Biography; and 8. Comparisons and Conclusions. (The third appendix recounts an after-the-war quarrel of Sassoon with Graves.) Bremer spends some time defining what he means by “war-poet.” “The problem with Lewis and the term ‘war-poet’ is the hyphen.” He continues in the introduction:

The hyphenated connection between the words “war” and “poet” [...] surely signifies that, in some way, the war has affected the poet, that it has provided the origin and subject-matter of his poetry. That subject-matter need not be the whole war; it may be just an action, a single action, or it may be prompted by the men or by an individual man who participated in it, by their heroism or their cowardice, by their deaths, by their sufferings and feelings—ranging through a wide gamut—or by the poet’s own thoughts and feelings brought on by his witnessing the agony or participating in the actions. The war is the source, the inspiration as it were. The poet may also be acting as a judge of the actions he sees, or as a prophet, showing something of their consequences, or he may be a comforter, or a combination of any or all these. Above all, as [Wilfred] Owen reminded us, the poet must be truthful about the war. That is what makes a war-poet: being truthful about the war. (xxi-xxii)

Obviously, Bremer is going to suggest that Lewis does not meet these criteria.

The second chapter goes through the war year by year, explaining the tone of the poetry in each period. Nineteen fifteen is filled with poetry idealistic about the war, 1916 is mixed in attitude as the realization of the mortality numbers became known, 1917 was increasingly bitter, and 1918 (although not given a clear statement by Bremer) seems from the examples to be either mordant or realistic. Bremer calls this survey an attempt “to give an impression of the larger movements in poetic expression” (14). One notices that he sometimes he quotes from poems written outside of the year in question if the passage fits his theme—for example, under 1916, he quotes Isaac Roseberg’s “Louse Hunting” from 1917 and Roseberg’s “last poem” (presumably 1918, when he died), “Through These Pale Cold Days.” But Bremer makes his point about poetry that directly responds to the war (after the naïve idealism of 1916, which Bremer does not consider real war-poetry).

In the fifth chapter, Bremer surveys Lewis’s *Spirits in Bondage*, which was published with a listing by William Heinemann of it as one of the publisher’s “Soldier Poets” (see the listing in the back of the original edition of *Spirits in Bondage*). *Spirits* in that listing joins two books by Siegfried Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman & other Poems* and *Counter-Attack and other Poems*; one by R. E. Vernède, *War Poems and other Verses*; one by Robert Graves, *Fairies and Fusiliers*; and Lewis’s book. But Bremer, quite correctly, points out that Lewis subtitled his book *A*

Cycle of Lyrics. Lewis is claiming that his book is a united production, unlike Vernède's miscellany of war poem and other verses. As Bremer says about Lewis's book, it isn't united (89, 111, 114, 124, among other comments).

Bremer takes Lewis's statement in a [23 May 1918] letter to Arthur Greeves to be the intended thesis for the book: "[...] I have formulated my equation Matter = Nature = Satan. And on the other side Beauty, the only spiritual & not-natural thing that I have yet found" (*Collected Letters* 1.371). Lewis repeats this as applied to his poems in the letter of [12 September 1918]: the book "is mainly strung round the idea that I mentioned to you before—that nature is wholly diabolical & malevolent and that God, if he exists, is outside of and in opposition to the cosmic arrangements" (397). "[N]ature is wholly diabolical" is the same as "Nature = Satan," of course. One thing that Bremer does is consider each poem in the book to see if it fits this thesis (occasionally with a God of beauty inactive in the world). This survey becomes repetitious, but it is worth doing because Bremer finds a substantial number of the poems unrelated to the announced thesis. He also considers whether the poems are war-poems in his sense. Even such a poem as "French Nocturne: (Monchy-le-Preux)" is condemned: "One would not need to leave England in order to write this poem" (100).

Bremer considers other topics about the poems, such as his chart of the number of words in each poem and the number of different words (the total at the end is 9010 words in the forty-one poems with 2230 different words) (94-95). Bremer does not draw a conclusion about these numbers; it might have been interesting to have seen such totals for war-poems by Sassoon and Graves. It was said that this survey has a major problem. Bremer gathers information about when the poems were written, but—although he makes use of Don King's *C.S. Lewis, Poet*, drawing the classifications of Lewis's poems as morose or sanguine from Ch. 3 of King's book—he does not seem to have looked at Appendix Six, "The Holograph Contents of Lewis's Earliest Poems, In the Handwriting of Arthur Greeves" (308-310). That has a listing of the poems Lewis wrote from Easter [vacation] 1915 to Easter [vacation] 1917 (with some undated poems following which were presumably written later); Bremer could have found the dates of the writing of seventeen or so poems in that list. For example, in the comments on "Victory," Bremer writes, "This was written down in *Metrical Meditations of a Cod*, according to Walter Hooper, and was therefore composed before the summer, say June 1917, when the notebook was left with Arthur Greeves" (101). (*Metrical Meditations of a Cod* is a manuscript collection of Lewis's poems mentioned by W.H. Lewis; Greeves' manuscript is a copy of it.) But Appendix Six indicates that "Victory" was written Easter 1916 under the title "Ad Astra" (the identification of the two titles is made by King). Thus the poem—or at least its first draft—was written three years before its collection in *Spirits in*

Bondage. (Bremer slips up further in his discussion of this poem by using its two titles as two submissions to *The Bookman*, misreading Lewis's letter to Greeves of [14 July 1919].) The present review sounds as if the survey of Lewis's poems in *Spirits in Bondage* is fatally flawed, but often the comments on the contents of the poems are interesting readings. For example, Bremer compares the 1918 version of "Song" (from a letter) with the 1919 version (in *Spirits*), finding the changes overall improvements in artistry (120-122).

This review need not deal at length with the factual material about Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon in Chs. 6 and 7. Both men served as officers in the same area of the war as Lewis did; both were wounded; both returned to the front; both wrote poems about men killed in the war and about other aspects of the actual experience of the war. Of course, they have differences—Sassoon turned strongly against the handling of the war and wrote a long statement about it; Graves kept him from being put in an insane asylum over the statement. In brief, they are good examples of writers of war-poetry in Bremer's terms, being vitally involved with the war. The eighth chapter, "Comparisons and Conclusions," compares the three poets in several ways, including their relations to women: Sassoon was a homosexual who, during the war, turned his orientation into a concern for the men under his command and who, a goodly while after the war, married a woman to have a child (they later divorced after having had a son); Graves came out of the British public schools believing he was a homosexual but soon discovered he wasn't and had, after the war, an elaborate heterosexual life; Lewis reacted strongly against the homosexual activities or attitudes in public schools, while having sadistic desires about women, and became, before he entered the war, involved in an affair with a woman as old as his dead mother. (That comparison/contrast may not have much to do with their wartime poetry, except in Graves and Sassoon's feelings of concern for their men and the expression of it in their poems. Lewis does not seem at the time to have had any great concern for the men under him.) Bremer also compares the three in terms of social background—both Sassoon and Graves were of higher social standing than Lewis, had more social connections than he did, and were not concerned greatly with social class standing; but Lewis was concerned with whether some he met were "gentlemen" or were of "his set." Bremer has a chart of how much time the three served in wartime, on or near the front line, etc.—Lewis was in the army for a shorter time than either of the other two, but he was near the front line longer than Sassoon (201). Bremer traces changes in attitudes during the war by Graves and Sassoon, but finds almost no interest shown with the wartime issues by Lewis before the war and little expressed at the time of the war. Where Bremer is going is this: Lewis "had developed, over the years following his mother's death in 1908, ways of excluding or limiting the possibility of having an experience" (218). A reader may well think of what

Alistair McGrath says in his *C.S. Lewis: A Life*, that Lewis was afraid to let himself feel during the war and suppressed feelings about the war afterwards (50). Although Bremer does not emphasize the effect of Robert Capron at Wynard School as much as he might, he surely is right to trace Lewis's psychic withdrawal back to a boy losing his mother, being sent about a month later to a different country and to public schools with which he had problems, being allowed to stay within an intellectual shell under Kirkpatrick's tutoring (this reviewer adds to the thesis), and finally going through the war without allowing himself to fully feel it. Bremer sees, correctly, that the repression started earlier than McGrath indicates. Bremer writes:

This psychological condition meant that much that he went through was not experienced but was as if it had "happened to someone else." This defense or protection against experience, with an implicit assumption that most experience is dangerous and painful—or at least undesirable, seems to have been for his survival for a long time. (218)

Bremer suggests that God was one of the things being rejected during the time; the only thing which could get through Lewis's shields was "Joy" (*Sehnsucht*).

In short, Bremer does not think Lewis's early poems were good as poetry, but they reveal much about the young man who would, eventually, develop into the important Christian writer. Despite some flaws, Bremer's book overall is a valuable study of Lewis in the Great War, as a beginning poet, and as a troubled soul who had much growing to do.

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—Joe R. Christopher



COLLECTED POEMS. Hope Mirrlees. Ed. and intro. Sandeep Parmar. Manchester: Fyfield (Carcenet): 2012. 143 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781847770752.

PRINCIPALLY KNOWN TO THE FANTASY COMMUNITY for *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926), Hope Mirrlees (1887-1978) is increasingly emerging as a considerable figure in twentieth-century British literature, somebody who was friendly with T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf, and yet pursued a line as an imaginative writer akin to that pursued by giants of modern fantasy such as J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. If her modernist experimentation links her to Eliot, and her lesbianism and defiance of bourgeois norms to Woolf, her conversion to Roman Catholicism and her sense of the liberating possibilities fantasy could offer to the humdrum colorlessness of the modern world link her to Tolkien. Indeed, if there is a female Tolkien, Mirrlees is it. (Naomi Mitchison, a significant novelist and crucial early reader of *The Lord of the Rings*, never wrote fantasy in quite the same sense).

It is no surprise to find out that Mirrlees wrote poetry; after all, poetry was essential to the work of Inklings Lewis, Williams and Tolkien, even if in no case was it their major vehicle. It was not Mirrlees's major vehicle either—despite the accomplishment of *Paris* (1919), the one long poem known and published in her lifetime—but the poems offer sundry delights, at different times sounding religious, humorous, celebratory and elegiac notes. Sandeep Parmar has provided an extensive introduction as well as including several of Mirrlees's essays which flesh out the book and make it a useful compendium of information about Mirrlees that can serve as a general introduction to her as a literary figure as well as a compilation of all her published and previously unpublished poetry.

On the back cover of the book, *Paris* is compared to Eliot's *Waste Land* (printed three years later, also by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press), and indeed the reader, even without such a suggestion, makes the apposition immediately: the quotations from advertisements, the inclusion of snippets from urban soundscapes, briefly dramatized characters fumbling their way through the detritus of urban life, the hurtling contemporaneity of the busy city undergirded by many layers of allusion and reference:

The Louvre, the Ritz, the Palais-Royale, the Hotel De Ville.
 Are light and frail
 Plaster pavilions of pleasure
 Set up to serve the ten days junketing
 Of citizens in masks and dominoes
A la occasion du mariage de Monseigneur le Dauphin (13)

Juxtaposed to “Workmen in pale blue/Barrows of vegetables/Busy dogs” and “The lost romance’ penned by some Ovid, an unwilling thrall/In Fairyland” (13),

these lines give some measure of the different ranges and tonalities of the poem. We are reminded by it that the catastrophist school of modern literary history, in which poetry by such as Eliot was deemed to be decisively different from what was before and around it, is wrong; that there was a far more graduated transition from Victorian into modern, and that 'native' British poets—i.e. those, unlike Eliot, actually born in Britain—played a role. Mirrlees takes steps like including musical scores and parsing out "lily of the valley" one letter per line, even riskier than Eliot's. (Parmar suspects, but is not certain, that Eliot read the poem, though "as a Hogarth author, he would surely have known of its existence" [xxxvii].) Though it is not possible now to write a history of modern British poetry, like Herbert Palmer's *Post-Victorian Poetry* composed in the 1930s, that dismisses Eliot entirely, Mirrlees's "Paris" shows there were other paths to qualities supposed distinctly Eliotic. Mirrlees, indeed, combined the religiosity associated with the later Eliot with the discordant cityscapes of the earlier work. She also, through her friendship (and probable love affair) with Jane Harrison, had a far more direct relationship with what Parmar terms "ideas about ritual and religion" (xvii) than Eliot did through his reading of Frazer.

Mirrlees's poem is, though, for better or for worse, far more comprehensible than Eliot's. It is an unconventional portrait of Paris but the referent is clear; there is no real dispute over what it means. For all the intermittent grime and stench, it is highly celebratory of Paris, seeing it as a fantastic, enchanted city, with less bitterness and satire than Eliot found in London. And Mirrlees's poems from *Moods and Tensions* (1976)—published two years before Mirrlees died—though far more conventionally lyrical than "Paris," are similarly direct, even if often enigmatic. Take the last poem from *Moods and Tensions*, "Jesus Wept":

My mother had a maid called Barbara,
And she was born under a tragic star,
But no one ever saw her shed a tear,
For she was crowned with love, as was Queen Guinevere.

For love she drowned herself, and she was held accurst
To pray for her neither simple nor gentle durst,
And through the timeless years of poetry she slept
Unmourned and unannealed, but Jesus wept. (52)

The archaic diction ("durst" and "accurst" and the traditional, quasi-balladic meter and rhyme) join with the exaltation of the humble—a servant compared with queen Guinevere—and the sense of the world's non-recognition of the afflicted to render a scene both poignant and disturbing. Jesus is the one way out, the one entity who will take pity on Barbara and take stock of her need. But note

that this Jesus cannot redeem, but only weeps; yes, referring to a famous line in the Bible, but in this case rendering him no more potent than a bystander. Yet, it is notable, with respect to parallels to the Inklings, how explicitly Jesus is brought in here, and how Jesus is seen as a the solution to the dilemmas of the juxtaposition of the fantastic and the modern. A writer like Tolkien may do this tacitly, implicitly through his theories of sub-creation. But Jesus never comes into a Tolkien text as a *deus ex machina* as he does in this Mirrlees poem (even though, in only weeping, he is a bit more of a *deus absconditus*).

Yet in "Heaven is Not Fairyland" (45), Mirrlees makes clear the importance of fantasy in her religious vision. The poem, the reader soon realizes, disagrees with its title. Whereas we might think she is going to caution us not to equate "the gingerbread houses" and "tales come true" of Fairyland with the "Pure Act" of God, Mirrlees finds the idea of pure act noisome, the tangibility of Fairyland preferable, saying of a more abstract, disembodied God, "How can we stand it" (45). One is reminded here of Geoffrey Hill's sequence "Funeral Music" where heaven as "a palace blazing / With perpetual silence as with torches" is found equally inadequate. In "A Meditation On Donatello's Annunciation in the Church of Santa Croce, Florence," Mirrlees goes further and seems to see Mary as the only compassionate element in the Christ-drama; she speaks of the confrontation between "an odious father and a graceless son" (51) in Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, but in the context of the Annunciation we think of another Father and Son. By playing with the sonic similarity between "Donatello" and "Madonna," Mirrlees sees painter and mother as coequal engenderers of the salvation represented by Christ, in a way that significantly wrests the story from patriarchal moorings:

Madonna tell, Madonna tell, O
Donna tell the Catholic-nurtured Donatello
He must have *seen* St. Gabriel. (51).

The slight over-explicitness of "Catholic-nurtured" (even though it buttresses the maternal theme) is indicative of Mirrlees's main flaw as a poet: an excessive discursivity, lacking, for instance the canorous density of the best of Tolkien's lyrics. Like Tolkien, though, she was sensitive to the power of pure sound in poetry, an insight enhanced by the work she did with Harrison on Greek- and Russian-language verse. In "A Portrait of the Second Eye, Painted in Pompeian Red," Mirrlees writes another Marian poem, picturing Mary and a woman from Pompeii offered the choice of a suffering divine or a deathly bacchanal; Mary makes the right choice, but the poem is made dramatic by the palpable evocation of darkness and negation. Tolkien, as can be seen in Letters 152 and 320, admitted a Mariological agenda in his writing (albeit far more tacitly), which can

be seen as another bond between Mirrlees and Tolkien.

The previously uncollected poems also offer many riches. "The Moon-Maid" mixes fantastic and Christian imagery with that of the Aesthetic Movement, comparing "her once sung by Baudelaire" to "a child that was reared by Faery hands" (62). As in her fantasy fiction, Faery is seen as a surprise that can pierce the carapace of bourgeois complacency: "The Faerie Changelings" speaks to the rebelliousness and riskiness of fairies, in this case embodying an ambiguous "joy that by God is banned" (65). Mirrlees, in "Some talk of Alexander and some sing Monty's praise," is utterly immune to the patriotic rhetoric of the Second World War, seeing the war as leading to the dissolution of "male prestige"; this skeptical though not pacifist attitude towards the war's outcome, and also a notable tone of anti-Americanism, for instance in its reference to Roosevelt as "Roosefeld" (66), link it to Tolkien's letter 77: "O God! O Montreal! O Minnesota! O Michigan!" The last poem in the book, "Dusk," seems to see the Angel of Dusk and the Lady of Dreams as antitheses. But the Angel ends up being benign, power saving consciousness from a vale of tears.

The essays are also notable. "Bedside Books" (1928), perhaps too cozily twee in its readerly intimacy, nonetheless charms. "Gothic Dreams" (also 1928) interestingly spotlights the Catholic sources of the Gothic, the link between Gothic and fantasy as both an index of modernity in innovation and a protest of modernity in its deliberate reinstatement of motifs of the past, particularly medieval ones. In a 1926 essay on the Russian writer Alexei Remizov, Mirrlees discusses this now neglected writer in edifying and vivid terms; if Mirrlees is correct that at the time she wrote he was considered "the greatest living writer" (75) of Russia, this did not remain the consensus, although the Soviet trauma diverted the course of Russian literature dramatically. The "magnifying and golden atmosphere" (77) of Remizov's stories is well evoked by Mirrlees, and provides a link between the trading of great Russian writing and modern British fantasy, between, as it were, Tolstoy and Tolkien. "Listening in to the Past" (1936) centers on the time of Mary Queen of Scots—not in any narrative but on its own terms. History is seen as stories, the past as a muse-like source of inspiration. "The Religion of Women" (1927) postulates that women are more nostalgic than men, care more about the past: "it is love that makes men unhappy, and time that makes women so" (97). This is a provocative generalization, but there are too many particular instances that contradict it: sticking with examples already brought up, the Eliot who wrote "footfalls echo in the memory" was thinking as much about Time as Love, and Tolkien's Elves, afflicted by nostalgia for the days of their grandeur, are mainly male, Galadriel being one of the less past-centered (though it could be because she is trying to atone). But women have as many individual motives as men do, and Mirrlees's argument is best appreciated in light of her own attempts to reconcile feminism

and Catholicism, and why, for her, traditionalism was emancipatory in gender terms.

Though this book necessarily does not emphasize Mirrlees's fantastic prose, most familiar to readers of *Mythlore*, Parmar does a good job, in his introduction and notes, of giving an overview and connecting *Lud-in-the-Mist* with what we have here. This volume gives a sense of Mirrlees's range and ambition, which will further add to our sense of her as an important figure in modern fantasy writing.

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—Nicholas Birns



FANTASY, ART AND LIFE: ESSAYS ON GEORGE MACDONALD, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON AND OTHER FANTASY WRITERS. William Gray. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. \$52.99. ISBN 9781443833851.

"THE GOLDEN KEY" CONTAINS SOME OF GEORGE MACDONALD'S most memorable images of life and death. No one who has read the story will be able to forget its sea of shadows, its nocturnal rainbow, or the magical creature arrayed in colorful feathers that swam through the air as a fish swims through water. The air-fish in particular speaks powerfully to the reader's mortal anxieties when, after rescuing the fairy tale's young female protagonist Tangle from a devouring tree and guiding her to the safety of her grandmother's cottage, it flies straightaway into a pot of boiling water to become Tangle's evening meal. Reluctantly eating the air-fish to show proper gratitude for its sacrifice, Tangle is delighted when her grandmother lifts the lid from the pot after supper to reveal the selfsame presence of the fish in a new winged form before it darts away into the darkness of the night. Thus in the multivalent figure

of the air-fish MacDonald sketches an outline of the interpenetrating nature of life and death, the sustaining power of sacrifice, and the interconnectedness of all living things. It is not surprising that William Gray returns to this story again and again in his new book *Fantasy, Art and Life: Essays on George MacDonald, Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Fantasy Writers*.

Gray's new book is a sequel and companion volume to his earlier *Death and Fantasy* (reviewed in *Mythlore* 28:3/4, #109/110, 2010). Like *Death and Fantasy*, this book is a collection of essays loosely organized around a central theme—in this case life. All of the book's eight essays have been previously published elsewhere or delivered as conference papers. The first five are mostly about George MacDonald, while the remaining three concentrate chiefly on Robert Louis Stevenson. While the themes of fantasy and life run through most of the essays, the first four attend primarily to religious values and tropes in MacDonald's work, the fifth and sixth segue from MacDonald to Stevenson as they unfold a variety of literary representations of nature and the natural world, while the final two essays explore a mixture of tensions between art and life in a number of Stevenson's fantasy and mystery stories. This description of the book's structure implies more internal consistency than Gray's collection actually possesses. The readability of the individual essays also varies considerably. For the most part, the Stevenson essays are highly accessible and could be read with pleasure even by those unfamiliar with much of his work. The MacDonald essays, by contrast, are much denser and would almost certainly prove daunting to readers without some understanding of the Inklings and fantasy literature more generally.

The first essay in the collection, "The Life-giving Power of Fantasy: Narrative as Therapy in George MacDonald's *Adela Cathcart*," is one of my favorites. Cathcart, the eponymous protagonist of MacDonald's novel, is afflicted with a mysterious ailment because she has forgotten how to see things with the eyes of a child. As Gray explains, MacDonald framed the book to demonstrate the healing power of narrative and used its realism as cover to publish three fairy stories intended mostly for the consumption of adults. Thus the narrator, Cathcart's benevolent uncle, prescribes a course of stories to assuage the young woman's persistent malady. Gray provides close and insightful readings of the three fairy tales that follow—"The Light Princess," "The Giant's Heart," and "The Shadows"—by foregrounding the theological lessons MacDonald aims to convey at "the very edges of orthodoxy." Drawing on MacDonald's other stories and sermons, Gray places the novel in its broader historical context by suggesting some of the influences figures such as Lewis Carroll and John Ruskin may have had on MacDonald's writing and thought. Although the essay is dense, it amply repays the reader's effort. The themes Gray examines here are explored yet further his second essay, "'The Child in the Midst': Childhood and

Salvation History in Fantasy Fiction by MacDonald, Lewis and Pullman." But don't be fooled by its title: this chapter (like the first half of the collection as a whole) is chiefly about MacDonald. Accordingly, references to the work of Lewis and Pullman serve primarily to shed additional light on MacDonald's theology of childlikeness. Chapter four is perhaps the collection's most disappointing essay. Intended to map the theological use of caricature in MacDonald, Lewis, Pullman and Gaiman, the essay offers little in the way of new material on MacDonald and its treatment of Pullman is too brief. The sections on Lewis and Gaiman are more extensive, but in the end Gray fails to pull all four together in a way that might have broken new ground on the use of caricature more generally in fantasy literature.

Gray's two essays on ecocriticism serve as a kind of bridge that links the two parts of the book as the collection transitions from MacDonald to Stevenson. The first of these two essays situates comparative readings of MacDonald's "The Golden Key" and Tolkien's *Smith of Wootton Major* with reference to a broader Romantic tension scholars have identified between works that frame the natural world as a reflection of the writer's self, and works that treat nature as a vital force in its own right. Gray describes the former as an "ego-protecting, other-devouring mechanism" (75) in fantasy that is equally lacking in both MacDonald and Tolkien. Gray concludes that Tolkien's quarrel with MacDonald as a writer of fairy stories (he described *Smith* as his "anti-GM tract") did not turn on this fundamental axis, but on the fact that MacDonald's protagonists go through Fairyland to somewhere else, while Tolkien brings Smith back from Faery to this world at the conclusion of his tale. Setting aside all but the common theme of nature, Gray strikes out in a new direction in the sixth chapter where he explores Stevenson's view of nature and the way in which his writing influenced, or at least anticipated, later movements such as ruralism, neo-paganism, and other conservation activities. The last essay in the collection is one of the longest and offers a fascinating survey of Stevenson's "dark fantasies" or what in other contexts might simply be called gothic tales.

My only serious complaint about Gray's book is the inorganic way in which the two parts fit (or don't fit) together. Although the themes of fantasy, art, and life run through the book as a whole, there is very little intellectual tissue connecting the two sections on MacDonald and Stevenson. Gray acknowledges the problem these two solitudes pose in his introduction, but ultimately fails to offer a convincing argument for why the works of these two men ought to be considered side-by-side within the covers of the same volume. Indeed, although they were both raised in the shadow of Scottish Calvinism and wrote in the second half of the nineteenth century, their work seems worlds apart in so many ways. Gray might have assuaged this difficulty considerably had he written a new essay to serve as hinge between the two parts of the book rather than

confining his remarks on the subject to a few pages in the introduction. None of this detracts from the fact, however, that there remains much of value in this collection for readers interested in either MacDonald or in Stevenson—just not both in the same breath.

—Scott McLaren



C.S. LEWIS AND THE MIDDLE AGES. Robert Boenig. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2012. 181 p. \$55.00. ISBN 9781606351147.

THE SUBJECT OF C.S. LEWIS'S WORK WITH, AND INFLUENCE BY, the Middle Ages is well worth exploring. Lewis's literary scholarship is too often seen as separate from his apologetics and fictional work; a book that helps scholars and general readers to appreciate the effect of Lewis's medieval scholarship on the rest of his *oeuvre* would be very useful. Robert Boenig's *C.S. Lewis and the Middle Ages* attempts to do just this; the result is an over-ambitious book that succeeds in its informational but not its analytical goals.

Boenig notes that he will attempt to answer three questions: "What comprised [Lewis's] scholarly work about the medieval period, and what were his contributions to the ongoing professional discussion about the significance of the literature and culture of the Middle Ages? Why was he first attracted to medieval narratives and treatises, both scholarly and devotional? What was the impact of medieval modes of creativity on his imaginative writing?" (3). Even under the best of circumstances, it would be difficult to address all three of these questions adequately in only 150 pages.

Chapters 1 and 2 comprise the stronger half of the book. In Chapter 1, Boenig systematically summarizes Lewis's major work on medieval literature, focusing on *The Discarded Image* (20-28), *The Allegory of Love* (29-39), "What Chaucer Really Did to *Il Filostrato*" (39-41), and other essays (41-48). It is a useful overview for readers who are unfamiliar with Lewis's academic work in literature. In particular, Boenig's summary and discussion of Lewis's *The Allegory of Love* makes accessible for non-medievalists an excellent book that is probably more often appreciated at a distance than actually read.

Chapter 2 traces Lewis's personal interest in the Middle Ages. Boenig's careful work with Lewis's letters provides insight into the way that Lewis's early reading of medieval and quasi-medieval books shaped his imagination. Boenig's discussion of Lewis's mock-medieval letters to E.R. Eddison, T.H. White, and Ruth Pitter (73-78) provides a delightful glimpse of Lewis's playful side.

Unfortunately, this chapter begins to show Boenig's difficulty in dealing with Lewis's wide-ranging interests, a problem that recurs in his approach to Lewis's source material. Boenig is surprised that Lewis is "eager to defend the Middle Ages" (49) in his academic work, but

when we turn to his personal writings, we often have a hard time finding this apologist for the Middle Ages. To be sure, Lewis writes about medieval books and charts his engagement with them. But he writes about books from other periods as frequently as he does about those from the Middle Ages, and he moreover makes little or no attempt to convince his correspondents that this enjoyment precludes that offered by books from other eras. (49)

Surely it is not mysterious that Lewis, who was widely read, was interested in topics that included theology, philosophy, apologetics, and astronomy, and had many non-medievalist correspondents, would not limit himself to talking about medieval literature. However, Boenig seems insistent on making Lewis's lack of medieval monomania into a puzzle, referring to it repeatedly (50, 64, 71), such that this non-issue distracts from an otherwise informative chapter.

In Chapters 3 and 4, Boenig moves to an analysis of Lewis's fiction. His general approach is sound; Boenig says that in the second half of his book, he wishes "to further the discussion recently begun in Michael Ward's influential 2008 book, *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*" (3), noting that "Ward has pointed out Lewis's detailed use of the medieval planets; I wish to broaden our appreciation of Lewis's medieval vista" (4). Specifically, Boenig claims that "Lewis's muse was a reactive one, for to a greater or lesser extent each of his works of fiction has either an identifiable source or several recognizable sources; Lewis reacted to these works, developing his own ideas and grafting them, like a medieval gardener imping shoots onto fruit trees, onto an already well-rooted stem" (79). So far, so good. However, Boenig goes on immediately to make a stronger claim: "Though they are all Lewis's own stories, his creative works often *depend on* prior texts that Lewis expects his readers to know. The counterpoints between the prior texts and Lewis's new texts *generate Lewis's artistic success* as well as establish what one could term his theses" (79, emphasis mine).

Boenig does not address or even acknowledge what Ward calls "the problem of reception" (Ward 4). If Lewis's artistic success depends on the

reader's recognition of the counterpoint between prior and new texts, it is difficult to account for Lewis's continuing popularity and influence among readers who cannot possibly be familiar with these prior texts. Surprisingly, Boenig neglects to address Lewis's defense of "stock responses," though Lewis's discussion of that idea in Chapter VIII of *A Preface to Paradise Lost* is highly germane to the argument.

Boenig argues that "each of his works of fiction" (79) has a recognizable source, though he offers an analysis of only five: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Great Divorce*, *That Hideous Strength*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (80). If Boenig had demonstrated convincingly that these five books supported his larger thesis, one could make the case that his argument is more broadly valid. However, as noted above, Boenig is too quick to assume a single source text for Lewis's novels, resulting in over-simplified analysis; his use of sources also leaves much to be desired.

For instance, Boenig says that "One can argue that the Arthurian romance *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, with some side glances at Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, is the major source for *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*" (80). Boenig does not choose *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* for extended analysis, but he does footnote this claim with a reference to Ward's *Planet Narnia*, where the relevant passage runs: "In constructing this picaresque romance, Lewis had many sea-voyage stories to draw upon, such as Homer's *Odyssey*, the Irish tradition of *immram*, the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Seafarer*, the voyage of St. Brendan, and Mandeville's *Voiage and Travaile*. Of sun-voyage stories there are fewer sources, but it seems likely that one model was *Paradise Lost*" (Ward 108). Ward does not even mention *The Quest of the Holy Grail* in this context, nor suggests that Mandeville's work is more influential than the other six voyage-stories he mentions; following the reference weakens rather than strengthens Boenig's claim.

Similarly, when Boenig argues that H.G. Wells's *The First Men in the Moon* "becomes Lewis's prior text" (81) for *Out of the Silent Planet*, the evidence does not support his claim in the way he suggests it does. Boenig cites a letter to Roger Lancelyn Green in which Lewis says "What immediately spurred me to write was Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men* . . . and an essay in J.B.S. Haldane's *Possible Worlds* [...] I think Wells' *1st Men in the Moon* the best of the sort I have read" (qtd in Boenig 82). Boenig does go on to show from the letters that Lewis was very fond of *The First Men in the Moon*, but it is difficult to see why, when Lewis specifically names Stapledon and Haldane as direct influences, Boenig ignores those two authors entirely and claims *The First Men in the Moon* as the source text for *Out of the Silent Planet*. In the rest of this chapter, Boenig addresses Lewis's influence by William Morris. Boenig showed in Chapter 2 that Lewis had read and been influenced by Morris, but the specific claim that

Morris's *Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair* is the source for *Prince Caspian* (92) is based only on a number of plot similarities (93) that are all common to folk and fairy tales in general.

In Chapter 4, Boenig's analysis of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is badly flawed due largely to his handling of source material. On the basis of one letter in which Lewis briefly recommends Aulén's *Christus Victor* as a counterbalancing read to another theologian (131), Boenig concludes that "Lewis, in other words, is persuaded by Aulén with a possible nudge from [A.G.] Herbert, that Mr. Morland should rely on *Christus Victor* for sound Christian doctrine" (131). The only other reference to Aulén that Boenig supplies is another letter in which Lewis lists his theological influences, adding "'I liked but cd. make no use of Aulén's *Christus Victor*'" (qtd in Boenig 132) Boenig is not simply selecting examples: these are the *only* two references to Aulén in the *Collected Letters*; Aulén is not mentioned at all in Walter Hooper's *C.S. Lewis: The Companion and Guide*. It seems unwarranted, then, that Boenig would argue for "how much Lewis is influenced by Aulén's classic theory of the Atonement" (142).

Since Boenig in fact notes Lewis's comment that he had learned doctrine from a wide range of literary and premodern theological and devotional books rather than from modern works of theology (132), it would have been useful if Boenig had taken Lewis at his word, and traced the various sources that Lewis might have used. Unfortunately, Boenig's assumption that Lewis was directly responding to Aulén's book, contra the evidence, makes it difficult to have confidence in Boenig's analysis of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Whenever Boenig's claims are more modest, and he assesses a text as one source among many for one of Lewis's books, the results are significantly better. The best of the analyses is of *The Great Divorce* in Chapter 3, in which Boenig examines how Lewis used elements of the medieval dream vision, with specific references to passages in Dante, Chaucer, Lydgate, and Guillaume de Lorris. Boenig's comparison of *That Hideous Strength* to T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* is unconvincing as an argument that Lewis was deliberately responding to and critiquing White (130), but it is worthwhile as a literary analysis of Lewis and White's contrasting takes on Merlin. In the Epilogue, Boenig offers an insightful reading of a passage from *That Hideous Strength*, showing how Lewis used and transformed "the riddle game between the Norse god Odin and the giant Vafthrudnir in the *Vafthrudnismal*, one of the poems included in the Old Norse *Elder Edda*" (146). Boenig provides a careful reading of the way that Lewis gives a "creative response" (148) to the source, opening up new insights for the reader.

In the end, *C.S. Lewis and the Middle Ages* is a chimera. While the second half of the book is badly flawed, the Introduction, Epilogue, and Chapters 1 and 2 are genuinely valuable, and some elements of Chapters 3 and 4 may spark

ideas for further research and reading. This book will be of use to readers who are looking for background information to better appreciate Lewis's scholarship as a medievalist. The work of exploring Lewis's broader interaction with medieval literature, and its impact on his writing, remains to be done.

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—Holly Ordway



SHERLOCK HOLMES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: ESSAYS ON NEW ADAPTATIONS. Edited by Lynnette Porter. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012. 211 pp. \$40.00. ISBN 978-0-7864-6840-9.

Is the Sherlock Holmes canon mythopoeic? The main characters are indisputably iconic and archetypal; some of the story lines certainly have mythic resonances and elements of them have become ingredients in the great cauldron of story. But where Holmes and Watson become truly mythopoeic is in their afterlife, in the reuse of this material in adaptation. Our modern Sherlocks arguably owe their existence to Nicholas Meyer's 1974 novel *The Seven Per-Cent Solution*, which "established the template for all the twitchy, paranoid, vulnerable, strung-out Holmeses to come" and "propelled Holmes into the modern world, making him the model for today's variously troubled Sherlocks" (Hale).

Lynnette Porter's essay collection focuses primarily on two particularly modern Sherlocks, the BBC television series which relocates Sherlock to modern-day London and the hyperkinetic Guy Ritchie-directed film franchise. Benedict Cumberbatch's contemporary Sherlock certainly owes something to his "twitchy, paranoid" forbearer, and though the Holmes portrayed by Robert Downey, Jr., is firmly esconced in Victorian London, he's far from the lean, restrained aesthete familiar from earlier film portrayals.

Also modern is the deliberate foregrounding of "homoerotic tension" in both of these series, and the three opening essays all deal with this issue. Carlen Lavigne notes how the BBC Sherlock deliberately plays with homoerotic subtext

“only to deny, even lightly mock, such readings” (16), “never quite letting the *possibility* of homoerotic tension fade” (20). Anissa M. Graham and Jennifer C. Garlen take as their starting point Irene Adler’s observation in the BBC episode “A Scandal in Belgravia” that “Brainy’s the new sexy” and demonstrate that through illustration, stage, and film adaptations, “the sexualization of Sherlock Holmes began almost as soon as the first stories went to print” (25), contributing to the rise of the “sexy geek as icon, hero, and heartthrob” (33). Kayley Thomas examines the “paratext” of the Ritchie adaptation, particularly the effect of Robert Downey, Jr.’s pre-release interviews and interpretation of the Holmes/Watson “bromance.” His insistence on keeping the potential of a queer reading open was an important part of both his performance and interviews.

In “The Watson Effect,” April Toadvine suggests that Watson’s place as moral stand-in for the reader often led audiences to underestimate him, particularly in film adaptations where he was portrayed as a bit of a fool. The Jude Law and Martin Freeman portrayals both emphasize his skills as a doctor and a former soldier, and, while he is still the more moral of the pair, he exhibits a “strongly situational” (58) morality akin to Holmes’s own.

The following article, “Don’t Make People into Heroes, John” by Francesca M. Marinaro and Kayley Thomas, is perhaps of especial interest to *Mythlore* readers as it deals with Campbellian constructions of heroism and the hero journey and the interplay of goodness and greatness. They observe that “[o]ur construction of Holmes-as-hero relies upon Conan Doyle’s construction of Watson as hero-worshipper” (68). In both the BBC and Ritchie versions, Watson is cast as a hero in need of a quest, with the “making and maintaining” of Sherlock as his goal (71). Watson teaches Holmes to better read and value human emotions and connections—to temper his greatness with goodness.

The next two chapters look at several television shows and books that draw on the Holmes archetype rather than updating Holmes himself. Ana E. La Paz examines the show *Bones*, in which both the scientific and medical abilities and the personality traits of Holmes and Watson are split among many characters. Rhonda Harris Taylor looks at two modern Sherlocks: Detective Robert Green of *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and FBI Agent Aloysius Pendergast of the Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child book series. Her contention is that the characters of Holmes and Watson “shapeshift” to address societal concerns, and in our post-9/11 world we distrust “unaffiliated loners” and prefer our Holmes surrogates to be associated with the law—though like the original Holmes, these characters remain “free to administer justice in ways that might not fit legal codes” (105).

We return to the BBC series for the next set of chapters. Lynnette Porter leads off with a close study of differences between the American PBS broadcast and the full original BBC broadcast, now available on DVD. American audiences

initially saw a “slightly different Sherlock” (113). While the show had to be edited for time, the scenes that were cut or trimmed tended to be those that showed John’s “loyalty” to Sherlock (117) and the complexity of their relationship, including the fact that they are “equals” (119) and that John had substantial “credentials” of his own (121). The American paratext, particularly the episode introductions by Alan Cumming, drew attention to Sherlock’s sexuality. As with the Americanization of the US editions of the *Harry Potter* books, there’s a lack of trust that American audiences will “get” British vocabulary and references.

Rhonda Harris Taylor’s “The ‘Great Game’ of Information” is a librarian’s take on how Sherlock seeks and uses information. She analyzes the “digital native” by the five standards of information literacy set forth by the Association of College and Research Libraries (129). Where he most racially departs from standards is his lack of respect for the legal and ethical aspects of gathering and using information (135-7), but the deepest conflict arises from Moriarty’s embodiment of information overload (141). Svetlana Bochman points out that in the original print series, Holmes is a “thoroughly modern man” (144) with a mastery of his era’s technology, a hero that shares the times’ optimism about progress. In the BBC series the audience has a more problematic relationship with technology. Sherlock’s ease with it contributes to his labeling as a “freak”; what was eccentric in Victorian times now gets him classified as a “high-functioning sociopath” (151). Bochman’s second article explores how the Victorian Holmes and the modern BBC Sherlock demonstrate “changing perceptions of remuneration for intellectual labor” (155) in the circumstances under which they do or do not charge fees for their work. Holmes is marked by Victorian reticence but is paid well enough by wealthy clients to live quite comfortably. But the modern Sherlock does not work for the professional police force in any official capacity and therefore generally does not get paid; this is a point of pride as a difference between himself and the “consulting criminal” Moriarty (161).

The volume closes with three more papers by Porter. In “Welcome to London” she discusses the phenomenon of “cinematic tourism,” in which tourists either visit the real places depicted on film or their shooting locations. Cinematic tourism “blurs the lines between reality and fiction” and “adds value to historic or popular tourist destinations” (177).

The House of Silk is the first Sherlock Holmes novel authorized by, and in fact commissioned by, the Arthur Conan Doyle estate. Interestingly, the author tries to stay true to period style and sensibilities in his portrayal of the intense yet non-sexual friendship of Holmes and Watson, in contrast to other recent interpretations. But, as Porter points out, this is problematized by the subject matter of the mystery—the “house” of the title is a brothel specializing in

underage boys, thus keeping issues of pederasty and sexual exploitation uppermost in the reader's mind.

Neil Gaiman, a favorite author of many readers of this journal, has written two short stories featuring Sherlock Holmes. "A Study in Emerald" is a twisty mirror-universe Lovecraftian mash-up, and "The Case of Death and Honey," set after Holmes's retirement, centers around a favorite Gaiman theme—Death. Gaiman's Sherlock, while in many ways true to the original, is perhaps more heroic and human, and more emotional about his friendship with Watson. Interestingly, the reader only sees Watson through Holmes's eyes—he "never is directly seen or is given dialogue" (199). Holmes's "emotional attachment to John Watson is key to his actions" (201).

In all, this is an enjoyable collection for anyone interested in adaptation issues, and demonstrates that it is the friendship of Holmes and Watson, even more than their individual characters, that is the real archetype which will stand the test of time.

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—Janet Brennan Croft



DANCING THE TAO: LE GUIN AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT. Sandra J. Lindow. New Castle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 281 p. \$39.99. 9781443839884.

IN *DANCING the TAO* SARAH LINDOW PRESENTS a thorough review of the writing of Ursula K. Le Guin. To most readers Le Guin is possibly best known for her Earthsea series of books. Yet like most authors Le Guin's *oeuvre* is more far reaching than her most popular works. Lindow's study follows Le Guin through young adult fiction, poetry, essays, children's literature and more. Reading this book will give any reader a very comprehensive knowledge of the primary story line and characters in the "Le Guiniverse."

Lindow approaches these writings with years of experience in the critical study of Le Guin. Referencing not only the texts but much of the secondary literature on them, she presents us with a lens to appreciate Le Guin as feminist, as creator, and on a more personal level. Lindow's lens includes references also to books recommended by Le Guin, particularly in the realm of a more psychotherapeutic understanding of moral dilemma, child development, and trauma.

As the title of the work indicates, Lindow is interested particularly in moral development as a theme in Le Guin's writing. Le Guin, a student of Taoism for several decades, even publishing her own interpretative translation of the book of Lao Tzu, does seem fixated on moral understanding and its change and growth, or lack thereof, in her characters over time. Yet the ability of Lindow to directly connect Taoist teaching with Le Guin's work is consistently on the light side. Lindow does reference Taoism in these analyses, but sees its teachings as strongly interrelated with issues of mental health as well as moral growth. Overall it appears that Le Guin's relation to childhood trauma and psychotherapy in her writings are of far more interest to Lindow. And it is in this respect that Lindow performs well here, for the most part. Le Guin's primary characters are fraught with issues of moral development and the healing of both personal and social trauma. Because of this it is sensible to approach Le Guin's writings with these parallax concerns in mind. And while the Taoist interchange is perhaps less than might be expected, Lindow does keep its application ongoing, if less overt in its presentation.

There is one exception that might be taken with this psychological approach. Too frequently the connection between a particular character's action and even clothing is linked directly to a particular event or specific moment in Le Guin's life. This is probably due to the bleed-over from Lindow's attempt to write both personally and critically. Even the best of critics attempting a successful blend of both the academic and the personal is bound to experience trouble with this. Yet, while Lindow's insights in these moments are certainly interesting, it sometimes feels as if a personal insight has crept into a place of authority dictating interpretation.

Overall, *Dancing the Tao* is an informative approach to the works of Le Guin. Sarah Lindow has presented us with a range of interpretative approaches and thoroughgoing synopses of much of Le Guin's *oeuvre*. For those either new to Le Guin and interested in an overview of her life's work so far, or those who are interested in a psychotherapeutic approach to literary interpretation, Lindow's books is a welcome companion.

—Carl Badgley

HOBBIT PLACE-NAMES: A LINGUISTIC EXCURSION THROUGH THE SHIRE. Rainer Nagel. Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2012. \$24.30. ISBN 978-3905703221.

RAINER NAGEL'S BOOK, *HOBBIT PLACE-NAMES*, is divided into four parts, the first of which contains general discussions relevant to the book's topics, and the latter three giving Nagel's analyses of the place-names in the Shire and Bree-land.

The first part of the book, the "Introductory Remarks" contains much that is relevant to the study of Tolkien's names, 'Tolkienymics,' into which tradition this book places itself. In the Introduction Nagel discusses the roles within Tolkienian linguistics of name studies and studies of Tolkien's use of Old and Middle English. The importance of the Hobbits as cultural mediators is also stressed in relation to translation studies. In the following sub-section, Nagel discusses "Principles of Place-name Giving" starting with actual English place-names; he then moves on to argue that Tolkien followed real patterns in his place-names.

Nagel then moves on to Tolkienymics, starting off with what is perhaps the most studied Tolkienian name, 'hobbit.' In the sub-section "Concerning Hobbits," Nagel takes us through various theories and conjectures, including rabbits and howitzers, and then to the internal etymology of *Holbylta* and *Kûd-dûkan* (the latter of which Nagel tells us is "pseudo-Gothic"), and finally he shows the natural changes in pronunciation that would take the Hobbits from 'Holbylta' to 'Hobbit.' The next subsection deals with "Hobbit Migrations as a Mirror of Real-world Language Change," which looks into the movements (and etymology) of Harfoots, Fallohides and Stoors compared to Jutes, Angles and Saxons. Nagel identifies two groups of Hobbit place-names, a "Hobbiton-cum-Bywater perspective" (31) and a "Celtic substratum" (30) centered about Buckand and the Marish. The etymology of 'The Shire' has its own sub-section, which leads on to "A Few Choice Hobbit Names," in which Nagel looks at a small selection of Hobbit personal names: Baggins, Bilbo, Frodo, Brandybuck, Meriadoc, Gamwich, Samwise, Hamfast, and Took. He also mentions the theory of Helmut W. Pesch who sees, in the families mentioned here, a model of a four-level British class society with the Gamwiches at the bottom followed by Bagginses, Tooks and finally the Brandybucks as a representation of the nobility.

The final few pages of part one are taken up with "A Brief Note and Old and Middle English Dialects" which focuses on dialects that had, in Shippey's words, "defied Conquest and Conqueror" (qtd. 55).

The last three parts of the book contain, as mentioned above, the individual place-name analyses. All entries follow the same pattern, starting with a quotation from the books (if one can be found), followed by a discussion of the

role of the place in the books and/or on the maps, the etymology of Tolkien's name, followed by discussion of the various available German translations.

This structure works remarkably well despite necessitating some repetition and a certain amount of cross referencing (the etymology of 'downs' is, for instance, only explained once). My familiarity with German is such that I can recognize some of the more common elements in the names, but that is about all. Nagel manages, however, to keep the discussion of the German names interesting, and I kept thinking of possibilities for a new Danish translation of *The Lord of the Rings* (a new translation of *The Hobbit* has recently been published, but nothing is known about *The Lord of the Rings*). Even if you have no interest in translations, you may still find yourself interested in some of Nagel's comments on what Tolkien mainly intended to signify with the place-names.

The last of the three sections is set aside for place-names from outside the Shire—mainly Bree-land place-names, but also a few Hobbit names for places in the general area. The two preceding sections split the place-names of the Shire, such that the first section, part two, lists "all settlements and habitation names" (though not individual houses), while part three contains everything else: rivers, woods, hills, houses, etc. This is likely to cause some confusion as not all of Nagel's decisions will seem obvious to every reader—either because the reader has misunderstood Tolkien's texts (I did, for instance, earlier mistake Woodhall to refer to the "wide space like a hall, roofed by the boughs of trees" (*LotR* I.3.82) where the Hobbits rested together with Gildor's company), or because Nagel's reading differs from the reader's, such as is the case with his and my reading of both Haysend and Crickhollow, which Nagel claims are settlements (more than a single house) despite there being more than a mile from the house that Frodo bought "at Crickhollow" to the nearest other house, and Tolkien explaining Haysend simply as "Sc. the end of the *hay* or boundary hedge" in his "Nomenclature" (772).

In his entry on the Bonfire Glade, Nagel mentions the possibility of a Hobbit tongue-in-cheek joke referring to a celebratory fire, and I would offer the idea that, with the sentient trees of the Old Forest, we could possibly speak of funeral fire, or even of a fire made of the bones of the trees, taking us back to the original meaning, "bone-fire" (161n) which Nagel also mentions. When discussing, in the entry for Buck Hill, the difference between downs and hills, Nagel suggests that the Hills of Scary may be an exception, which surprised me somewhat, as I wouldn't think that "downs" would be appropriate for any hills in rocky country (presumably granite), as Nagel had already described the area around Scary and Quarry.

Despite referring to "the many philological jests found in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" (3) Nagel is more hesitant to claim to have found one of these than some other Tolkien linguists, for which I would praise Nagel: I

sometimes find that claims to have discovered yet another such “philological jest” stretch believability beyond breaking-point. Instead Nagel lets the reader share his joy of these clever and amusing word-games for their own sake (and I certainly do that), without feeling the need to justify his love of convoluted, and sometimes multilingual, philology.

The only grievous deficiency in this book is the lack of an index—or rather, indices. The lack of indices prevents a reader from using the book for quick reference. This is aggravated by Nagel’s decision to split the place-names of the Shire into categories such that the category is not always obvious. With a set of indices for Tolkienian names, for real-world names, for name elements, and for the German names, this book would have been a sure addition to the ‘within reach’ shelves of my Tolkien collection as I would certainly have found myself referring often to its pages. As it is, I will not find it near as useful, though I still expect to refer to it occasionally and perhaps with increasing frequency as my familiarity with the book grows.

Despite this grievance, I nonetheless found the book enjoyable, and will recommend it to anyone interested in Tolkien’s application of his philological specialty in his sub-creative writings, or anyone who just love words and the games we play with them.

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—Troels Forchhammer



THE BROKEN SCYTHE: DEATH AND IMMORTALITY IN THE WORKS OF J.R.R. TOLKIEN. Edited by Roberto Arduini and Claudio A. Testi. Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2012. xxviii + 252pp. \$24.30. ISBN 9783905703269.

A TRANSLATION OF A WORK ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ITALY AS *La Falce spezzata. Morte e immortalità in J.R.R. Tolkien* (2009), the twenty-sixth volume of the Comrarè Series from Walking Tree Publishers is a collection of nine essays focusing explicitly on what Tolkien declared in at least three of his *Letters* to be

the central theme of *The Lord of the Rings*, at least for him. A portion of one excerpt is included on the rear of the book, and is expanded here:

I do not think that even Power or Domination is the real centre of my story. It provides the theme of a War, about something dark and threatening enough to seem at that time of supreme importance, but that is mainly 'a setting' for characters to show themselves. The real theme for me is about something much more permanent and difficult: Death and Immortality: the mystery of the love of the world in the hearts of a race 'doomed' to leave and seemingly lose it; the anguish in the hearts of a race 'doomed' not to leave it, until its whole evil-aroused story is complete. (*Letters*, 246)

Decrying a lack of scholarly focus on this remark and the themes it invokes, *The Broken Scythe* presents itself as both a remedy and an invitation, analyzing some of the many, many roles played by death, fatality, deathlessness, and other issues of mortality in Tolkien's various writings. In keeping with the remarkably international scope of both publisher and series, *The Broken Scythe* is the work of eight Italian scholars, having been submitted for publication in Italian and assessed by "some truly polyglot members of the Board of Advisors" (i). The formal translator(s) is/are uncredited; the English is good, with only a preposition or two ringing off-tune. Series editor Thomas Honegger nevertheless stresses in his preface that the Englished product "does not deny its origin in the Italian tradition," as well as in the specific study-groups which gave rise to the project (i). It should be stressed that, as a specimen of this tradition, *The Broken Scythe* demonstrates no formal and analytical practices that might prove disorienting to those from Anglo-American traditions. The essays are well-structured and supported, and show idiosyncrasy primarily in their footnoting of informal material, such as emails.

Verlyn Flieger provides a brief preface, outlining each of the collection's essays after reflecting upon the themes of death and loss common to both *The Lord of the Rings* and, as Tolkien argued in his "Monsters and the Critics" lecture, *Beowulf*. Applying Tolkien's argument to his own magnum opus, she argues that these themes are what set *both* works beyond critics' charges of puerility and whimsy, and that the fantasy elements are a vehicle, mere but essential, for the conveyance of the texts' deepest meanings:

For all its beer-and-mushrooms hobbitry, its epic battles and fairy tale adventures in mysterious woods, the real strength of *The Lord of the Rings* resides in its dark side, its concern—carried over from its parent mythology of *The Silmarillion*—with death and deathlessness. (xxiv)

Flieger goes on to welcome the essays of *The Broken Scythe* as being “part of a current and very welcome wave in Tolkien criticism,” one that moves way from traditional critical issues, as well as involving works beyond *The Lord of the Rings* (xxiv).

Beginning the collection is Franco Manni’s “A Eulogy of Finitude: Anthropology, Eschatology and Philosophy of History in Tolkien.” As much an open discussion as a study, the paper seeks to give some formal philosophical and theological context (including, but beyond that of Christianity) to considerations and presentations of death, the purpose of life, and the Afterlife across Tolkien’s writings, including both his *legendarium* and biographical material. The paper, which presents itself as a potential source-study, finds difficulties in the paucity of explicit philosophical language among Tolkien’s writings, as well as the scarcity of works of philosophy within his personal library and literary canon of expertise. This formal absence will seem inconsequential to many, as Tolkien’s works are demonstrably and profoundly philosophical—for that, some of this paper’s positions seem overcautious and sometimes overlook the crucial distinctions between the various fictional and nonfictional contexts of Tolkien’s writings. As the paper recognizes, Tolkien was capable of representing many different voices and perspectives among his fictional characters, some of which he personally disagreed with (31); any alleged correspondence between these perspectives and Tolkien’s own, much less those of contemporary philosophers, must answer as much to literary contexts as to epistemological ones. For this, the paper’s consideration of “Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth” from *Morgoth’s Ring* is excellent, demonstrating philosophical perspectives internal to the world of the *legendarium*, as well as the philosophy inherent in philology. Though there is some loss of coherence due to its scope, the paper works very well as a lecture, with many useful and interesting elements—including considerations of love, free will, “finiteness,” and experience—rising from its breadth.

Next is co-editor Claudio A. Testi’s first of two papers in this collection, “Tolkien’s *legendarium* as a *meditatio mortis*,” which demonstrates a solid grasp of the literary contexts, creative processes, internal beliefs, and external significance of Tolkien’s fictional cosmos. The paper is rigorously researched and organized by numerated sections, looking at death and immortality among Elves and among Men separately, and across five different stages:

- I. 1917-25 (“The First Unsorted Ideas” [*The Book of Lost Tales*, first versions of poems on Túrin, and Beren & Lúthien])
- II. 1926-37 (“The First Elucidations” [“Ainulindalë,” “Quenta Noldorinwa,” “Quenta Silmarillion,” “The Annals of Valinor,” “The

- Annals of Beleriand," *The Hobbit*, early version of "The Fall of Númenor"])
- III. 1937-56 ("The Stabilization of Ideas" ["*The Lord of the Rings*," "The Fall of Númenor," "The Drowning of Anadûnê," "Later Quenta Silmarillion," "Annals of Aman," "Grey Annals," three versions of "Ainulindalë," rewriting of Túrin's story]).
 - IV. 1957-60 ("The Highest Point of Tolkien's Thought" [story of Finwë and Míriel, elaborations on "Later Quenta Silmarillion," "The Laws and Customs among the Eldar," "Aman," "Athrabeth Finrod Ah Andreth," "Converse between Manwë and Eru," commentary on "Athrabeth Finrod Ah Andreth," essay on reincarnation of the Elves])
 - V. 1961-73 ("Hints of Confirmation" ["no significant development on themes of death and immortality" [42]])

The paper's presentation of the *legendarium* as a *meditatio mortis* is based on the suggestion that modern humankind now faces the prospect of "making human life indefinitely long and young, in one word to gaining immortality" (39). Through considering the respective mortalities and fates of Elves and Men in Arda—as well as the creative processes through which they evolved in Tolkien's mind—Testi concludes that "[t]he more death is looming on the horizon of our lives, the more we open ourselves to a brighter and ultimate hope, whereas the more we ban death from our lives and look for perennial longevity, the deeper we sink into the darkest despair" (68). Due to the mechanical format of the essay body, the foreword and conclusion serve more as decorated bookends than as integrated statements, but the essay is enormously useful as a research tool on its topic.

Co-editor Roberto Arduini's "Tolkien, Death and Time: The Fairy Story within the Picture" presents a rather casual consideration of death and time as they appear—as individual words as well as themes—in some of Tolkien's creative and autobiographical works, as well as in Humphrey Carpenter's biography. References to and citations of contemporary philosophers, particularly Freud, are made in an attempt to frame Tolkien's sensitivity to mortal themes as a consequence of his involvement in the First World War—the sensitivity seems defensible, the pertinence of Freud not so much. The title of the paper comes from a review of *Tree and Leaf*, including an interpretation of the sub-creative theories of "On Fairy-Stories" as an escape from death and an explanation of their processes in "Leaf by Niggle." Tom Shippey has done this twice now, and Arduini cites these precedents heavily; his own contribution is to elaborate its aspect of consolation, especially as it pertains to the artist's concern with time and the completion of his art. Of Niggle's painting, Arduini claims that "it is quite obvious that the Tree is the *Lord of the Rings* (or perhaps a completely

finished and integrated version of the entire story of Arda)" (93); he concludes the essay with a review of the poem "Mythopoiea," arguing that it too demonstrates Tolkien's concern with death and time.

Lorenzo Gammarelli's "On the Edge of the Perilous Realm" is a shorter (14-page) essay which seeks to "extract [...] the theme of loss, or bereavement" from fourteen of Tolkien's shorter and lesser-known works, all of which might be considered fairy-tales (103). These are *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son*, "Leaf by Niggle," "The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun," "Imram," the poems of *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, *Smith of Wootton Major*, and "Bilbo's Last Song." Though the essay warns that its approach will result "inevitably in a heterogeneous essay" (103), the paper appears more like a catalogue, with the treatment of each work—sometimes only a couple of sentences—appearing under its headword. The paper begins with a section "In Praise of Shortness," which argues, in essence, that these works are better subjects for thematic analysis than, say, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, being more concentrated in their themes than longer writings, and less likely to support multiple interpretations. Another preface, "The Perilous Realm," considers Tolkien's definition of Faërie; its relevance is to the following works as types of fairy-tale, but its inclusion seems unnecessary. Actual treatment of the works seems light, amounting largely to origin and plot summary. Even where a sizeable amount of attention has been given, as with *Smith of Wootton Major*, the approach remains descriptive. In all, the paper seems to serve a collective function in *The Broken Scythe*, filling out the corners by involving Tolkien's shortest and least-known works.

Alberto Ladavas's "The Wrong Path of the Sub-creator: from the Fall to the Machine and the Escape from Mortality" considers the Númenóreans and the Ringwraiths specifically, two excellent case studies for analyzing themes of death and immortality. Citing from a pair of Tolkien's *Letters* which declare themes of mortality and immortality in the *legendarium* (no. 203 and 131), the paper attempts to demonstrate in its subjects a "possessive attitude, wish for immortality in order to enjoy it as long as possible and the consequent rebellion against divine laws" (118). This paper's obvious weakness is its foremost strength; it is likely because the thesis is self-evident that the writing is so enjoyable, and the consideration of evidence seamless and uncontrived. Ladavas's review of the fall of Númenor adheres exclusively to Tolkien's own material. His analysis of the Nine includes elements from Augustine's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and the Old Norse-Icelandic legend of Þiðrandi, both of which bring a Christian perspective—unnecessary but not indecorous—to the examination.

Simone Bonechi's "In the Mounds of Mundburg': Death, War and Memory in Middle-earth" is a historical source study, relating "as far as

possible" the burial and commemorative practices of Britain during the First and Second World Wars to the funeral rites found in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* (155). With the overwhelming prominence of wars and war-dead in both worlds—that is, Primary and Secondary—a comparison of the commemorative practices of each seems thematically justifiable, at least. When it comes to describing the actual influence of the two wars, particularly the Great War, on Tolkien's creative works, Bonechi's position is wisely conventional: they must have played a role, absolutely, but such an influence is very difficult to quantify. As in John Garth's *Tolkien and the Great War*, to which the paper refers, the parallels remain largely implicit, and the portion dealing with the rites of Middle-earth specifically might stand alone with little revision. One of the best-written pieces of *The Broken Scythe*, the paper's consideration of evidence concludes that

while in post-war Britain the commemoration reached an equilibrium between the will to celebrate the dead collectively and the need to respect their individual identity, adopting a uniform headstone and engraving it with name and regiment of the fallen or remembering the names of the missing by writing them on special memorials, in Middle-earth we have the total identification of the fallen with his symbolic role, at least among Men and Elves. (146)

There are, in other words, no commemorative celebrations of individuals, only of their roles in great events. Such seemingly forgotten private details are, nevertheless, reserved for the greater glory of Tolkien's own narrative—"acts of unsung sacrifice and the incurable wounds of Frodo" whose subtlety and moral dimension undermine the military agency which Sauron and his minions are able share with their heroic combatants (153).

Andrea Monda's "Death, Immortality and their Escapes: Memory and Longevity" focuses on particularly long-lived characters and races—*longaevi*—and how they exemplify what Tolkien identified in his *Letters* (284) as the 'escapes': serial longevity, and hoarding memory" (156). The paper begins with a consideration of *longaevitas* as it is ascribed to fairy creatures of C.S. Lewis's *The Discarded Image* and also to the long-lived races of the first three ages of Middle-earth. From there, the 'escapes' of memory and longevity provide the paper with a loose thread by which to consider the Elves, the Hobbits, the One Ring, Aragorn and Arwen, Denethor, Saruman, Treebeard, and Tom Bombadil, all of whom exemplify different aspects of the two. All are argued to be negative in some way—whether through sadness, misery, or downright evil—altogether amounting to the conclusion, explicit in the title, that death and immortality have no substitutes. The lengthy concluding section, however, seems to start work on

another paper, or at least to present contextualizing material which might have been better integrated into the preceding material.

Claudio A. Testi's second paper, "Logic and Theology in Tolkien's Thanatology" makes a dense and invaluable contribution to the collection in two ways: by further examining the "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" and by involving Catholic theology concerning death. The paper is to be commended for emphasizing and detailing aspects of Tolkien's Catholicism (183), which is easily overlooked by readers who do not share his faith, but which no doubt plays a major role in the themes examined by this collection. Testi's position, which deserves much deeper consideration than it will receive here, is that the thanatologies of both the "Athrabeth" and Catholic theology (primarily as developed in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas) evince aspects designated "natural" and "conformity to [divine] design." The two different conceptions of death presented and debated in the "Athrabeth" are subjected to a dialectical analysis, after which their thanatology is distilled and articulated before being compared to Catholic positions such as the original Goodness of the Earthly Paradise (a difference from the example of the Ainulindalë) and the three states of Humankind—pure, complete/noble, and decayed—which correspond to both examples. A chart is included which itemizes the essay's findings, as well as a conclusion that makes the crucial point that "Tolkien was neither a theologian nor a philosopher nor a logician. He was a philologist, a scholar and, above all, a man who, in his works, dealt with the great topics of human life, focusing most of all on the topic of death" (191).

The paper is a difficult act to follow for the final, topically intertwined essay "A Misplaced Envy: Analogies and Differences between Elves and Men on the Idea of Pain" by Giampaolo Canzonieri. The paper looks at the relationship between death and pain (both "inner" [i.e. grief] and physical), and "is centred on pain as a possible but neglected alternative to death as a source of resentment of Men against Elves" (204). Canzonieri first looks at the particular immunities and vulnerabilities of Elves, asking "why was the possibility of death from grief introduced as being among the inborn characteristics of a people who, in their Creator's original intentions, should never have known grief?" (198). His answers are that it serves both a literary purpose—essentially, to make a more interesting story—and a salvific one, allowing for inner growth as well as greater empathy with the Secondborn. The paper's consideration of physical pain is more open-ended, weighing the hardier constitution of Elves as a lesser point of envy for Men than their relative deathlessness. The paper concludes with a meditation on the relationship between pain and death for Men, arguing that death implies a "necessity of faith," differentiating Men from the Elves, who possess no uncertainty in their mortal fate. An illustrative case study is made of

Arwen Undómiel, and the liminal situation she faces as an Elf who abandons her native condition to be with her human husband.

Concluding with a consolidated bibliography (including a separate section dedicated to “Tolkien Studies Concerning Death and Immortality”) and comprehensive index, *The Broken Scythe* will be welcomed particularly by scholars seeking more specialized and theme-specific studies than those generated by the more holistic or dianoiac approaches which are conventional to Tolkien studies. At the same time, the collection provides constructive counterpoints to those opposed to such theme-parceling, with the occasionally disorienting slippage among such topics as death, deathlessness, timelessness, fate, and the purpose of a mortal existence challenging traditionalists to define and defend their generalized methodologies more thoroughly.

—Harley J. Sims



THE HOBBIT TAROT. Terry Donaldson (author of guide pamphlet) and Peter Pracownik (artist). Stamford, CT: U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 2012. 78-card deck and booklet. 96 pp. \$20.00 ISBN 9781572816770.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS TAROT DECK AND CARD GAME. Terry Donaldson (author of guidebook), Peter Pracownik (artist), and Mike Fitzgerald (game rules). Stamford, CT: U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 1997. 78-card deck, and book 272 pp. including b/w illus. of the cards, bibliography. Out of print. ISBN 1572810548.

THE HOBBIT TAROT (2012) AND *THE LORD OF THE RINGS TAROT Deck and Card Game* (1997), both based on J.R.R. Tolkien’s fiction, are among the hundreds of contemporary revisions of what was originally a Renaissance card game. First invented as a set of trumps added to a regular playing deck in fifteenth-century Italy, many of the original card images seem to have been adapted from carnivals and triumphal parades to satisfy the interests of their aristocratic patrons. In later centuries Tarot was popularized as a tool for fortune-telling, absorbed into various esoteric belief systems, and, most recently, reinvented for use in various meditative and creative exercises and as collectibles associated with popular myths, stories, activities, and so forth. The card designs and images have been adapted to suit these evolving artistic, didactic, and

market interests, so it is hardly surprising to find two of the most popular stories of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries adapted to the form. Terry Donaldson wrote the pamphlet for *The Hobbit Tarot* and the guidebook for the *LotR Tarot*; and Peter Pracownik provided the precisely rendered artwork for both decks. Donaldson and Pracownik also worked together on, among other projects, *The Dragon Tarot* (1996), and Donaldson wrote the guidebook for *The Lord of the Rings Oracle* (1998) with forty cards illustrated by Alice Englander. Each black-edged *Lord of the Rings* card has additional left and top borders rendered as cut stone and marked with a title, and a placard at the bottom to set off a brief description of the scene depicted in the center. The white edged *Hobbit* cards have labels on a band across the bottom, and, with less border and more space left for the pictures, most of the figures are larger than those in the *LotR* deck.

As adaptations of literature to Tarot, these two decks are far from unique. The *William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination* (1995; revised 2010), the *Tarot of Jane Austen* (2006), the *Shakespeare Tarot* (1993), and the *Wonderland Tarot* (1989) are just a few of the more popular of this type that come to mind. All such adaptations present challenges to the deck designer, as the characters and events of the narrative have to be assigned to cards with their own pre-existing associations and images. *The Hobbit* offers relatively few characters and events for this purpose, and thus there are some allocations that Tarot specialists may find less than satisfactory. For example, the Priestess card does not include a figure and Smaug appears repeatedly on the Devil, Tower, and World cards, as well as on the Ten of Wands. There are also a few inconsistencies, such as the illustration of the Aces of Coins, Cups, and Swords with prominent suit signs, and the Ace of Wands with Gandalf carrying a flaming staff. In addition, the Two and Three of Swords have no figures, while all of the other suit cards numbered two through ten do. The *LotR* offers the advantages of more characters, events, and mythic dimensions with which to fill the 78 cards and also more opportunities for interlacing elements from the earlier story. For example, the *LotR Tarot* Six of Swords shows Bilbo and the Dwarves escaping from the Elves in barrels, the Seven of Swords shows the Trolls fighting as the rising sun is about to turn them to stone, the Five of Wands shows the spiders in Mirkwood taking Bilbo's friends captive, the Six of Coins shows Bilbo discovering Smaug's treasure, and the Ten of Coins shows Smaug guarding his treasure.

Tolkien and Tarot readers alike may further appreciate the interpretive versatility and comparisons that arise when Tarot is used as a kind of template for two related stories. In the *LotR* deck, for example, Gollum is the solitary figure on the Fool; the matching *Hobbit Tarot* card shows Bilbo setting out from his home with a beggar's bundle tied to a stick over his shoulder. While Bilbo seems the more obvious fit to the familiar Tarot image of a happy hobo oblivious to the dangers of his environment and also seems to forecast the happy ending

that comes of his adventures—for him at least—it is perhaps Gollum's appearance on the card that more truly shows the dangers that threaten the cautious and cavalier alike. Gollum appears again with Sam and Frodo on the *LotR* Temperance card at the moment they capture him, and on the Eight of Cups as he leads them through the Dead Marshes. *The Hobbit Tarot* Temperance card shows the Goblins' war leader Bolg at the Battle of the Five Armies. The arrival of the Eagles and Beorn—who are shown on the Eight of Cups and Page of Coins of the *Hobbit* deck respectively—ensure the outcome Bilbo and Gandalf hope for. The treatment of Temperance and the Eight of Cups is quite different in each deck, but both cards are lent a positive narrative connection for the heroes.

In *The Hobbit Tarot* the placement of Gollum as the single figure on both the Hanged Man and Moon illustrates the prolonged and doomed life his possession of the ring has granted him. The *LotR* Hanged Man, on the other hand, shows Faramir as he is lowered onto a pyre. Unlike Gollum, Faramir resists the temptation to take control of the Ring, is eventually rescued, and ultimately drawn back into the world of the living by love. The *LotR* Moon card shows the Tower of Minas Ithil (Tower of the Rising Moon), which became the Tower of Minas Morgul (Tower of Black Sorcery) when the Ringwraiths took control of it. The emphasis on the dark aspects of the moon is indicated by the presence of two Orc Captains at the gate and by the arrangement of the signs of the moon's phases at the top of the card so that the darkest is directly over the Tower. The *Hobbit Tarot* Wheel of Fortune card shows Gollum and Bilbo engaged in their guessing game; but, in this deck's principal example of interlacing, the elvish words "one ring to rule them all" float in red letters in a circle around them. In the *LotR* deck, this same card shows a large image of the ring with a caption that reads "The Ring brings benefits, but eventually dominates. 'One Ring to Rule them all.'" Gollum is also featured perched on a rock admiring his ring on the *Hobbit Tarot* Six of Cups, a card given over to Pippin and Merry's celebrations after the fall of Orthanc in the *LotR* deck.

Dedicated Tolkien readers may, at first glance, find the reduction of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* to card-sized images and labels a serious diminution of the original literature, and the dedicated Tarot reader may respond dismissively to the reduction of Tarot to the specifics of particular narratives, but closer examination of the re-envisioned decks shows some effective dramatizations and elucidations of the qualities and characters of both the Tarot figures and symbols and of the stories aligned with them. And it remains to be seen whether or not there is a future for these particular decks in the hands of cartomancers and esotericists.

—Emily A Auger

J.K. ROWLING: HARRY POTTER. Edited by Cynthia J. Hallett and Peggy J. Huey. New Casebooks series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. \$23.00. ISBN 9780230008502.

PALGRAVE'S NEW CASEBOOKS SERIES is designed to introduce university students to a variety of critical approaches to a given author. Other children's authors included in this series are Roald Dahl and C.S. Lewis, neither of which have yet been reviewed in *Mythlore*. If this particular collection is representative, they are worth seeking out.

Siân Harris's "Glorious Food? The Literary and Culinary Heritage of the *Harry Potter* Series" is an interesting examination of food, food preparation, and eating in the Harry Potter books. Rowling's food themes place her in the British children's literature tradition of Enid Blyton's boarding school stories and Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. However, on closer examination, there are disturbing elements to food in the Potterworld: traditional English fare is privileged over multicultural variety, and food is always prepared by women (Petunia Dursley, Molly Weasley, Hermione Granger) or house-elf slaves. Food itself, though, is a source of comfort; in the wizarding world, as opposed to the Muggle, Harry "encounters adults who nurture him literally and psychologically" (16).

Next, Anne Klaus takes issue with critics who read the Harry Potter books as simplistic fairy tales, most notably Jack Zipes, though she admits there was less of this sort of criticism after the fifth volume was published. Her arguments against this view include "the length and multi-dimensionality" of the series (25), the sacrifices made by many characters, and especially the growing complexity, "moral conscience," and "self-reflexivity" of both primary and secondary characters (27). (In fact, the reader is clearly "invited [...] to sympathize" [30] with the secondary characters as much as with the protagonist.) One interesting observation Klaus makes is that complex feelings and "psychological phenomena" are externalized in metaphorical objects like the Mirror of Erised (26-7).

Robert T. Tally, Jr. (who wrote on orcs for *Mythlore* 29.1/2, #111/112) argues that the Harry Potter books as a series form a *Bildungsroman* well suited to the postmodern era, a time of "anxieties and uncertainties" (38). A central lesson of Harry's *Bildung* is that what seems to be dictated by destiny and prophecy always comes down to the choices characters make. Tally makes an interesting point about the narrator of the series; for the most part, the narrator "looks over Harry's shoulder" (40) and shares his perspective, except for the initial chapters of four of the books, which serve as prologues. Harry's *Bildung* is about building community; Harry learns he cannot make it on his own. In opposition, "Voldemort's unwillingness to integrate himself into society is what, in the end,

prevents him from both knowing and ruling that society" (42). Like the classic *Bildungsroman*, the *Harry Potter* series "educates as it entertains" (46).

Fran Pheasant-Kelly's "Bewitching, Abject, Uncanny" is the longest and most theory-dense essay in this volume, incorporating ideas from Kristeva's theory of the abject and Freud's thoughts on the uncanny, among others. She focuses primarily on the role of space and place in the movies, and asserts that "the different capacities of the visual medium afford certain emphases not available in the novels" (48). Beginning with the contrast between the "repressive, confined space that Harry occupies" at the Dursley house and the fantastic spaces of the wizarding world (49), Pheasant-Kelly ties these themes in with audience anxieties about 9/11 (imagery of "falling bodies, smoke, and shattering glass" 70) and the war on terror. Harry's "increasingly masterful negotiation of threatening spaces signals a steady transition to adulthood" (55). Her analysis suggest that themes, camera angles, lighting strategies, set design and other elements of *mise-en-scene* reflect concerns like torture, economic recession, genocide, PTSD, national security, and paranoia.

Compatibility theory, as explained by Charlotte M. Fouque in her reading of Rowling, attempts to find a balance between free will and determinism; to reconcile freedom of choice with fate or destiny. In the *Harry Potter* series, the Sorting Hat is a good illustration of this problem; students are destined, through bloodlines or personality, to assignment in one of the four Houses at Hogwarts, yet Harry asserts his choice and is placed in Gryffindor rather than Slytherin. In the course of the series there are other objects, incidents, and prophecies that tie his fate to Voldemort's. In spite of Dumbledore's statement that "it is our choices [...] that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities" (qtd. 76), Harry's choices seem to be predetermined. The essay, like the series, leaves the essential conflict between free will and fate unresolved, and presents a different interpretation than Tally's essay, above.

In "Dumbledore's Ethos of Love," Lykke Guiano-Uluru prefaces her discussion with the idea that literature can influence the reader's morality. Love is given a privileged place in the *Harry Potter* series and is considered the most powerful force in the world. Dumbledore's strategy of concealing vital information from those he loves is presented as problematic and undercuts his reliability and authority, thus "deconstruct[ing] Dumbledore as the stable ethical center of the Potter universe" (85). Dumbledore's dilemma is due in part to the essential "tension between favoring someone in particular versus the impartiality that Dumbeldore feels ought to guide his actions" (87). This tension leads to ambiguities in Dumbledore's relationships with Harry, Snape, and Voldemort which leave "a slightly bitter aftertaste, ethically speaking" (95).

Em McEvan's illuminating essay "*Harry Potter* and the Origins of the Occult" is an analysis of the (primarily) American evangelical Protestant criticism of the *Harry Potter* series as representing or encouraging a dangerous tolerance for the witchcraft and the occult. American evangelicalism, in the author's view, is characterised by conversion narratives, a need for scapegoating, and antagonism towards the Other that find in the *Harry Potter* series two particular dangers: occult or satanic practices in the text itself, and the text as an instrument for "letting Satan into the reader's heart" (105). *Harry Potter*, then, provides the evangelical community with a focus for antagonism and action that draws the community together.

Marcus Schulzke's "*Wizard's Justice and Elf Liberation*" suggests that reading the *Harry Potter* series is a political education for the reader, particularly the young reader who, like Harry, "begin[s] the series naively" (111) and learns "a skeptical attitude about politics, the encouragement of resistance, and the dilemma of how to mobilize support for a controversial cause" (112). Yet the series refuses to come down solidly on the side of liberalism or conservatism, instead encouraging a nuanced attitude towards all views. If there is a political lesson to be learned, it is, in Schulzke's view, "the duty of ordinary people to take a stand against abuses of power" (115). This lesson is, in the books, complicated and problematized by the paradox of Hermione's attempts to liberate the house-elves in opposition to their own attitude towards their servitude.

Issues of race in the *Harry Potter* series are not addressed through skin color (it's a very homogenously white world) so much as through magical ability and parentage—whether one is of pure wizarding stock, has a Muggle parent or parents, or is a "squib" of wizarding ancestry but unable to perform spells. Half-bloods belong fully to neither world, and their coping strategies reflect the "advantages, difficulties, and tragedies" of real-world biracial individuals (124). Tess Stockslager's paper considers three examples: Seamus Finnegan, who is entirely matter-of-fact about his half-bloodedness but also reflects the "uneasy position [of the Irish] on the boundaries of English society (125); Severus Snape, the "Half-Blood Prince," who accepts his status and makes strategic use of his ability to negotiate both worlds in service of the greater good; and Tom Riddle, whom Stockslager designates a "half-blood racist" (129), who tries to expunge his heritage and "pass" as a full-blooded wizard. Of interest to Tolkien readers, though left unexplored in this article, is the fact that in all three cases, it is the mother who is of magical heritage, just as in Tolkien's human-elf crosses.

Clyde Partin, a doctor and professor, writes a very interesting review of the place of the medical arts in the *Harry Potter* series. Rowling uses illness and its treatment in a number of ways. Some of her invented afflictions can be read metaphorically or have parallels in the real world. Inheritance patterns for

magical talent, as Stockslager demonstrated, depart intriguingly from Mendelian genetics in certain ways. On a more straightforward level, Rowling's world-building incorporates medical training in potions and herbs (based on medieval models), medical care in the Hogwarts infirmary and the more specialized hospital, St. Mungos's, and regulatory and licensing agencies. Left out is the sort of home care provided by Mrs. Weasley on a domestic level, or Hermione while the trio is in hiding from Voldemort; there's room for some future work there.

Roslyn Weaver and Kimberley McMahon-Coleman go some way towards addressing this lack in their paper on mothers in the *Harry Potter* books as "Lioness, Witch, and Wardrobe." What they reference by this deliberately evocative title is, first, the lioness-like mothers who fiercely protect their children, even sacrificing their own lives, like Lily Potter or Tonks Lupin. Witch mothers neglect or reject their children "physically or morally" (153) or provide bad and selfish moral examples, like Petunia Dursley, Merope Gaunt, or Narcissa Malfoy. "Wardrobe," for these authors, stands for a mother who provides physical and moral nurturing, like Professor McGonagall or the more traditional Molly Weasley. The paper ends with a consideration of Rowling herself as a mother and a daughter.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Harry Potter phenomenon was Rowling's post-publication revelation, in an interview, that Albus Dumbledore was homosexual. Jim Daems analyzes the ways that "without textual support for Rowling's claim, positive readings are trapped within negative stereotypes" (163). This is a challenging and provocative essay dense with allusions to queer theory. One point to consider is the relationship between authorial intent and the manuscript itself; in this case, with no textual support, Rowling's statement now means Dumbledore has to be re-read as entirely closeted in the Potterverse. Dumbledore's silent queerness in a broader sense reinforces negative stereotypes already attached to the books, as Em McEvan's paper showed, by evangelical Christian critics. It also reinforces the problematic and far too common "tragic dead homosexual" trope.

Pamela Ingleton's chapter takes on some of the same issues but from the perspective of authorship theories. What does Rowling's announcement about Dumbledore's sexuality (as well as other "extratextual" revelations) mean about authorial attempts to manage the reception and interpretation of one's work? In Barthean fashion, Rowling appears to fear the "death of the author" and loss of control over the reader. Ingleton juxtaposes Rowling's "nineteen years later" closing chapter of the final *Harry Potter* book with the way Arthur Conan Doyle killed off Sherlock Holmes in an attempt to make sure no one else could write a sequel. The chapter examines several other theories of authorship and issues of fan appropriation; while generally tolerant of fan fiction, Rowling famously sued to prevent the publication of a fan-written reference book on her works. Her

website venture, *Pottermore*, is seen as a further attempt to circumscribe approved extratextual interpretation of the *Potter* series.

The volume concludes with a useful annotated bibliography of further reading and an index. The collection is well suited for its intended audience; while many of the essays offer useful insights for any reader, they also provide a sound introduction to literary theory in general, applied to texts with which many of today's students grew up.

—Janet Brennan Croft



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