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## Reviews

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## Online Winter Seminar



### Online Winter Seminar

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Via Zoom and Discord

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### Abstract

*Tolkien and Shakespeare: Essays on Shared Themes and Language*. Ed. Janet Brennan Croft. Reviewed by Emily E. Auger.

*The Evolution of Tolkien's Mythology: A Study of the History of Middle-Earth*. Elizabeth A. Whittingham. Reviewed by David Bratman.


*Charles Williams: Alchemy and Integration*. Gavin Ashenden. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

*The History of The Hobbit. Part One: Mr. Baggins; Part Two: Return to Bag-End*. John D. Rateliff. Reviewed by Jason Fisher.

*Past Watchful Dragons: Fantasy and Faith in the World of C. S. Lewis*. Ed. Amy H. Sturgis. Reviewed by John D. Rateliff.

### Authors

Emily E. Auger, Joe R. Christopher, Janet Brennan Croft, Jason Fisher, John D. Rateliff, and David Bratman



## REVIEWS

**TOLKIEN AND SHAKESPEARE: ESSAYS ON SHARED THEMES AND LANGUAGE.** Ed. Janet Brennan Croft. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2007. 327 pp. \$35.00. ISBN-13: 978-0-7864-2827-4. (Orders [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com) or 800-253-2187).

THIS LATEST ANTHOLOGY OF ESSAYS on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien is the second edited by Janet Brennan Croft, the first being *Tolkien on Film: Essays on Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings* (2004). It is also the second in the series of *Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy* edited by Donald E. Palumbo and C.W. Sullivan III, which thus far includes five volumes, the first on contemporary female dystopias and the latter three on the *Star Wars* films, *Star Trek*, and Hugo Gernsback. The presence of a book dedicated to Shakespearean influences on and comparisons with Tolkien in such a series is one more proof of the Bard's perennial inspiration to the genres of popular culture, both literary and filmic. This accolade is reason enough to put *Tolkien and Shakespeare: Essays on Shared Themes and Language* on more than a few recommended reading lists; the number of papers in this collection not based on subjects already identified by eminent Tolkien scholar Thomas Shippey (*J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, 2001, and *The Road to Middle Earth*, 1983; revised and expanded edition 2003), is another.

Croft has divided the volume's eighteen essays, all completed by lists of cited text and internet sources, into four groupings: Faërie, Power, Magic, and the Other. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is by far the most popular Shakespearean point of reference for the authors of the Faërie section, but they offer the reader far more than predictable character comparisons. Allegra Johnston finds Tolkien's use of Norse and Anglo-Saxon mythical traditions apparent in his dignified and frequently heroic Elf characters, all of whom contrast sharply with the whimsical lightweights more commonly found in Shakespeare's plays. Jessica Burke finds the Victorian literary and artistic expansion on Shakespeare's diminutive Faërie a more powerful, albeit even more negative, inspiration for Tolkien than Shakespeare's own work. Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario has discovered numerous points of comparison between the rather "English" craftsmen of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Hobbits, including geographical displacement, hairiness,

interest in the transformation of current events into stories for re-telling, and romance; this latter point is developed with reference to Aragorn whom Tolkien originally portrayed as a Hobbit. Romuald I. Lakowski lends his research skills to the influences common to both authors including Warwickshire and various medieval sources and motifs, particularly the “meeting with the hideous hag” which he makes the basis of an extensive comparison of Titania and Galadriel.

The section on Power begins with Daniel Timmons’ timely discussion of the frequent, though by no means unanimous, negative critical responses to the presentation of war in *Lord of the Rings* and the consistent approval of supportive representations of the same theme in *Henry V* in the context of twentieth-century military conflicts. Kayla McKinney Wiggins draws out the themes of revenge and Machiavellian methods of rule, as well as those of fate and fatalism and chaos and order, as points of comparison between the princes of *Lord of the Rings* and *Hamlet*. Leigh Smith’s essay on the influences and parallels between *King Lear*’s plot, definition of good kingship, disguise, and the complex treatment of good and evil and *Lord of the Rings* is unquestionably one of the most thorough and well argued in the collection. Timmons, Wiggins, and Smith all give research credit to Croft’s book *War and the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (2004).

The other three papers on Power address it in relation to inheritance and heroism. Judith J. Kollman uses Gandalf’s “All that is gold does not glitter” recommendation of Strider/Aragorn to the Hobbits as the basis for an extended comparison between the rightful heir of Gondor and Hal/Henry V. Annalisa Castaldo argues that Shakespeare provided Tolkien with his most important literary models for portraying history and, more specifically, for his conception of the non-aristocratic hero. Anne C. Petty’s comparison of the cathartic realizations of the seductive and corrupting nature of power by Thorin Oakenshield in *The Hobbit*, Denethor in *Lord of the Rings*, and Fëanor in *The Silmarillion* with that experienced by Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Richard III provides a well thought out conclusion to this section.

There are, regrettably, only three essays on Magic: Nicholas Ozment’s fascinating discussion of Elizabethan and twentieth-century attitudes towards magic with reference to Prospero and Gandalf; Frank P. Riga’s comparison of Merlin, Prospero, Saruman, and Gandalf; and Croft’s own analysis of the reappearance of motifs from *Macbeth* in different form in *Lord of the Rings*.

The five essays in the section on the Other begin with Maureen Thum’s identification of carnival strategies, such as masking, as methods used to subvert traditional gender roles, specifically those of women in *Twelfth Night* and *Lord of the Rings*. Charles Keim and Robert Gehl both compare Gollum and Othello, but where Keim emphasizes the psychological aspects of the two characters, Gehl places his discussion in the context of racism, giving attention to Shakespeare’s and Tolkien’s respective developments of location in Venice and the Shire and

portrayals of their main characters' fetishistic attachments to Desdemona and the Ring. Anna Fähræus considers Tolkien's Men, distinguished from his Elves in *The Silmarillion* and *Lord of the Rings* by their mortality and its attendant ambition, in relation to Shakespeare's, particularly those in *Richard II* and *Richard III*. Lisa Hopkins considers Tolkien's interests in evolution and in the passing of cultural authority from Troy to Rome to England as factors contributing to the likenesses between Sam's relationship with Gollum and Ariel's with Caliban. The uniqueness of this primary discussion notwithstanding, Hopkins' unexpected comparison of Gollum and Dracula is not only the high point of her essay, it also suggests a third reason to recommend this anthology to Tolkien readers and that is its forays into topics and territories that, while suggesting Shakespearean "influences" at work, go beyond the specific Tolkien-Shakespeare comparison implied by the anthology title.

—Emily E. Auger



**THE EVOLUTION OF TOLKIEN'S MYTHOLOGY: A STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF MIDDLE-EARTH.** Elizabeth A. Whittingham. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2008. 220 pp. \$35.00. 978-0-7864-3281-3. (Orders [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com) or 800-253-2187).

TOLKIEN'S WORKS TAKE TIME TO ABSORB. Although perceptive articles about *The Lord of the Rings* had appeared almost from the beginning, it was some fifteen years after publication before serious full book-length scholarship about that work began to be published.

Something similar may be said about *The History of Middle-earth*. Christopher Tolkien's twelve-volume survey of the *Silmarillion* *legendarium*, his father's lifework, was completed in 1996, but full-scale literary surveys of it are only now beginning to appear. Elizabeth A. Whittingham is not the first scholar to have written perceptively on the *History*, though. Verlyn Flieger, whom she cites frequently, set the standard for scholarship on the series with her study of time-travel elements in Tolkien in *A Question of Time* (1997), and followed it with a full-length meditation on the framing of the series in *Interrupted Music* (2005). But Whittingham's work, as she notes, is more in the footsteps of Christina Scull's essay "The Development of Tolkien's *Legendarium*" in Flieger and Carl F. Hostetter's collection *Tolkien's Legendarium* (2000).

The core of Whittingham's book is a series of essays logically progressing through the major themes of the texts of the *History*: its cosmogony (the creation in the *Ainulindalë*), theogony (the pantheon of Valar in the *Valaquenta*), cosmology, thanatology (death and immortality among Elves and Men), and eschatology.

Not only does this procession of impressive Greek words show the seriousness of the topics that Tolkien addressed, but it roughly follows, in a logical order, both ways in which the series under discussion is the history of Middle-earth: the order of events in the *Silmarillion*, and the order in which Tolkien wrote about them. Each topic is considered for the whole of Tolkien's career, but in general the earlier chapters concentrate on early work in *The Book of Lost Tales*, while the last chapters concentrate on late work.

Each chapter begins with a summary of the topic's treatment in Biblical and mythological sources that may be presumed to have inspired Tolkien, and then turns to Tolkien's own treatment of the matter. Each subject is structurally different in Tolkien's writing—the cosmogony all gathered in the *Ainulindalë*, the cosmology scattered about—so Whittingham deals with each differently. But she depicts the general structure of Tolkien's created thought with some skill and command of the disparate material. To some extent she traces its progression and evolution as well. Sometimes this bogs down somewhat in details of minor wording changes, but for the most part Whittingham stays above this, examining not just the factual evolution of Tolkien's story but the stylistic evolution as well. Though generally sketchy and low on detail, this consideration of style is a real achievement, as this topic—requiring a command of the whole body of the *History*—has attracted little previous comment

Whittingham's broadest observation is that the sub-creation evolved from one modeled on pagan mythology to one more closely resembling Biblical theology. This context is particularly useful in discussing the Valar as beings whose nature lies between pagan gods and Biblical angels. She also shows us Tolkien evolving from mythographer to philosopher, slowly leaching female power out of the story and then beginning to restore it, dealing with the literary as well as the cosmological effects of the Round World story, and balancing his pessimistic nature and his ultimately optimistic theology.

Repetition is an occasional problem in this book, but the only serious distraction is Whittingham's repeated use of phrases like "final text" to describe particular versions of Tolkien's stories. As she clearly understands, there is no final version of anything in the *Silmarillion*, only a last version, so the term is misleading.

The book begins with a superfluous biographical chapter, which apart from an interesting digression into C.S. Lewis's influence on *The Lay of Leithian* (a theme not otherwise much taken up in the book), says little about how Tolkien

went about writing the *Silmarillion* or what went into it. This could just as easily have been dropped. In her Introduction, Whittingham postulates a six-period division of Tolkien's creative work on this material, but outside of the chapter on death and immortality she makes little use of it.

There is much room for examination of the literary style and value of *The History of Middle-earth*. This book marks a good start.

— David Bratman



**CHARLES WILLIAMS: ALCHEMY AND INTEGRATION.** Gavin Ashenden. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2008. xii + 275 pp. \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-87338-781-1.

ASHENDEN'S IS A BASIC BOOK on Williams's neo-Rosicrucian and Q'abalistic concepts, developed from A.E. Waite and his (pro-Christian) Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. Williams, it is pointed out, tended to say he had joined the Order of the Golden Dawn, but instead he had been an active member of the Fellowship from 1917 to 1927. Perhaps Williams's use of "Golden Dawn" was because it was better known and had attracted such luminaries as Yeats and Evelyn Underhill, thus being more prestigious, as Ashenden suggests (4); but it also may have been because Williams took the secrecy of the Fellowship seriously—and thus misled inquirers.

Ashenden sums up the two major concepts Williams got from Waite: a refusal of duality in Christianity (e.g., body *vs.* soul), and an integration of romantic experiences into Christian beliefs (see Ashenden's "Conclusion," 232-35). But the book is long and complicated in its details.

It begins with a heavy dose of background: the first chapter, after some introductory material on Williams, turns into an account of A.E. Waite's life, starting from his late teens, moving from spiritualism to mysticism, with much about alchemy and the Q'abalah; and to histories of Rosicrucianism and the hermetic tradition, especially the Q'abalah. The second chapter brings these beliefs into their development in England, especially in the Temple of the Golden Dawn. Ashenden traces the upsets in the Temple, mainly that between those who believed in practicing magic and those who believed—with Waite—the rites were to be used only as aids to mysticism. (These conflicts are fairly well known to students of W.B. Yeats.) Waite by this time had published *The Real History of the*

*Rosicrucians* (1887) and was soon to publish *The Secret Doctrine in Israel* (1913)—the latter on the Q'abalah. He was to go on to publish books on the Church of the Holy Grail and on Alchemy. At this point (1903), he led a splinter group out of the Golden Dawn. This lasted until 1914, when it was dissolved. The next year Waite started the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross as an underlyingly Christian secret society. Ashenden calls it “a semignostic Christianizing of the adept with a focus on Q'abalistic immanence” (33).

The next chapter turns to Williams. Ashenden discusses his *Outlines of Romantic Theology* (begun 1924, pub. 1990) in light of two chapters in Waite's *Secret Doctrine* that treat marital sex as partaking “in the spirit of the celestial union” (44, Ashenden quoting Waite). Probably the reason that Williams never published his work was that its anti-divorce stance was complicated by the arrival of Phyllis Jones at Amen House in 1924 (discussed briefly, 53-54). By the way, since the influence of Coventry Patmore on both Waite and Williams is mentioned in this chapter (e.g., 49), let me insert that I suspect Williams's book was started as an attempt to recreate Patmore's *Sponsa Dei*, which was destroyed by its author.

The above describes the approach of Ashenden's book; more briefly I would now like to examine his treatment of other writings by Williams. The fourth chapter discusses *The Descent of the Dove*, with its balancing of the *Via Negativa* with the *Via Affirmativa*—the latter parallel to Williams's emphasis on the body in *The Theology of Romantic Love* and other works; it also ties the discussion of *Troilus and Cressida* (in *The English Poetic Mind*) into the crisis caused by Phyllis Jones. (The latter point has been made before.)

The fifth chapter discusses Williams's use of alchemical language and ideas in *Shadows of Ecstasy*, *The Chaste Wanton*, and *War in Heaven*. The sixth, the distinctions between the goetic, the theurgic, and the alchemical in *Witchcraft*. It should be explained that the emphasis on alchemy in these chapters relates to the transmutation not of lead to gold, but of an individual spiritually—sometimes to the transmutation of society. The seventh chapter is a more general discussion of the development in Williams's novels, involving Williams's denial of the physical and spiritual existing separately. The eighth chapter illustrates this development by consideration of *Descent into Hell* and *All Hallow's Eve*. The first two novels had antiheroes; these two have “mature Christianized” adepts (141).

The ninth chapter discusses the Arthurian poetry. The approach starts from the hermetic belief of parallelism between the microcosm and the macrocosm, as in Williams's essay “The Index of the Body.” This parallelism takes on religious emphases also—and mathematical emphases. Ashenden illustrates these points from the poems.

The long tenth chapter—called “The Quest for Integration”—deals with Phyllis Jones (“Celia”) and Williams's wife, Florence Conway (“Michal”).



Specifically Ashenden discusses "A Century of Poems for Celia" (written 1926-27) and Williams's later letters to Celia (1938-42)—the date of the last letter is given as 1943 on p. 190, but elsewhere is dated to 1942. (The dates of the poems are not completely certain [193-95]; Ashenden does not consider the possibility that the sequence may have been made up of poems written over more than two years, pretending to take place in a briefer period, as occurs with some sonnet sequences.) Ashenden dates the influence of Celia on Williams "as the controlling romantic and emotional myth" from 1926 to 1942 (193). In this he contradicts the usual biographies, which give an earlier ending. If one runs the dates from 1908 (Williams's meeting with Michal) to 1926 (eighteen years) and then these years (sixteen years), almost half of Williams's adult life was given over to Celia. (This does not count the final three years—a return to Michal for approximately twenty-one years total.)

Ashenden's purpose in this last chapter is to see how well Williams applied his beliefs in a "restitutive hermeticism" in his own life (190). Ashenden approaches this through the introduction to *The New Book of English Verse*, which discusses the "Celian moment" of seeing the beloved. "The influence of hermeticism blurred the false distinction between the secular and spiritual, between the material and the transcendent" (199). But Williams was not as successful in the poems of "A Century" in distinguishing between the spiritual potential and his erotic inclination. When Celia repels his sexual inclinations, he returns, in No. 178, "On the Knowledge of Love," "to the hermetic vision—romanticism infused with spirituality as mediated by the poets" (207). Other details can be left to the readers of the book.

This is a basic volume on a very important aspect of Williams's beliefs. It suggests where Williams started from (Waite's concepts), his development (especially in terms of the four novels discussed), and his problems applying his beliefs in his own life. Some readers will not be interested in the hermeticism and will avoid the area, finding other things of value in Williams; but this book suggests how involved in many of Williams's essential ideas his hermetic beliefs were.

A brief addendum on some minor problems. Ashenden may have experienced some delays in the publication of his book, for he describes Williams's World War II letters to his wife, *To Michal from Serge* (2002), as "only very recently published" (viii). For some reason, he does not know of the publication of *The Masques of Amen House* (2000), which preceded that volume of letters. Thus, Ashenden says "A Century" "has received no critical attention" (190)—but *The Masques* contains ten of the hundred poems in that sequence. It also contains a few other poems to or mentioning Celia which Ashenden does not note. Perhaps *The Masques* does not give "A Century" "critical attention," but certainly it explains the poems' context in Bernadette Lynn Bosky's introduction

(see p. 14). Also in Ashenden's volume, besides about a dozen minor typos, on p. 207 appears what seems to be two brief, repetitive discussions of "At Mass on Ascension Day." But all of these, as flaws, are trivial.

—Joe R. Christopher



**THE HISTORY OF THE HOBBIT. PART ONE: MR. BAGGINS; PART TWO: RETURN TO BAG-END.** John D. Rateliff. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. ISBN 978-0618968473, 978-0618969197. Hardcover. 905pp. \$70.00. [Also available in a boxed set with the 70th Anniversary Edition of *The Hobbit*, ISBN 978-0618964406. \$95.00]

READERS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR *The History of The Hobbit* for a very long time – indeed, roughly the same length of time the first admirers of *The Hobbit* had to wait for its sequel. At the outset of Christopher Tolkien's textual history of *The Lord of the Rings*, he made the explicit statement that "[n]o account is given in this book of the history of the writing of *The Hobbit* up to its original publication in 1937" (*Shadow* 6). But such a history was needed, and the nascent project was probably already underway at the hands of Taum Santoski at Marquette University at the time Christopher Tolkien penned his introduction. Not long after Santoski's untimely death in 1991, John Rateliff assumed direction of the project, having already been involved in a less formal capacity for several years. Shortly thereafter, Wayne Hammond informed eager readers that "the history of the writing of *The Hobbit* is sketched by Humphrey Carpenter in *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, and will be fully told by John D. Rateliff in a forthcoming book" (*Descriptive Bibliography* 7). But until the summer of 2007, those readers had to be content with Carpenter's and Hammond's abbreviated accounts, though they had been clamoring for the promised book for fifteen years.

That wait is now finally over, and I am happy to report that *The History of The Hobbit*, in two ambitious and riveting volumes, is clearly worth the time it took Rateliff to complete his work. But the book is more than a mere textual history. To paraphrase Bilbo, Rateliff has not just one purpose, but three. First, he presents the earliest manuscript of *The Hobbit*, with minimal interruption but with considerable exegesis and source study. In this, as he writes in his Introduction, his book is complementary to Douglas Anderson's equally valuable *Annotated Hobbit* (xxx). Second, he argues the case that *The Hobbit* is much more

closely connected to the “Silmarillion” tradition than is generally acknowledged. In effect, it seems that Rateliff’s conclusions partially refute (or at least extenuate) Christopher Tolkien’s claim that “*The Hobbit* was *drawn into* Middle-earth—and transformed it; but as it stood in 1937 it was not a part of it” (*Shadow* 7, italics original). At the same time, Rateliff wishes to counteract the all too common misperception of *The Hobbit* “as ‘a mere prelude’ to *The Lord of the Rings*, a lesser first act that sets up the story and prepares the reader to encounter the masterpiece that follows [...], a view [which] does not do justice to either book” (xi). Third, Rateliff elucidates the case of the 1947 revisions, the text now known to most readers, and presents for the first time Tolkien’s abandoned attempt in 1960 to rewrite the entire novel to bring it into greater harmony with the mood, language, and geography of *The Lord of the Rings*.

In its meticulously systematic layout, the book follows the example of Christopher Tolkien’s *History of Middle-earth* series closely, tracing the development of *The Hobbit* through a series of successive phases, interrupted now and then by adumbrated plot notes projecting the story forward from different vantage points (a technique Tolkien would employ again while writing *The Lord of the Rings*). Rateliff, with minor misgivings, elected to divide his history into chapters corresponding to those of the published novel but almost invariably absent from the manuscript (cf. “The Plan of This Edition”, xxvi-xxix). Laudably, Rateliff keeps Tolkien’s voice quite distinct from his own. To that end, he saves comments on the manuscript for the text notes following each uninterrupted chapter or plot outline, and follows these in turn with his own essays on Tolkien’s sources, motifs, and themes, with *their* notes following last of all. While this may sound tedious described in a review, it actually makes for an extremely readable and engaging history. Readers desiring to first experience Tolkien’s original manuscript without disruption may therefore do so smoothly, skipping Rateliff’s essays and returning to them later if they wish. My own recommendation, however, is to read and relish every word in the order given. Rateliff’s numerous insights and well-written commentaries will significantly enrich the reader’s experience of Tolkien’s evolving vision for *The Hobbit* at each ensuing point.

Tolkien’s first manuscript is also full of many wonderful surprises. I will not spoil all of them, but I would like to highlight just a few. Perhaps most obviously, there is the matter of the nomenclature. Thorin Oakenshield was originally Gandalf the Dwarf; Gandalf the Wizard was originally Bladorthin, a name subsequently relegated to a single obscure reference in the novel (like Queen Berúthiel in *The Lord of the Rings*); Beorn the Berserker was originally Medwed the Werebear; Smaug the Magnificent was Pryftan; and Fingolfin, in the earliest fragmentary drafts, was not the High King of the Noldor, but rather the Goblin by whose dispatch Bullroarer Took earned his fame! Equally surprising

are several abandoned alleyways down which the story first strayed (or threatened to stray, in plot notes). In one, Bilbo finds his way back to the lost Forest Path in Mirkwood using a ball of wound-up spider silk, like Theseus in the Minotaur's labyrinth. In another, it was originally to be Bilbo who killed Smaug, single-handedly, by stabbing him in his sleep—Carpenter revealed this nearly thirty years ago, but it is still startling. In still another lost story element, it was to be the Elves of Mirkwood, and not Thorin and the Dwarves, who succumbed to the unmitigated greed of the dragon-sickness. And neither Thorin nor his kinsmen, Fili and Kili, were to have died in the resulting struggle. Finally, there is an astonishing series of explicit references both to the real Primary World and to the burgeoning world of the "Silmarillion," including on the one hand, Shetland ponies, policemen on bicycles, the Gobi desert, China, Christmas, and even the star Sirius; and on the other, not only Gondolin, but also the Gnomes (that is, the inchoate Noldor), Tû the Fay (that is, the Necromancer, later Sauron), and even a direct reference, by name, to Beren and Tinúviel (removed prior to publication).

Rateliff has also provided a wealth of appendant material valuable for a fuller appreciation of *The Hobbit*. This includes more than two dozen of Tolkien's sketches and illustrations, several not previously published; the original draft of Fimbulfambi's (later, Thrain's) map of the Lonely Mountain; and most fascinating of all, a "facsimile" of the letter Thorin and Company left beneath Bilbo's mantel clock. There are also four appendices: excerpts from *The Denham Tracts*, often advanced as a possible source for the word "hobbit"; the original 1938 letter to *The Observer*, signed "HABIT" (the source of that now very hackneyed pun), as well as Tolkien's full response, with further discussion of the word "hobbit"; the *Dvergatal*, a part of the *Völuspá* (though thought to be a subsequent interpolation) from which Tolkien borrowed almost all of the Dwarves' names, presented in side-by-side Old Norse and Modern English; and finally, a fascinating series of letters between Tolkien and the writer Arthur Ransome from late 1937.

For all of these many rewards, perhaps the most interesting item—after the original manuscript itself, of course—is the so-called "1960 Hobbit," Tolkien's abortive attempt to rewrite the entire novel as a *bona fide* prelude to *The Lord of the Rings*, matching it in its tone and details. Innumerable readers of *The Lord of the Rings* have asked of *The Hobbit*, what about the Shire and Bree? What about Weathertop? What about Sauron, Dol Guldur, the Rangers, and Saruman? In 1960, Tolkien set out to address these perceived "shortcomings" in *The Hobbit*, reconciling it with both its sequel and the later elaboration known as "The Quest of Erebor" (published in *Unfinished Tales*). Though he got no further than Rivendell, the resulting three manuscript chapters and their accompanying timelines, itineraries, and phases of the moon are remarkable. But with Tolkien's planned additions to *The Hobbit*—the Shire, the Brandywine River, Bree and the

Prancing Pony, the Rangers—came regrettable losses, mainly in its humor. The most significant cut was the apparent loss of the “golf/Golfimbul” jest. In the end, Tolkien’s abandonment of the project was probably fortunate.

For all its many merits, *The History of The Hobbit* has some minor flaws—and what self-respecting reviewer could refrain from picking at the scabs of those occasional oversights, mistakes, or missteps? First and foremost among these, to me: apart from a short and highly selective list of frequently cited works (xxx-xxxii), there is no proper bibliography. And while it is true that the *History of Middle-earth* volumes Rateliff takes as his guide also have none, Rateliff’s citations are too numerous and far-ranging for the omission of a bibliography. For comparison, Hammond and Scull’s *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader’s Companion* and Scull and Hammond’s *J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* both include lengthy bibliographies. A second problem is easily discovered because of the first: the Index is at many points inconsistent or incomplete. Attempts to track down citations in the absence of a bibliography reveal that, while the Index contains entries for Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull both individually and as a couple, there is no entry for Tom Shippey, *inter alia*. Likewise, despite a twelve-page essay on Radagast (more on this in a moment), there is no entry for him in the Index. Discovering him missing under his own name, one turns hopefully to the entry “Wizards”, only to encounter a frustrating “See also [...] Radagast, Saruman [...]” (905). Saruman, it transpires, is missing from the Index as well. Of course, good indexes are notoriously difficult to produce; however, it is a shame that such a voluminous and carefully researched work should deprive readers of a comprehensive index. We can only hope this will be rectified (or improved, at least) in the upcoming softcover edition.

Turning to the *content* of the book rather than its appendages, I would like to comment on two or three of the essays Rateliff has written to accompany each phase and chapter. These are generally illuminating, erudite, and thorough (as typified by “The Ring”, 174-82)—generally, but not invariably. For example, Rateliff’s examinations of “The Carrock” (261-6) and “The Name ‘Esgaroth’” (561-2) both overlook the published work Mark Hooker has done on these names and places. Hooker’s study of the Carrock (79-81) previously appeared in *Beyond Bree* in 2001 and in *Palantir* (in Russian) in 2002 before being reprinted in *A Tolkienian Mathomium*. His study of Esgaroth (15-17) was previously unpublished; however, Sandra Ballif Straubhaar called attention to both essays in her review last spring (311, 312), and it seems not unreasonable that Rateliff might have caught at least one of them. It is not a matter of the recency of *A Tolkien Mathomium* (as Rateliff refers to other books published in 2005 and 2006); I expect it is simply that Rateliff never read Hooker’s book, and reviews of it came too late.

In other cases, it is not previously published scholarship Rateliff misses, but rather original sources. Commenting on the Ravens of the Lonely Mountain, Carc and Roäc, Rateliff has relatively little to say, mainly emphasizing the *sound* of the names, citing Anderson's comment that they are "marvelously onomatopoeic" (*Annotated Hobbit* 316). Another suggested link (622-3, note 5), the Old Norse *hrafni*, Old English *hræfn* "raven", is an improvement, but there is still much to be said. Considering Tolkien's choice of Norse names in the northeast Wilderland, surely Carc derives from Old Norse *krákr* "crow or raven" and Roäc from *hrókr* "rook" (a bird of the crow family). Tolkien even spells the ravens' names Kark and Roäk at one point. Additionally, Carc find cognates among the Elven languages—probably under the direct influence of the Old Norse or the underlying Indo-European root (cf. Ancient Greek *κόραξ* "raven"). Among these cognates, we have Gnomish *crunc* "crow" (PE11 27); Qenya *karon* "crow" (PE12 45); and the root *KARKA-* "crow", later emended to *KORKA-* (*Lost Road* 362). Still later—subsequent to the publication of *The Hobbit*, but I provide them here for the sake of completeness—we find in the more developed Quenya *quáko* "crow" (*Jewels* 395), and of course the later Sindarin forms, *craban* and the plural *crebain* "crow, crows" (PE17 37), familiar to readers of *The Lord of the Rings*. All of this goes unmentioned by Rateliff. Following the text notes, in his short essay on ravens, Rateliff does mention Odin's ravens, Hugin and Munin, as well as the traditions of the *Völsunga Saga* and the *Fáfnismál*, but he might also have mentioned the *Krákumál* ("The Lay of the Raven"), contained in the same codex as the *Völsunga Saga*. Perhaps a greater stretch, there is even the mythological Roc (from Persian *rukḥ*), immortalized in *The Arabian Nights* and in Marco Polo's *Travels*. The point here is not to niggle but only to demonstrate that in some cases Rateliff could have dug deeper.

For one final example, I would like to comment on Rateliff's analysis of the character of Radagast (268-80). Almost without precedent in scope—coincidentally, Nick Birns published a study of roughly equal length, but plowing different ground, at about the same time—Rateliff's discussion of Gandalf's "good cousin Radagast" (233), "a sort of Godot" (269) in the novel, is thorough and interesting, but not without faults. In discussing the possible etymology of the Wizard's name, Rateliff asserts at one point that "Old Norse is not an option here" (289n36); however, I am not entirely convinced by the argument he advances. What about Old Norse *ráðgast* "to take counsel," which is, at least implicitly, highly suggestive of Radagast? Next, Rateliff offers possible readings informed by Old English, then moves on to consider a Slavic origin on the strength of Beorn's original Slavic name, Medwed ("bear", cf. Slovenian *medved*, Serbian *medvojed*, Russian *медведь*, Czech *medvěd*; from an Indo-European root *medh-* "honey" > English *mead*). In the event, Rateliff dismisses both Old English and Slavic in favor of Gothic, which he finds "the most convincing of all"

(278). He presents solid evidence for a Gothic source, but what troubles me here is this: if one may dismiss Old Norse and Old English—“despite the excellent fit in sound and etymology” (277)—on the basis of the Slavic name, *Medwed*, then why should one not also dismiss Gothic for the same reason? Rateliff’s argument could perhaps have been better formulated. Regarding the Gothic argument, which is indeed plausible, Rateliff suggests the model of “the Gothic king or war-chieftain *Radagaisus* (died 406 AD), whose name is rendered *Rhadagast* in some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources” (278). One such source Rateliff gives is an 1829 translation of Alfred’s Old English *Boethius*. But he missed an even better piece of evidence: the actual spelling Tolkien used, *Radagast*, occurs in at least one other, roughly contemporary, edition of the same work (excerpted in Thorpe 138). Tolkien’s spelling also occurs in Gibbon’s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (364-6); Rateliff cites this source, but gives the spelling of *Rhadagast*. Perhaps he read a different edition? The one I examined contained both spellings. And finally, Rateliff thanks David Salo for pointing out these possible Gothic antecedents, but Tom Shippey made the same observation about *Radagaisus* in *The Road to Middle-earth* (301).

Let me pause before we drown in minutiae. In recording such slight quibbles as I have, my point is not to chip away at the value and quality of Rateliff’s achievement. It is only to highlight the fact that, however thorough a literary and source study of *The Hobbit* might be, there is always more to find. Tolkien’s sources are far from exhausted, though *The History of The Hobbit*, together with *The Annotated Hobbit*, must now bookend any future study of Tolkien’s novel. Rateliff’s few missteps and oversights scarcely mar such an ambitious and brilliant work. In a way, they are incentives for even deeper exploration, Rateliff’s book in hand. Simply put, the book is an indispensable new starting point for the study of Tolkien’s timeless classic.

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—Jason Fisher



**PAST WATCHFUL DRAGONS: FANTASY AND FAITH IN THE WORLD OF C. S. LEWIS.** Ed. Amy H. Sturgis. Altadena, California: The Mythopoeic Press, 2007. 222 pages. \$20.00. ISBN 978-1-887726-11-5.

THIS, THE MYTHOPOEIC PRESS'S SEVENTH BOOK, is a collection of papers presented not at one of the Society's annual Mythopoeic Conferences but at Belmont University's C.S. Lewis Conference, held in November 2005 in conjunction with the release of the new film *The Chronicles of Narnia I: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. Ably edited by the Society's own Dr. Amy Sturgis, who contributed one of the best essays to the Mythopoeic Press's previous collection, *Tolkien on Film* (Mythopoeic Press, 2004), its twelve essays mostly center on Lewis but also deal with writers such as Tolkien, Rowling, and Wilde.

Any collection assembled from papers presented at a conference is liable to be a mixed bag, and this one is no exception. Given the broad range of its contents, there's no need to read the essays here in any particular order; the



reader should be encouraged to browse, starting with those whose topics most strongly catch his or her interest. Ironically, given the book's primary focus, its best essay (the last in the volume) is Kathryn N. McDaniel's "The Elfin Mystique: Fantasy and Feminism in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series," which praises Rowling for depicting a non-ideal fantasy world before honing in the focus specifically on the moral problem of house-elves as apparently willing slaves. Also thought-provoking is Karen Wright Hayes' "Surprised, But Not By Joy: Political Comment in *Out of the Silent Planet*," which argues persuasively for an anti-colonial message in that book alongside its more overt theological theme. Hayes also makes the telling point of how ironic it is that Lewis, who hoped to "smuggle" theological doctrine to unsuspecting readers, is now so widely identified as a Christian writer that it undermines his entire strategy as a writer of fiction.

Some of the essays are notable for addressing topics that usually get overlooked in the understandable focus on Lewis's most popular works. Thus Devin Brown examines how Lewis set an example by exercising his vocation through his occupation. Similarly, Gregory M. Anderson explores a neglected area: Lewis as a writer of sermons, focusing specifically on the 1941 sermon "The Weight of Glory" and the rhetorical devices Lewis used to deliver his argument and move his audience. A little further afield, Ernelle Fife uses *The Four Loves* to interpret Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, demonstrating an applicability for Lewis's ideas beyond his own works or those of his fellow Inklings.

Given the timing of the conference, it's not surprising that two of the pieces deal with film adaptations of Lewis's and Tolkien's works. Of these, Hugh H. Davis focuses on treatment of a specific scene, Aslan's sacrifice at the Stone Table, and compares how three film and one audio adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* presented it. While his discussion sometimes threatens to bog down in minutia (do we really need to know that the 2005 film devotes 5.13%, or seven minutes and twenty seconds, of its running time to this scene, while the book itself spends 4.3% of its page count?), his larger point that film-makers tend to spend more time on action scenes like the battle at the end of the movie than the quieter moments on which the book's story hangs is well-taken. By contrast, Greg Wright (author of two books about Tolkien and Peter Jackson) discusses the recent Narnia movie and Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* films in the light of Lewis's and Tolkien's own well-known comments about film adaptations. Wright reaches the surprising conclusion that Lewis and Tolkien are critical about films partly because they had a bias against film and partly because they lived a long time ago and didn't know any better—a regrettable lapse into chronological snobbery, all the more striking for coming in a discussion of two authors who were always vigilant to avoid it. In addition, Wright's piece is

marred by factual inaccuracies about film history that severely undercut his thesis.

Of the other pieces, noted Inklings scholar Donald T. Williams summarizes the argument or thesis of *The Abolition of Man* and *Miracles* (rather better than Lewis did himself) and applies them to *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, suggesting that in Narnia we see the visible results of the trends Lewis warns against in *The Abolition of Man*. Similarly, H. L. Reeder IV looks at J.R.R. Tolkien's essays "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" and "On Fairy-Stories" from a Deconstructionist perspective, but unfortunately uses so much jargon in his discussion of "Christian resistance" that those not conversant in Foucault might find his arguments impenetrable (e.g., "the understanding of a genealogy of knowledge, its manufacture and subsequent deployment as a discourse of power[,] becomes the central trait in a theory of resistance"—page 173). Reeder also claims that while the Beowulf essay is much-cited by Old English scholars, the fairy-story essay is largely unknown outside of Tolkien studies; this assertion ignores the enormous impact Tolkien's ideas about secondary worlds, subcreation, escape, and recovery have had on fantasy scholarship.

A few pieces take positions likely to strike the average reader as distinctly odd. For example, Marek Oziewicz ("Let the Villains Be Soundly Killed at the End of the Book") takes it as a given that in our time the law no longer serves as an instrument of justice. Not only is this an opinion not shared by Lewis, so far as I can tell, but Oziewicz devotes fully eight pages (more than a third of his piece) to defining theories of justice before belatedly turning his attention to Lewis. Daniel L. Scott Jr. and Austin Cagle, in their condemnation of modern education, not only assert that we now live in a world without wonder (a claim against which most of us would I think vigorously dissent) but casually suggest that the current state of our education system might be due to demonic influence.

Finally, there is the opening piece, Bruce Edwards's keynote address to the conference ("In, Not of, the Shadowlands"). While Edwards is probably the most distinguished contributor here, author and editor of a number of well-respected works on Lewis, unfortunately his contribution is the weakest in the collection, probably because his florid oratory is better geared to oral presentation than to being read in print. Not only does he praise Lewis with such extravagance as to raise skepticism in the minds of all but the most devout Lewisians, but there is also the problem that, time and again, Edwards quotes a paragraph from Lewis and then proceeds to expound upon it, only to have Lewis's original passage invariably be both clearer and better phrased than Edwards's gloss.

In the end, this is a worthwhile collection, despite some weak spots. The editor, Sturgis, is to be praised for her well-written introduction, which gives a

good summary of the contents and focus of each piece (especially useful for those who want to skip around rather than read straight through from beginning to end); the Press itself also deserves praise for providing a good index (a rarity in conference proceedings). Typos are few and inconsequential, aside from the embarrassing gaffe of getting the name of Lewis's fellow Inkling and contributor to *The Problem of Pain* wrong in an essay devoted to that work ("R. F. 'Humphrey' Havard," page 17; the index correctly gives his middle initial as E). The book's greatest shortcoming, ironically, comes not from its contents but its title, which is identical with that of one of the best-known books ever written on Lewis and Narnia: Walter Hooper's *Past Watchful Dragons*, first published in 1978 and re-issued in a number of new editions since, most recently in 2006. Giving this name (which comes of course from Lewis's famous essay "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said" [1956]) to the Belmont Conference was entirely appropriate; assigning it to the resulting book was a poor choice, as if someone other than Tom Shippey were to bring out a new book on Tolkien called *The Road to Middle-earth*, with all the unnecessary confusion that would entail. Aside from that rather serious caveat, this volume is worth reading. While not one of the essential works any serious Lewis scholar should own, there are enough ideas here to make for an entertaining read.

—John D. Rateliff



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