



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 27
Number 3

Article 18

4-15-2009

Reviews

David Bratman

Independent Scholar

Joe R. Christopher

(emeritus) Tarleton State University, Stephenville TX

Edith L. Crowe

(retired) San Jose State University, California

Jason Fisher

Independent Scholar

Glen GoodKnight

Independent Scholar

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

See next page for additional authors

Recommended Citation

Bratman, David; Christopher, Joe R.; Crowe, Edith L.; Fisher, Jason; GoodKnight, Glen; Gray, William; Schweitzer, Darrell; Sturgis, Amy H.; and Williams, Donald T. (2009) "Reviews," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 27: No. 3, Article 18.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol27/iss3/18>

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSUTM

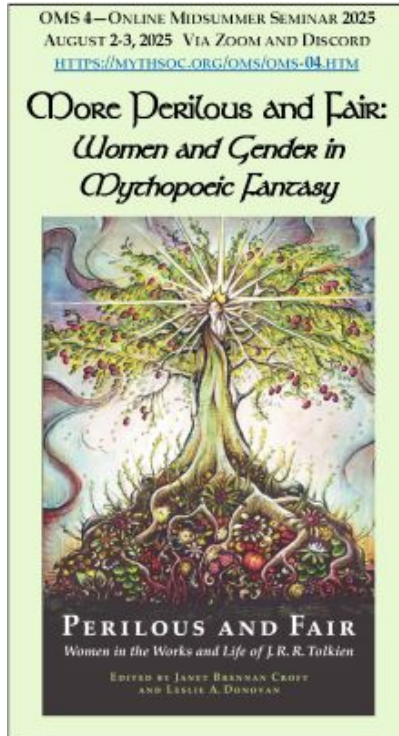
Online MidSummer Seminar 2025

More Perilous and Fair: Women and Gender in Mythopoeic Fantasy

August 2-5, 2024

Via Zoom and Discord

<https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-04.htm>



Reviews

Abstract

Lilith in a New Light: Essays on the George Macdonald Fantasy Novel. Ed. Lucas H. Harriman. Reviewed by William Gray.

Black & White Ogre Country: The Lost Tales of Hilary Tolkien. Edited by Angela Gardner. Illustrated by Jef Murray. Reviewed by Glen GoodKnight.

C.S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion. John Beversluis. Reviewed by Donald T. Williams.

Faith and Choice in the Works of Joss Whedon. K.. Dale Koontz. Reviewed by Amy H. Sturgis.

Fritz Leiber, Critical Essays. Ed. Benjamin Szumskyj. Reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer.

Myth and Magic: Art according to the Inklings. Eduardo Segura and Thomas Honegger. Reviewed by Jason Fisher.

From Narnia to a Space Odyssey: The War of Ideas between Arthur C. Clarke And C. S. Lewis. Ed., and with introduction, by Ryder W. Miller. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

The Mirror Crack'd: Fear and Horror in JRR Tolkien's Major Works. Ed. Lynn Forest-Hill. Reviewed by Edith L. Crowe.

Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion. Douglas Charles Kane. Reviewed by Jason Fisher.

Night Operation. Owen Barfield. Reviewed by David Bratman.

Eager Spring. Owen Barfield. Reviewed by David Bratman.

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Authors

David Bratman, Joe R. Christopher, Edith L. Crowe, Jason Fisher, Glen GoodKnight, William Gray, Darrell Schweitzer, Amy H. Sturgis, and Donald T. Williams

R E VIEWS

LILITH IN A NEW LIGHT: ESSAYS ON THE GEORGE MACDONALD FANTASY NOVEL. Ed. Lucas H. Harriman. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2008. x + 181 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-7864-3810-5. \$35.00.

IT'S GETTING ON FOR TWENTY YEARS since we last had two collections of essays on George MacDonald published within a couple of years of each other: William Raeper's *The Gold Thread* (1990) followed in 1992 by Roderick McGillis's *For the Childlike*. Almost two decades later, following the centenary of MacDonald's death in 2005, three collections of essays on MacDonald have appeared within two years: Jean Webb's "*A Noble Unrest*": *Contemporary Essays on the Work of George MacDonald* (2007); McGillis's *George MacDonald: Literary Heritage and Heirs* (2008); and the subject of the present review: *Lilith in a New Light: Essays on the George MacDonald Fantasy Novel* (2008), edited by Lucas H. Harriman. While some of the prominent voices in those two early 1990s collections are sadly no longer with us, it is remarkable how many of the contributors to *Lilith in a New Light* [LNL] are familiar voices. There is a strong sense of continuity—and occasionally of repetition—in these collections of essays on MacDonald.

What is different about Harriman's collection is that, in contrast to the wide range and diversity of the other collections, it concentrates on just one book: *Lilith*. This allows a much sharper focus on what is sometimes perceived as MacDonald's problem text, though of course *Phantastes* too has its problems, especially in relation to its overall coherence (see Gray, *Fantasy* 35; 194n.30). The approach adopted in LNL was piloted, as it were, in *North Wind* (No. 21, 2002) where, in a kind of round-robin, a number of MacDonald scholars responded to John Pennington's essay "'Of 'Frustrate Desire': Feminist Self-postponement in George MacDonald's *Lilith*" (more on this later). In Harriman's collection the ball is set rolling by Robert A. Collins's paper "Liminality in *Lilith*," which introduces the concept of 'liminality' in order to solve what is to Collins the apparently insoluble—or at least hitherto unsolved—problem in the penultimate chapter of

Lilith when Vane tells how his ascent towards the throne of the Ancient of Days is interrupted when

[a] hand, warm and strong, laid hold of mine, and drew me to a little door with a golden lock. The door opened; the hand let mine go, and pushed me gently through. I turned quickly, and saw the board of a large book in the act of closing behind me. I stood alone in my library. (250)

There is for Collins no satisfactory explanation of this 'anti-climactic' return to the quotidian at the end of *Lilith*. The pragmatic solution of positing the need to maintain narrative plausibility by returning to the narrative frame is for Collins 'incommensurate' with the mythopoetic status of *Lilith*. Far from Vane being a mythic hero returning with a message of enlightenment from an alternate world, Collins feels that the story fails as mythpoesis or a Campbellian heroic journey. Notwithstanding the insights offered by the concept of 'liminality', for Collins "it fails to solve ultimately the mythopoetic problem: what is the mythic significance of the 'endless ending' [of *Lilith*]?" (13). According to Collins this problematic ending "does not seem to most serious readers to mirror what they already know of MacDonald's religious beliefs" (13). Rather "it communicates an air of didactic failure," though Collins concedes that "the failure is perhaps as likely to be that of its readers as of its author" (13).

The other scholars in the collection take up the gauntlet thrown down by Collins, apart from Roger C. Schlobin who says *Lilith* is a waste of time, asking "Why did I bother?" An obvious reply is: "Why bother including such an ungenerous reading in the collection?" And could it be that Schlobin—who suggests that the writer of "What is behind my *think*?" (*Lilith* 16) is presenting "a variation on René Descartes's '*Cogito ergo sum*'?" (84)—may be missing a trick? The other contributors read MacDonald's work with more attention and respect, and seek to show, in response to Collins's criticisms, either that the ending of *Lilith* is not a failure, or that if it is, then it is a failure that paradoxically represents success in terms of deconstruction (for the *locus classicus* on interpretative failure as deconstructive success see J. Miller 189).

In his "Liminality and the Everyday in *Lilith*," Tom Shippey not unexpectedly refers mainly, if by no means exclusively, to Tolkien. He prefers the term 'medial' to 'liminal' as a key to interpreting *Lilith*, which he says mediates a range of contrasting positions, for example MacDonald's residual Calvinism and his personal belief in goodness (18). While Shippey finds MacDonald's over-use of paradox irritating, in the end he accepts that the contested conclusion of *Lilith* represents MacDonald's view of "the true state of all human beings: they are led on by glimpses of something they can now grasp only fitfully and uncertainly, surrounded by a 'solid mass' of reality which will be revealed in the end as illusion" (20). And if you must talk about 'liminality,'

then for Shippey it is this world itself that is 'liminal'. Here Shippey aligns MacDonald strongly with Tolkien and Lewis, though when referring to *The Great Divorce* he seems to overlook the persuasive case made by Catherine Durie in Raeper's *The Gold Thread* (1990) that Lewis actively distorted MacDonald's views, especially on the question—so central to *Lilith*—of Universalism.

Michael Mendelson's "*Lilith*, Textuality and the Rhetoric of Romance" uses Collins's paper as an excuse to revisit his 1985 paper "George MacDonald's *Lilith*: The Conventions of Ascent," and, as in his essay in McGillis's *For the Childlike*, he offers an erudite contextualization of MacDonald's work within the horizon of theories of genre and rhetoric. Tacitly alluding to Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism* (which he had explicitly cited in his 1992 paper), he calls *Lilith* MacDonald's Wordsworthian "high argument"—"an invented myth based on Christian allegory" (23). Mendelson adduces a wealth of illuminating intertextual material in order to suggest that, far from Vane's premature expulsion from the stairway to heaven being the problem it is for Collins, actually "Vane clearly understands what has happened and why" (34). Vane has been "'further in and higher up' [sic] than he ever imagined, and he has come home with a purposeful vision of life's journey. This is not resurrection; which is reserved for the dead. But he has been to Pispah, and his ongoing life will be informed by that vision" (35). No problems here then! It's a pity that Mendelson's wide-ranging and scholarly essay is marred by small inaccuracies, for example, when he refers to "the fairy [sic] Serpentina" in *The Golden Pot* by the writer he persists in referring to as "Hoffman" [sic].

According to Verlyn Flieger in her essay "Myth, Mysticism and Magic: Reading at the Close of *Lilith*," what Collins sees as a problem is actually the very point MacDonald the (Celtic) mystic is making. The ending of *Lilith* is not a problem to be solved, but "rather a provocation [...] which may be in place deliberately to encourage, or even to force a more intuitive, less rational response" (40). Mysteries explained become "mere solved puzzles" (40). Flieger sums up: "The essence of myth is to be inexplicable in rational terms. The less it yields itself to analysis, the more mythopoeic it is, and the more effective and compelling it becomes" (45). Whatever problems there may be with this kind of generalization, and with Flieger's tendency to make potentially essentializing claims about "the very nature of Celtic myths and the Celts who made them" (42), her example of what Greville MacDonald called "*bi-local existence*" (298) from the Irish poem *The Voyage of Bran* (familiar to both Tolkien and Lewis) does fit convincingly and illuminatingly with *Lilith*.

If MacDonald is for Flieger a 'Celtic mystic', for Elizabeth Robinson he is a mystic *tout court*. Far from agonizing over the problems Collins finds in the allegedly contradictory ending of *Lilith*, Robinson in her "*Lilith* as the Mystic's Magnum Opus" doesn't even mention them, asserting instead that "[i]n *Lilith*,

MacDonald creates a unified reality in which he presents the culmination of the mystic journey as Vane accepts death in order to live, the death of the self that results in mystic union with God" (128). She explains *Lilith* in terms of the writings of the "mystic's mystic," St John of the Cross (whether MacDonald knew of the latter is not clear): *Phantastes* represents "the Night of the Senses" and *Lilith* "the Night of the Spirit." If Robinson's approach is illuminating, there is little sense of the uncertainty and inconclusiveness that other scholars (and especially Collins) have perceived in *Lilith*'s "endless ending." Collins's "sense of disturbance at *Lilith*'s conclusion" (47) is addressed by Colin Manlove in "The Logic of Fantasy and the Crisis of Closure." Ironically Manlove's criticism of Collins's approach might equally well apply to Robinson's, which is in some sense the opposite of Collins's: "The problem [...] is that he [she] is continually looking to some external pattern into which to fit *Lilith*" (47). According to Manlove, the text of *Lilith* itself suggests different ways of reading its "endless ending." One of the problems with Collins's approach is that it assumes that Vane has made spiritual progress, and therefore his failure to be with God at the end of *Lilith* is undeserved. Manlove, however, questions such a reading of this particular pilgrim's progress, and discusses the ways Vane has fallen short (which explains his falling back to earth at the end of *Lilith*). This double movement of ascent and falling away is, according to Manlove, characteristic of much of MacDonald's writing, and indeed of his life. He illustrates this with a reference to MacDonald's *Diary of an Old Soul* which is, he says, "a continual oscillation between a longed-for heaven and the all-too earthly present, between hope and doubt, rapture and emptiness" (55). This "mingling of [...] yearned-for joy and lived doubt" runs through all that MacDonald wrote, "in *Lilith* perhaps even more than in his other fantasies" (57). The present writer may perhaps be permitted to register his surprise that St Augustine's *Confessions* figures so little in this collection (it appears only in Harriman's discussion of Ricoeur's discussion of *Confessions* in *Time and Narrative* [87-8]).

One of the ideas recurring in these essays on *Lilith* is the raven's enigmatic reply to Vane's question about his whereabouts: "In the region of the seven dimensions" (21). This mysterious idea has regularly been explained by reference to Boehme, but Rolland Hein, who as the editor of the Variorum edition of *Lilith* probably knows the novel better than most, argues in "A Fresh look at *Lilith*'s Perplexing Dimensions" that Dante is a better guide here than Boehme. Although the universalist MacDonald took issue with Dante's understanding of hell and punishment, Hein claims that he is very close to Dante's understanding of the allegorical, and particularly the anagogical, meaning of his own work (notwithstanding MacDonald's criticism of allegory in "The Fantastic Imagination"). Drawing attention to several crucial points in *Lilith* where MacDonald makes explicit reference to *The Divine Comedy*, Hein makes a

persuasive case for using Dante as a guide to *Lilith*. Not only the apparently problematic ending, but *Lilith* as a whole is illuminated by being read in light of Dante's masterpiece. In Hein's magisterial summing-up:

Both visions, that of *The Divine Comedy* and *Lilith*, seem suspended in time. They offer their authors' respective paradigms for an individual's achieving the necessary orientation to reality, that orientation which fulfils the basic quest of life. The good of the quest is not a message to be intellectually communicated, but a vision to be experienced. (81)

If Hein speaks with the wisdom of a lifetime of scholarship devoted largely to MacDonald, then the contribution of the book's editor, Lucas H. Harriman, presumably near the beginning of his academic life, offers an impressively poised and insightful pause for reflection before the reader is swept into the turbulence of the deconstructive readings of Pennington and McGillis. Significantly, I think, before we encounter the likes of Barthes, Bataille and Lacan, the critical/theoretical guru cited by Harriman in his mediating essay "The Revelatory Potential of *Lilith's* Immanent Eternity," is that great interpreter of the hermeneutical tradition, Paul Ricoeur. Drawing on Ricoeur's work on Augustine in *Time and Narrative*, Harriman argues the importance of the "filled present," with a stress on immanence which renders discussion of Vane's return to the quotidian world redundant: where else should he be, if not in a world transformed, if not yet finally transfigured, by the imaginative power of fantasy?

John Pennington's "Frustrated Interpretation in *Lilith*" is in some respects a restatement of his essay, "Of 'Frustrate Desire': Feminist Self-postponement in George MacDonald's *Lilith*," which caused some controversy in the pages of *North Wind*. Using the well-known distinction of Roland Barthes between 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts, Pennington insists that *Lilith* is an example of the latter: "As a writerly text [...] *Lilith* must circumvent traditional closure and remain open for the reader to 'write' his or her interpretation of the endless ending" (95). Responding to Collins's accusation that the ending of *Lilith* is a failure, Pennington picks up on the claim of D.A. Miller that "failure of closure [becomes] a text's most powerful and seductive effect [...] Supposing we take that coming-to-fail not as a negative phenomenon, but as positive strategy, not disruptive but constitutive of a text's social implications and usefulness" (95, citing Miller 164-5). Of particular interest to readers of *Mythlore* is Pennington's resistance to what he calls the confinement of *Lilith* within the closure of a particular kind of ('readerly') mythopoeic fantasy, a confinement he blames on C.S. Lewis (96). But *Lilith* as "writerly fantasy of desire" actually "flaunts its lack of closure," according to Pennington (96), who seems to delight in what he calls, in Bersani's phrase, its "ontological slipperiness" (97). Pennington invokes the

kind of Lacanian approach whose motto might be ‘further over, further out’, in contrast to Lewis’s “further up, further in” (see Gray, *Fantasy* 107). As Pennington puts it: “Vane’s waiting symbolizes that eternal life [...] that would be a plot of the infinite” (99); but this kind of deconstructive ‘infinite’ sounds very like what Hegel called the “bad infinite,” and might be seen as a poor substitute for the “good infinite” which embraces the flux of time rather than dissolving into it.

If Pennington’s essay is implicitly Lacanian (Lacan appears explicitly only once), then Roderick McGillis’s “Liminality as Psychic Stage in *Lilith*” is explicitly and systematically Lacanian. Lacan’s most famous essay in literary circles is probably his “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter,’” that begins with Freud’s “compulsion to repeat” (*Wiederholangszwang*), which Lacan renders as “the repetition automatism” (in the English translation). Maybe McGillis is suffering from an acute case of this universal affliction because the essay in Harriman’s collection is the double of his essay of the same title in Jean Webb’s 2007 collection, though neither essay acknowledges the existence of the other. And uncannily enough, a substantial chunk of both these essays reappears in McGillis’s essay “Fantasy as Miracle: Tentative Beginning Without Conclusion” in his own 2008 collection. Which is not to say that a good thing is not worth repeating; and McGillis’s essay is very good—if you are predisposed to accept a Lacanian perspective. Those of us who harbor suspicions concerning compulsory Lacanianism will have our moments of doubt. I have argued elsewhere that Kristeva’s approach works better than Lacan’s with MacDonald and C.S. Lewis (Gray, *Death and Fantasy* 9-24; 73-84), and even that Lacan is fundamentally incompatible with the ultimately mystical Christian Platonism of Lewis and MacDonald. McGillis references the book on *Feminine Sexuality* edited by Mitchell and Rose where Lacan *flirts* with Christian mysticism but I personally have never been convinced. Therefore I remain skeptical about equating Lacan’s “Real” with MacDonald’s “home,” as McGillis does (106). Similarly, the persuasiveness of Bonnie Gaarden’s essay “Cosmic and Psychological Redemption in *Lilith*” will depend very much on whether the reader is predisposed to accept Jungian psychology, although following Edmund Cusick’s essay “George MacDonald and Jung” in Raeper’s 1990 collection, Gaarden does make a strong case for using Jungian categories to explicate MacDonald’s Neo-Platonist Christianity. Gaarden’s essay alludes to Hegel, an awareness of whom is apparent in her earlier essay “‘The Golden Key’: A Double Reading” in *Mythlore* (Winter-Spring 2006); what is most appealing to the present writer is the way that, in her work on MacDonald, Gaarden makes Jungian ideas resonate with a Romantic ‘broad church’ including Christian (Neo-) Platonism and more heterodox traditions running from Origen through Boehme to Blake.

Moving on from deconstruction and mysticism (which for Derrida at least are not at all the same thing, it might be worth recalling), Kelly Searsmith reads

Lilith in a very different way. Unlike Collins et al. she sees no problem at all with its (for her and for Victorian readers) unsurprising ending, which she claims is merely a “generic convention” of Victorian *Kunstmärchen*. The real function of English literary fairy tales was, she says, “managerial-class identity formation”: “The fantastically exoticized Other was not endorsed over that of the English Self; rather, it provided [...] a rallying point of inspiration [...] that further impelled the protagonist’s development towards the type of future colonial or domestic manager”(144). While it is welcome to be taken from the ontological slipperinesses of deconstruction and mysticism, Sears Smith in her laudable attempt to locate *Lilith* firmly within the material realities of late-Victorian power structures has her work cut out for her. For a start MacDonald was not English (though *pace* Jeanne Murray Walker [67] it was his *English* congregation in Arundel that ousted him), and his Highland background would have disinclined him to see himself as coming from ‘North Britain’. He also had some (in their way) radical views on wealth distribution, which hardly makes him the ideal candidate for the role of mediating “managerial-class identity formation.” My guess is that MacDonald is more of a ‘subaltern’ figure; certainly he would have shared with Robert Louis Stevenson the (in some ways distinctively Scottish) concern for the dignity of the *profession* (minister, teacher, doctor, lawyer, even engineer) as opposed to that of the manager.

With David M. Miller’s “The (As Yet) Endless Ending of *Lilith*” we are back to ontological slipperiness with a vengeance. Miller’s essay is certainly the most unusual and possibly most interesting in the collection. Resurrecting E.D. Hirsch’s ‘old-fashioned’ but greatly missed distinction between *meaning* and *significance*, Miller shows himself all-too-aware of postmodernist deconstructions of this (I guess) binary opposition. However, Miller applauds the ‘retro’ concern of Collins for the ‘meaning’ of *Lilith*, and proceeds to pursue such a quest, accompanied by his own postmodernist shadow which he names ‘Caliban’ (I wonder whether the name ‘Hyde’ had occurred to him?) It is impossible to do justice here to Miller’s fractured, bravura performance; it has to be read. As a taste of its Delphic/surreal style, I cite Miller’s concluding sentences (which necessitated some internet research by the present writer into American subculture!):

Caliban gets the last words. When Vane/Mara/Hope/MacDonald quote Novalis. “Our life is no dream, but it should and will perhaps become one,” Caliban hears, “Life could be a dream, Sweetheart.” Here’s looking at *you*, Caliban. “Sha-boom, sha-boom.” (174)

—William Gray

Works Consulted

- Abrams, M. H. *Natural Supernaturalism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1973.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Jewish Mystic?" <<http://www.hydra.umn.edu/derrida/reb.html#eng>>
- Durie, Catherine. "George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis." *The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald*. Ed. William Raeper. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.
- Gaarden, Bonnie. "'The Golden Key': A Double Reading." *Mythlore* 24.3/4 (#93/94)(2006): 35-52.
- Gray, William. *Fantasy, Myth and the Measure of Truth: Tales of Pullman, Lewis, Tolkien, MacDonald and Hoffmann*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- . *Death and Fantasy: Essays on Philip Pullman, C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald and R.L. Stevenson*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter.'" Trans. Jeffrey Mehlman. *Yale French Studies* 48 (1973): 39-72.
- MacDonald, George. *Lilith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- MacDonald, Greville. *George MacDonald and His Wife*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1924.
- McGillis, Roderick, ed. *For the Childlike: George MacDonald's Fantasies for Children*. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1992.
- . *George MacDonald: Literary Heritage and Heirs*. Wayne: Zossima Press, 2008.
- Miller, D.A. *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "A Guest in the House: Reply to Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's Reply." *Poetics Today* 2.1b (1980-1981): 189-191.
- Mitchell, Juliet and Jacqueline Rose, eds. *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1985.
- Pennington, John. "Of 'Frustrate Desire': Feminist Self-postponement in George MacDonald's *Lilith*." *Journal of the George MacDonald Society* 21 (2002): 26-70.
- Raeper, William, ed. *The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. 3 vols. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984.
- Webb, Jean, ed. *"A Noble Unrest": Contemporary Essays on the Work of George MacDonald*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.



BLACK & WHITE OGRE COUNTRY: THE LOST TALES OF HILARY TOLKIEN.

Edited by Angela Gardner. Illustrated by Jef Murray. Moreton-in-Marsh, Great Britain: ADC Publications Ltd., 2009. ISBN 978-0-9551900-1-8. £9.99.

THE GOLDEN DAYS RECALLED

TO MY KNOWLEDGE THIS IS THE FIRST PUBLICATION written by Hilary Tolkien. It was discovered in an attic box by Hilary's grandson Chris Tolkien, who allowed it to be illustrated and published. The first third of the book was conceived when Ronald and Hilary were quite young. "Bumble Dell" describes both ogres, how they would treat Hilary if they caught him trespassing through their lands, and the delicious blackberry patch in a dell they called Bumble. It was later filled in by the Great Western Railway to get from Brum (Birmingham) to London quicker. It also describes two old mills, one of which was probably Sarehole mill.

This is followed by "Black and White Witches." The Black Witch, who turned children into lumps of stone or took their sardine sandwiches, was poised against the Witch Witch, who when hearing of the Black Witch's spells on children, ran off with her white cat and a dog to rescue them. She also ran a sweets shop, and sold sweets to children for "never more than a penny for a conical bag" (19).

The next part is about a rustic park run by Mr. Heaven and his daughter Helen Heaven. He would become furious when boys asked him "How is Hell in Heaven, Mr. H?" (22) and chased them around the lake until they reached where the swans were nesting, which then proceeded to take nips out of their pants.

This is followed by Hilary's first memories in 1899 or 1900 of seeing automobiles, which were constantly breaking down on the road. Hilary then recalls how, a few years later, the family went to another town for Sunday Mass, and he was allowed to drive the pony-pulled buggy part of the way. He recalls the owner, Mrs. Church, and her grouchy Crimean War veteran husband. Hilary then remembers the big sycamore where he and Ronald had picnics, and a neighbor's dog who loved to dig into rabbit holes, so that only his tail showed.

Hilary then jumps forward for a brief memory of serving in World War I. Then he rambles about the farm animals he knew. He goes on further about a ghost he did not meet, and concludes with more memories of World Wars I and II. This is followed by a glossary of unfamiliar terms in the stories.

Then comes what is for me, the best part of the book: "A Brief Biography of Hilary Tolkien." This includes eleven photos showing the two brothers as a very young age, a well done drawing of Mabel Tolkien, their mother, a photo of Hilary home from the War, photos of Hilary and his wife Magdalen, a colorful drawing of a cottage by Hilary, a color photo of Ronald and Hilary, and a photo taken in 1955 showing some members of both families together. The text of the

biography is well written, with many hitherto unknown details about Hilary and his family. It is worth reading the book just for this part. The book discloses that it is the first chapter of a larger project to write a full biography of Hilary, including his drawings, photos and recently discovered letters between various members of the Tolkien and Suffield families.

This book shows that the two brothers, Ronald and Hilary, had several common interests. Both were interested in the care of plants: Hilary was a seller to local greengrocers, and also had a fruit orchard; Ronald did volunteer gardening for his local Catholic parish. They both enjoyed music: Hilary singing in his local parish choir; Ronald wrote words to already existing folk songs in *Songs for the Philologists*, and put his verse to music in "Namárië," with the sound of a Latin Chant. They both enjoyed drawing: Hilary often drew pictures on cards as gifts (one is printed in this book), Ronald is well known for his drawings and paintings related to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These and other qualities it seems were passed on to them by their mother Mabel, who was "sainted" in their eyes, and was taken from them when she passed away when they were only ten and eight years old. They shared this grief in common.

After Hilary's death in 1976, Ronald's son Christopher wrote to Hilary's son Gabriel: "So many of the very happiest of my own childhood memories are at Blackminster, and of the love and kindness we received from your parents; golden days they seem now, and I believe they really were" (73).

—Glen GoodKnight



C.S. LEWIS AND THE SEARCH FOR RATIONAL RELIGION. Revised and updated. John Beversluis. Amherst, N. Y.: Prometheus Books, 2007. 363 pp. ISBN 978-1-59102-3. \$20.00, pbk.

SURELY ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL books in the history of Lewis Studies was the first edition of John Beversluis's *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*, originally published by Eerdmans in 1985. Billing itself as the only book-length critical study of Lewis's rational apologetic for Christian faith, it concluded that none of his arguments succeeded. Reviewing the first edition in *Mythlore* 43 (Autumn 1985), Nancy-Lou Patterson called it "as waspish a work" as it had ever been her "disagreeable task to review," concluding that the faith, "including its reasoned elements," would survive the book (42). Patterson was

right: the first edition sometimes gave the impression that Beversluis thought accusing Lewis of a fallacy was equivalent to demonstrating that he had committed it. Few readers who had appreciated Lewis's apologetic works were convinced by Beversluis's arguments.

Now we have a new revised, updated, and expanded edition. It has already caused much exultation on atheist websites and much dismissive eye-rolling among Lewis fans. Neither reaction is justified.

Beversluis has responded to his critics, continued his own thinking, and rewritten each section to the point that this version is almost a completely new book. In the process, he has strengthened his presentation considerably. While in the end I still find it mostly unconvincing, it does keep its promise to provide the strongest sustained critique of Lewis's apologetic on the market. As such it performs a valuable service. Those who wish to continue using updated versions of Lewis's arguments for Christian theism will have to get past Beversluis in order to do so with credibility, and their arguments will be stronger for the exercise.

Beversluis sets out to take seriously Lewis's statement in *Mere Christianity* that he does not ask anyone to accept Christianity "if his best reasoning tells him that the weight of the evidence is against it." Beversluis approves of Lewis for demanding evidence and wants to know if he has succeeded in showing that the best reasoning supports Christian faith. Beversluis concludes that Lewis's own best reasoning fails to do so. While he examines several of Lewis's arguments—the argument from desire, the moral argument for theism, the "trilemma" argument for the deity of Christ, the argument from reason for the self-refuting character of naturalism, Lewis's theodicy, etc.—in great detail, his objections can be summarized in two points. First, the "apparent cogency of [Lewis's] arguments depends on his rhetoric rather than on his logic" (20). Lewis was such a good writer that people are carried away by his words and do not notice the fallacies being committed under their cover. Second, Lewis's arguments are fallacious, and his besetting fallacy is the false dilemma. Lewis will say that there are only two (or three) choices, refute one, and thus seem to leave Christian theism standing in sole possession of the field; but in reality, there are other alternatives he has not considered, and the one he is rejecting is a straw man.

It should be immediately obvious to Beversluis's readers that his first criticism of Lewis is valid only if, and only to the extent that, the second is upheld. It is hardly a fault to write well unless that writing can be shown to be in the service of error. The details of the second criticism will likely be debated in the journals for some time. The question will be whether the additional alternatives Beversluis tries to posit do not in fact ultimately reduce to the set of

choices that Lewis's more incisive analysis had set before us in the first place. In most cases, I believe that they do.

For example, Beversluis argues that Lewis's refutation of moral subjectivism is vitiated by the fact that he treats it as a single genus, when actually "there are more sophisticated and nuanced versions that [...] cannot be disposed of so easily" (83). The example we are offered is Hume's theory of morals as based on feeling, which Beversluis claims is not susceptible to Lewis's "loose-cannon generalizations" (87). Well, I think it is. In fact, I think it can be doubted whether Hume's view is properly a theory of ethics at all, as it has absolutely no answer to Lewis's charge that subjectivist ethics is unable to account for the word "ought." When the philosophical jargon is stripped away from the allegedly "more nuanced" views, it is not clear at all to me that Beversluis has made his charge of false dilemma stick rather than just muddying the water. The other forms of subjectivism remain species of the genus.

In the discussion of the Trilemma ("Lord/Liar/Lunatic"—not Lewis's words, by the way), the alleged missed alternatives include the possibility that Jesus did not actually say or mean the statements on which the argument is based, and that a person could be mistaken about being God and still be a great moral teacher. In the first case, Beversluis himself commits the fallacies of *dicto simpliciter* and *ad verecundiam*, telling us that "All mainstream New Testament scholars agree that the synoptic Gospels are fragmentary, episodic, internally inconsistent, and written by people who were not eyewitnesses" (123). *All?* That generalization has never been true, and it is less true now than it has ever been. (See Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, Eerdmans, 2006, as just one counter-example.) Even if the "experts" were in fact unanimous, it would not make them right. And surely one can be mistaken about a great many things, including one's own identity, and still be a good moral teacher. But we are asked now to believe that a person could wrongly think he is the Creator of the Universe, the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal Being who thundered from Sinai now incarnate in human flesh, and still retain any credibility on *anything* else he might say! Beversluis argues that Jesus' moral statements would still be true even if he were a lunatic; but this misses the point completely. Lewis assumes the validity of the teaching; it is the credibility of the *Teacher* that is on trial. To say the least, I do not find Beversluis's "alternatives" to Lewis's allegedly prematurely limited choices terribly impressive.

What my best reasoning tells me at the end of the day is that people who want to escape the conclusions of Christian theism can always find a loophole that will satisfy them. John Beversluis is particularly good at doing so. It does not follow that theism is false or that Lewis's arguments for it are bad.

Whether you agree with me or with Beversluis about Lewis's arguments, one thing is certain: the discussion is sure to continue. I for one look forward to that.

—Donald T. Williams



FAITH AND CHOICE IN THE WORKS OF JOSS WHEDON. K. Dale Koontz. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2008. Softcover: vii +231. ISBN 978-0-7864-3476-3. \$35.00.

WHAT DO EARTH-BOUND VAMPIRE SLAYERS and cowboys in space have in common? In her new book about the worlds of Joss Whedon, K. Dale Koontz suggests that the answer is far deeper and more meaningful than witty writing and impressive special effects alone. Koontz is not the first author to analyze Joss Whedon's *Buffy* universe (consisting of the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* television series and their related texts) together with his *Firefly* universe (consisting of the *Firefly* television series, the film *Serenity*, and their related texts); some of those who anticipated her include J. Michael Richardson and J. Douglas Rabb with their book *Existential Joss Whedon: Evil and Human Freedom in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Angel, Firefly, and Serenity* (McFarland: 2006) and Joy Davidson with her edited collection *The Psychology of Joss Whedon: An Unauthorized Exploration of Buffy, Angel, and Firefly* (BenBella: 2007). In *Faith and Choice in the Works of Joss Whedon*, however, Koontz also considers Whedon's eight-issue comic series *Fray*, a futuristic tale related to but independent from the *Buffy* universe, thus expanding the landscape of Whedon studies. Unfortunately, one cannot help but think that Koontz's volume debuted one year too early, because Whedon's groundbreaking 2008 production *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* not only has proven to be one of his most popular and critically acclaimed creations, but also embodies the themes of choice and faith that are of most interest to Koontz.

Koontz's purpose lies in examining why—and, more to the point, how—self-proclaimed atheist Joss Whedon underscores the themes of choice and faith in his works, themes that are undeniably spiritual in nature, if not tied to a specific religious tradition. While Koontz's subject is compelling, she also implies that it is unique, and in so doing she misses a valuable opportunity to draw parallels between Whedon's work and that of one of his contemporaries. Like Whedon, Chris Carter emphasizes questions of free will, redemption, and belief—

often, like Whedon, invoking the symbolism of Roman Catholicism in particular while doing so—in creations such as *The X-Files* and *Millennium*, among others. The apparent paradox that Carter, an avowedly non-religious man, would devote so much attention to spiritual questions, and explore religious issues so perceptively, has been the focus of multiple analyses by critics. By ignoring the parallels between Whedon and Carter and failing to engage the scholarship on Carter's work, Koontz loses the chance to make a larger comment on the contemporary creators behind and consumers of fantasy and science fiction media.

Despite these drawbacks, however, Koontz offers a valuable addition to Whedon studies. She divides her discussion into four sections. The first considers the theme of purpose through a close reading of the characters of Dawn, Spike, and Angel from the *Buffy* universe. The second focuses on the idea of family; Koontz begins by examining the way Whedon uses twin and sibling relationships in *Fray* and concludes by considering the atypical family represented by the crew and passengers in the *Firefly* universe. Third, Koontz presents her longest and most successful section, an extended exploration of how Whedon handles the concept of redemption via the characters of Doyle and Faith from the *Buffy* universe and Mal and Book Shepherd from the world of *Firefly*. Last, Koontz highlights zealotry as portrayed in the lives of River from *Firefly* and Caleb from *Buffy*. Throughout the chapters, Koontz spotlights what she considers to be the "ABCs" of Whedon's storytelling: acceptance, belief, and choice.

Koontz's familiarity with Whedon's work allows her to move effortlessly among episodes and films and texts to draw three-dimensional and perceptive portraits of both the characters in question and the ideas they represent. At a few points she fails to match her encyclopedic knowledge of all things Whedon with an equally wide conception of spirituality; for the most part, Koontz limits herself to considering Whedon through the lens of Western Christianity, despite the overt and intentional presence of Buddhism, for example, in the *Firefly* universe. On the whole, however, Koontz makes a convincing case for the spiritual richness and artistic sophistication of Whedon's creations, and thus a valuable contribution to scholarship on Whedon and in media studies. The reader is left with a deeper appreciation of Whedon's faith—in the promise of goodness and in the potential of people, if not in a god—and the many ways in which he challenges and empowers his characters and, in turn, his fans to make moral choices with courage and compassion.

—Amy H. Sturgis

FRITZ LEIBER, CRITICAL ESSAYS. Ed. Benjamin Szumskyj. Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Co, 2008. 207 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-7864-2972-1. \$35.00.

WHATEVER ITS SHORTCOMINGS, this book is an important step in the right direction. It may not be, as the back cover copy tries to imply, the definitive academic study of Fritz Leiber's work (if only because only one of the contributors seems to be a genuine literary academic) but it is still a start. It was generally agreed by Leiber's peers of his own generation that he was one of the greats. Most professionals a generation younger—Baby Boomer writers—grew up reading him, probably encountering his Fafhrd and Gray Mouser series as teenagers, then gradually developing a mature appreciation of both the artistry and craft that went into those tales and into Leiber's more ostensibly challenging work like *The Big Time*. Leiber has always been a writer's writer. But, just now, very little of his work is still in print. Younger readers today do *not* have the opportunity to casually encounter him in mass market paperback the way Baby Boomers did. So anything that helps keep Leiber's name on the literary map is to be welcomed.

This book then is a beginning, not an end. It has its shortcomings. Some of the prose of a few of the contributors can be pretty tortuous, as if in their attempt to be "academic" they had picked up some of the vices of the academy rather than its discipline. There are writers who don't necessarily stay on topic, although this isn't always a bad thing. Fritz's son, Justin Leiber, sets out to discuss his father's theory of Time and how it developed, but is actually at his best with personal anecdotes which give us glimpses of Fritz that of course no one else can provide.

S.T. Joshi is very much lucid and on-target as he discusses how Leiber modernized the horror story in such works as "Smoke Ghost" and *Conjure Wife*. Joshi illustrates this in terms of Leiber applying and moving beyond the principles he learned from Lovecraft, who had been, for a few months at the end of his life, something of a mentor to the then novice Fritz, who was still a few years away from his first genre sales, to *Unknown* and *Weird Tales*. What Joshi seems to minimize is the influence of William Sloane, whose *To Walk the Night* (1937) very powerfully accomplished all of the things that Joshi tells us Leiber did. That Leiber read Sloane is evident enough. His 1950 story "The Ship Sails at Midnight" is a virtual homage to *To Walk the Night*. Quite likely, the only reason we do not think of Sloane as a figure as important as Leiber or even Lovecraft is that after one more book, *The Edge of Running Water* (1939), he stopped writing.

One of the areas that Leiber scholarship, such as it exists—there are two previous studies, one by Bruce Byfield, one by Jeff Frane, both too short, and also beginnings rather than summations—must delve into is the matter of influences. With a writer like Fritz Leiber, admittedly, this can be a daunting task. So much

has to be mastered: H.P. Lovecraft, Shakespeare, John Webster, Ibsen, Rafael Sabatini, Talbot Mundy, E.R. Eddison, James Branch Cabell, and doubtless quite a lot more. How many Leiber scholars have a thorough understanding of even those writers? Charles Waugh on page 27 lets a Cabell reference slip by (the Gray Mouser referring to himself as “a monstrous clever fellow,” a phrase that echoes throughout *Jurgen*) without even apparently realizing what it is. Leiber actually stated that *Tros of Samothrace* was for his generation what *The Lord of the Rings* has become since. Has anybody explored the Leiber/Mundy connection? Not here. Neither the names Cabell nor Mundy are even found in the index.

So, a beginning. The shadow of Lovecraft looms very large, if only because Lovecraft so defined what Joshi calls “the weird tale” that even Leiber is still distantly in orbit around HPL. Several writers agree that *Our Lady of Darkness* (1978) is a capstone of Leiber’s weird work, which should, at the very least, make the reader want to go hunt that book out and reread it. John Howard applies close textual analysis to the magazine version of that work, “The Pale Brown Thing,” to show how it was expanded into the finished novel, which is interesting in its own right, though there is no sense that the short version has any distinctly separate merit of its own, the way that, for instance, Roger Zelazny’s “He Who Shapes” exists quite independently of *The Dream Master*.

There are some good ideas here. The editor himself tries to connect some very early religious stories Leiber write while an Episcopal lay minister with *Gather, Darkness!* Davide Mana explores the appearances of cats and cat-like beings in Leiber’s fiction. As any Leiber reader knows, the cat motifs are significant, not just Leiberian whimsy. John Langan, himself a horror-story writer of great promise, who may one day be seen as one of Leiber’s successors, gives particularly interesting insights into the seminal “The Girl with the Hungry Eyes.” Bruce Byfield examines “the eccentric” in Leiber’s little-studied poetry and traces it into the fiction. This is, indeed, a connection no one has ever made before, precisely because Leiber scholarship is just beginning, even as this book is a beginning.

A bibliography of Leiber’s work at the end would have been nice. We cannot assume that someone encountering this book in a university library knows much about Leiber, not now, at the beginning of things.

—Darrell Schweitzer



MYTH AND MAGIC: ART ACCORDING TO THE INKLINGS. Eduardo Segura and Thomas Honegger, eds. Cormarë Series, No. 14. Zollikofen: Walking Tree Publishers, 2007. ISBN 978-3905703085. Softcover. 352pp. \$21.25.

WITH *MYTH AND MAGIC: ART ACCORDING TO THE INKLINGS*, Walking Tree continues its proliferous ascendancy in the world of Tolkien studies. *Myth and Magic*, the fourteenth publication in their Cormarë Series, collects fourteen essays on “[m]yth, magic, art and literary creativity [as] central topics of discussion among the Inklings” (back cover) by an international cast of Tolkien scholars. I have no significant reservations in recommending the collection, but symptomatic of that disease all reviewers share (we call it *cacoethes carpendi*), I do have some smaller ones, if you will indulge me.

From the collection’s title, it would appear that the editors regard myth and magic as two components in a generalized theory of literary art. One would expect to turn to the Preface for an elucidation on the editors’ rationale in selecting these; unfortunately, Segura and Honegger’s Preface is more vague than most in disclosing the mission of the book. It refers first to “the Inklings’ notions of Art, Literature, and Language” (i); then, to the desire for “a profounder understanding of what the Inklings considered the key [note the singular] of literary creation, and of Art” (ii); then, without transition, to “Myth, Art, Magic” (iii); and finally, to “Myth and Language” (iii). The editors never examine the relationship between any of these. Myth, magic, and art appear to be more or less arbitrarily chosen.

Contributing to the feeling of aimlessness are the facts that “[t]he chapters have been distributed in no special order” (iii), and most deal with only one or two of the three titular elements and only one or two of the Inklings. It is difficult to justify the volume’s subtitle when ten out of fourteen essays focus on Tolkien, only five of fourteen focus on Lewis, and none at all take as their primary focus any other Inklings. To be fair, four essays (Simonson, Shippey, Duriez, Segura) do touch on lesser Inklings, in lesser degrees, but at least one essay devoted to Williams or Barfield (better, one *each*) should have been included for this collection to deserve its subtitle. Unknown to the editors, their desideratum of “[a]n in-depth study of Charles Williams’ works [...] a volume on the allegorical novels of this almost unknown Inklings” (iii) was already being undertaken by Gavin Ashenden, whose *Charles Williams: Alchemy and Integration* appeared about two weeks *before Myth and Magic*. At least two of Ashenden’s chapters, “The Encounter between Poet and Magus” and “The Goetic, Theurgic, and Wisdom Traditions,” may be profitably read alongside the present volume. But lest I become bogged down in the front matter, let me move on to consider the essays individually.

Martin Simonson's "Recovering the 'Utterly Alien Land': Tolkien and Transcendentalism" is a strong start. The substance of the essay is a comparison of Tolkien to the American transcendentalists, Ralph Waldo Emerson and especially Henry David Thoreau. Among several striking similarities are their respective "attempts at finding a mythic language of the wild to express a modern perception of the eternal and to recover a fresh perception of the world, seeing words as the ultimate tools that man must use to bridge the two realities and make the other world visible" (9). The only weak spot I find is that Simonson does nothing (probably *can* do nothing) to establish a direct chain of influence from the American transcendentalists to Tolkien. The piece would be stronger if he could; yet the correspondence between them, if not causal, nevertheless makes for absorbing reading.

From art and myth, we come next to art and magic in Tom Shippey's "New Learning and New Ignorance: Magia, Goeteia, and the Inklings." Shippey uses Lewis's mammoth *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, as a jumping-off point for a discussion of the Inklings' thoughts on magic. The "new learning" and "new ignorance" in question come from Lewis's substantial and abstruse Introduction, itself a 66-page essay! And by the way, as if this weren't enough, Lewis adds an Epilogue, "New Tendencies." As with most essays by Shippey, one has the feeling of being privileged to listen in on the musings of a much better educated scholar than oneself. Shippey ranges widely among the works of the major Inklings—e.g., Lewis's Space Trilogy and Chronicles of Narnia, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and "On Fairy-Stores", and Williams's series of "occult thrillers" (38)—as well as among the works of other writers, both familiar and arcane—e.g., Chaucer, Shakespeare, Frazer, Paracelsus, Agrippa, Ficino, *et alii*. But however widely he ranges, Shippey keeps the major landmarks in sight, and the result is compelling argument.

Less successful is the chapter which follows, "Words for Magic: *goetia*, *gûl* and *lúth*," by Dieter Bachmann. Subtracting the common elements one has just read in Shippey's essay, immediately preceding, what remains is a brief, narrow, entirely linguistic study of a random handful of words (both real and invented) that Tolkien associated with magic. Despite some shaky arguments, a point I especially appreciated was his caveat that "[a]nyone wishing to cite letter number 155 [an unsent draft] in support of an argument [...] would do well to keep in mind that it does not contain an opinion voiced by Tolkien, but one he decided not to voice" (51). In this, Bachmann joins Michael Drout in cautioning scholars against the abuses of epistolary evidence (see Drout 19–20, 21). Elsewhere, the author could stand to take a closer look at the etymologies of some of the words he explicates. Though unavailable to him at the time, Tolkien's "Words, Phrases, and Passages" has much to say on the words

Bachmann studies, including a completely different *and non-magical* interpretation of Lúthien as “daughter of flowers” (15).

We come next to Verlyn Flieger’s “When is a Fairy Story a Faërie Story? *Smith of Wootton Major*,” which treats magic and its reflection through art. The essay was probably conceived—and serves very well—as a bridge between Flieger’s expanded edition of *Smith of Wootton Major* (2005) and her and Douglas Anderson’s expanded edition of *Tolkien On Fairy-Stories* (2008). It is a systematic examination of how *Smith* stands as one practical application of the principles Tolkien set out in his 1939 “On Fairy-Stories.” I say *one*, because Flieger and Anderson described *The Lord of the Rings* in just the same way—“the practical application and demonstration of [its] principles”—in *Tolkien On Fairy-Stories* (15). One quibble in this otherwise exemplary essay: Flieger writes that “[o]f all Tolkien’s works large and small, *Smith of Wootton Major* has perhaps received the least critical attention from both scholars and the public at large” (57–8). Really? Less attention than *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *Roverandom*, or *Mr. Bliss*? Then, later, Flieger observes that “[m]uch critical speculation has been expended on the possible autobiographical elements” (67) in *Smith*. The reader is left unsure just how much attention—little or much—the story has been paid.

I found the next essay a bit more of a slog; the title of Colin Duriez’s chapter, “Myth, Fact and Incarnation,” is the only succinct thing about it. It is an ambitious ramble among “notoriously elusive” (78) concepts such as *knowledge*, *meaning*, and *imagination*, backstopped by *myth*. Duriez is hobbled to some extent by treating a topic of such considerable vagueness. It can be difficult at times to keep the many threads, let alone the larger tapestry, in sight, but with perseverance (and a second reading, in my case), it turns out to be pretty thought-provoking. Duriez contextualizes his argument with the other Inklings, Tolkien and Barfield, as well as with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and George MacDonald, making his one of the more broadly applicable essays in the collection (along with Shippey’s; and Segura’s, which I’ll come to later). One specific objection: if the author was hobbled by his choice of subject, his crutch is an over-dependence on lengthy block quotation. Duriez gives us nearly 2,000 words just in the block quotes alone! Adding to that the quotations within the text, the number is substantially greater. Duriez should have been more selective, pruned those quotations he felt were necessary, and written the rest in his own voice.

Patrick Curry’s “Iron Crown, Iron Cage: Tolkien and Weber on Modernity and Enchantment” left little impression on me. According to his abstract, Curry wishes to liken Tolkien to the German sociologist, Max Weber, yet he opens the essay with the admission, “Tolkien [...] almost certainly never read the social philosopher Max Weber”(99)—not a promising basis for any valuable comparison. Beyond noting the fact of certain similarities, what else can

Curry conclude? The answer, perhaps, is the environmentalist agenda slipped in at the end. But the essay does not prepare the reader for the appearance of this agenda in what is really a rather weak conclusion. In any case, the author makes no substantive attempt to explain how the understanding of Tolkien may be advanced through Weber. Worse, how can Curry discuss Tolkien's and Weber's metaphors of the iron crown and iron cage, respectively, without mentioning Éowyn's greatest fear: "A cage, [...] behind bars" (Tolkien *LotR* V.2.767)?

Returning to myth, co-editor Thomas Honegger assembles a substantial and readable treatment of Tolkien's putative aim to (re)construct a lost English mythology in "A Mythology for England? Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth." The (mis)quote, a "mythology for England," has become such a commonplace (see Fisher) that the idea is seldom now explored, *au fond*. This essay is also something of a counterpoint to Tom Shippey's "Tolkien and Iceland: The Philology of Envy"; both authors explain which mythologies Tolkien felt were and were not suitable raw material for his purposes, but from different angles (112–4; Shippey 192–3). Honegger's conclusion is his *coup de grâce* – that Tolkien eventually solved the problem of making his mythology English, without a foundational English mythology, by presenting it through the eyes of those "epitome[s] of (modern) Englishness" (126), the hobbits. One slip: Honegger seems sure that the first edition of *The Lord of the Rings* was published without its appendices (125), but only the promised index was omitted.

Devin Brown's essay, "Lewis's View of Myth as a Conveyer of Deepest Truth," is something of a companion to the chapter by Duriez (as Bachmann's is to Shippey's). Unfortunately, it's the weaker of the two, and too short to make its point convincingly. Despite his own brevity, Brown joins Duriez in excessive block-quotation – all the more conspicuous in such a short essay. Brown wishes to show that Lewis "often found a *creative* format to be more powerful than an *expository* one" (131, italics original). But this is a difficult point to make under the best conditions. Here, Brown leaves too many questions unanswered. If true, why did Lewis write so much expository nonfiction (much more than Tolkien)? And Brown seems to assume that Lewis's fiction and non-fiction have the same goals. Do they?

What follows, in Miryam Librán-Moreno's "'A Kind of Orpheus-Legend in Reverse': Two Classical Myths in the Story of Beren and Lúthien," is a *tour de force* analysis of the probable influence of two Classical antecedents on Tolkien: primarily the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the tale of Protesilaus and Laodameia adduced to help explain certain "aberrant and isolated detail[s]" (169). Librán-Moreno makes a very sophisticated point (159) of explaining why Tolkien must have drawn on the Classical source for the Orpheus legend, rather than on medieval retellings such as *Sir Orfeo*, as would normally be assumed. She meanders confidently among Tolkien's many recensions, as well as in and

among a dizzying array of Classical sources, both Greek and Latin (quoting passages in the original languages, with accompanying translation). The essay may be almost too scholarly for some readers. Classical authors and works are abbreviated without the sort of key a lay-reader might require; and the physical organization of the piece resembles a dissertation in miniature. It's a small complaint, but the essay might have been written with an audience of less specialized erudition in mind, perhaps zeroing in solely on the Orpheus / Eurydice legend and leaving Protesilaus and Laodameia for another day.

If the foregoing essay is long and complex, readers may blanch at Eugenio M. Olivares-Merino's "A Monster that Matters: Tolkien's Grendel Revisited." This is an *enormously* long essay on the subject of Tolkien's personal views on the monster. At 54 pages, it's the longest chapter in the book – six times longer than the book's shortest. In fact, it's longer than the essay it makes its subject, Tolkien's "Beowulf: The Monsters and The Critics!" Longer, but not much broader. Olivares-Merino combines excessive quotation from Tolkien and his contemporaries with little more than systematic restatement of Tolkien's thesis (with Drouot's analysis of earlier versions of the essay). I applaud his use of the raw material Drouot has provided; however, there is too little in the way of application or new research in this essay. When the author does take off on his own, I find some of his readings of *Beowulf* are questionable. This is probably the essay *least germane* to the book's mission—to assess the Inklings' attitudes to myth, magic, and art, about which the author, in all his many pages, says virtually nothing. Most disappointing is his admission, *sub finem*, "I am not a devoted reader of Tolkien's fiction, though I assume that much could be said about the relevance of Grendel behind some of the creatures in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*" (237). But that's the essay I would have preferred to read!

Margarita Carretero-González's "A Tale as Old as Time, Freshly Told Anew: Love and Sacrifice in Tolkien, Lewis and Rowling" also struggles for relevance. The author begins by asking whether Rowling is somewhat of an Inklings herself. No, she decides—so why then are we reading about Rowling? And regrettably, this essay was written before the publication of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*; luckily, the author's guesses about the final Harry Potter book were prescient (258–9). The "responses to commands of love" (254) she puts forward as examples are the most obvious ones: Lily Potter's and Albus Dumbledore's sacrifices to protect Harry (Rowling); Aslan's sacrifice for Edmund on the Stone Table (Lewis); Gandalf's sacrifice in Moria, and Frodo and Sam's sacrificial interrelationship (Tolkien)—all contextualized in the rubric of Lewis's *Four Loves*. One quibble: I think Carretero-González misreads when she says that Aragorn called Sam's "the darkest road" (262). Surely Aragorn means Sam *and* Frodo's road; "yours" here is plural, not singular. Who would say that Sam's road was darker than Frodo's? Finally, the author concludes an already footling essay

with a weak cliché: “after all, it is love that truly makes the world go round” (263).

Continuing to drift from the central point of the collection, we come to Fernando Soto and Marta García de la Puerta’s “The Hidden Meanings of the Name ‘Ransom’: Strange Philology and ‘Contradiction’ in C.S. Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy.” Strange philology indeed! I find much to disagree with in the authors’ study of the name Ransom. They suggest that Ransom is meant to be “ram’s son” = the lamb (i.e., Lamb of God, hence Christ), and they construct an unnecessarily complex argument to demonstrate it. But while interesting, it rests on a conditional (270): *if* Lewis had done so-and-so ... But the fact is, he did *not*. How strong can such an argument be? There is some good thinking here, but mixed up with one too many indefensible leaps. The authors ultimately fail to resolve the “gross literary inconsistency” (282) between *Perelandra* and *Out of the Silent Planet*.

John Garth’s “As Under a Green Sea: Visions of War in the Dead Marshes” is a thoughtful and thorough study of an important chapter in *The Lord of the Rings*. Garth’s emphasis, as in his previous work, is historical. The essay reveals Tolkien’s creative sublimation of the nostalgia and horror of his personal war experience into aspects of Middle-earth: “the window looks not only into the remote past of Middle-earth but also into Tolkien’s own memory” (296). But despite the essay’s quality, one may again question its relevance. Garth briefly touches on the artistic/aesthetic aspect of Tolkien’s work (298–9), but he says almost nothing about myth or magic, and little enough about art when you come down to it.

The final essay of the volume, “Leaf by Niggle and the Aesthetics of Gift: Towards a Definition of J.R.R. Tolkien’s Notion of Art,” serves as editor Eduardo Segura’s closing statement. This piece helps to bring the collection to a relevant finish and even to define its larger purpose(s) in ways his Preface did not. At the heart of the essay is Segura’s quite defensible argument that “Tolkien developed a true theology of art, a notion of artistic work as a means of redemption, of recovery of initial grace—the grace before the Fall” (320). Segura goes on to highlight points of contact with Lewis and Barfield, demonstrating a broader Inklings focus than most of the other essays (barring Shippey and Duriez). Somewhat odd is the fact that Segura invokes G.K. Chesterton in the abstract for the essay, but never in the essay itself. Well, I suppose we can’t have everything.

—Jason Fisher

Works Consulted

- Ashenden, Gavin. *Charles Williams: Alchemy and Integration*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2008.
- Drout, Michael. "Towards a Better Tolkien Criticism." *Reading The Lord of the Rings: New Writings on Tolkien's Trilogy*. Ed. Robert Eaglestone. London, New York: Continuum, 2006. 15–28.
- Fisher, Jason. "Mythology for England." *The J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*. Ed. Michael D.C. Drout. New York: Routledge, 2007. 445–7.
- Lewis, C.S. *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Shippey, Tom. "Tolkien and Iceland: The Philology of Envy." *Roots and Branches: Selected Papers on Tolkien*. Cormarë Series, No. 11. Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers, 2007. 187–202.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.
- . *Tolkien On Fairy-stories*. Expanded edition, with Commentary and Notes by Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008.
- . "Words, Phrases, and Passages in Various Tongues in *The Lord of the Rings*." Ed. Christopher Gilson. *Parma Eldalamberon 17* (2007).
- and Michael D. C. Drout. *Beowulf and the Critics*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002.



FROM NARNIA TO A SPACE ODYSSEY: THE WAR OF IDEAS BETWEEN ARTHUR C. CLARKE AND C. S. LEWIS. Ed., and with introduction, by Ryder W. Miller. New York: iBooks, 2003. Soft-cover reprint [2005?]: ISBN 1-59687-143-1. 176 pp. \$12.95.

FROM NARNIA TO A SPACE ODYSSEY (a misleading title since Narnia is not important in the book) consists of three parts: several introductory essays, the sixteen- or seventeen-letter correspondence of Clarke and Lewis, and a section of stories and essays by the two authors. Several of the letters are reproduced (Lewis, 4, 44, 176; Clarke, 45). This review will take these up in this order: the letters (because this is the major interest of the book), the introductory essays, and the reprinted writings. The emphasis, of course, for this audience will be on Lewis.

But, first, a bibliographic note. The trade paper edition being reviewed has a different cover, different ISBN, and smaller size than the 2003 hardcover, but unfortunately does not give the year of its printing, though a check of

WorldCat shows another paperback reprint dated 2005. In different printings, the subtitle varies between “War of Ideas” and “War of Letters.” The hardcover is distributed by Simon and Schuster; this softcover by Publishers Group West. Spot-checking has found no differences in the text between the two versions of the book; it is apparently a new printing, not a new edition.

The book was announced as the correspondence of Clarke and Lewis. The sixteen letters appear on pp. 36 through 52 (that is, sixteen pages of letters—fifteen if one makes allowance for the two half-pages of reproductions). At the end of the book appears a letter from Clarke to Lewis (“wherever you are . . .”) written for the book in 2003. All of Lewis’s letters are in Walter Hooper’s edition of the *Collected Letters*. The letters start from Clarke’s upset over a passage in *Perelandra* against Interplanetary Societies and Rocket Clubs that have the goal of mankind taking its corruption to other planets, and Lewis’s polite reply: (1) Clarke to Lewis, Dec. 1943; (2) CSL, 7 Dec. 1943 [*Collected Letters*, Vol. II, 593-94]. Thereafter come several letters when Clarke sends essays to Lewis or asks him to speak to meetings, and Lewis thanks him politely for the gifts and tells him of conflicts with speaking: (3) ACC, 23 Sept. 1946; (4) CSL 24 Sept. 1946 [741]; (5) CSL, 2 Oct. 1946 [742]; (6) CSL, 2 Jan. 1947 [752]; (7) ACC, 13 Feb. 1953; (8) CSL, 14 Feb. 1953 [Vol. III, 292-93]; (9) ACC, 16 Feb. 1953. The most interesting letter by Lewis in this group is the eighth—besides a joke in a post script, he comments “The fatal objection [to engaging in a debate at the British Interplanetary Society] is that I should be covering ground I have already covered in print and on which I have nothing to add. I know that is how many lectures are made, but I never do it.” Lewis’s attitude, of course, suggests why he produced such a variety of works. The final exchange takes place because Joy Davidman sent Lewis a copy of Clarke’s *Childhood’s End*, and Lewis replied to her with an enthusiastic letter; she showed Lewis’s letter to Clarke, and Clarke then wrote, wanting to use an excerpt on the British edition: (10) ACC, 17 Jan. 1954; (11) CSL, 20 Jan. 1954 [410-11]; (12) CSL, 20 Jan. 1954 again [411-12]; (13) ACC, 21 Jan. 1954; (15) ACC, 24 Jan. 1954; (16) CSL, 26 Jan. 1954 [417-18]. And then Clarke’s letter written to Lewis for this volume, with a reference to their meeting in a pub for a debate, with their seconds (Lewis was accompanied by Tolkien): (17) ACC, 17 July 2003.

And now for the major problem. Miller, the editor, says that he had problems reading Lewis’s handwriting (6). One wonders why he did not do a little investigation on where to get help and then contact the Wade Center—that is, for his original hardback edition. For the 2005 reprinting, if that is what it is, he had the first two volumes of the *Collected Letters* available to him (Vol. II appeared in 2004) and could have corrected many of these errors. The point is that all the substantive letters by Lewis have passages which make little sense:

If you find that the most popular stories were those in wh. its cowboys always betrayed his hearts to the crooks and deserted his girl for the vermin [...]. (No. 2)

Here is Hooper's version:

[...] in which the cowboy always betrayed his pals to the crooks and deserted his girl for the vamp [...]. (593-94)

By the way, Miller misspells *scientifiction* as *scientifiction* in this letter. (In a quotation from *Perelandra*, Miller renders it as *scientifiction* [16]; but he gets the correct spelling in Clarke's first letter [36].) In the eighth letter, Miller transcribes Lewis's "I might at a pinch show great fortitude about the boredom of the audience [...]" and "[...] I know the sort of thing" as "I might at a kind show [...]" and "[...] I know the best of thing."

It would be overkill to quote the rest of the passages—some worse than these—but the reader is advised to read the eleventh, twelfth, and fifteenth letters with Hooper's version at hand. (A few errors appear in Clarke's letters, but none that make him sound like an idiot.) In short, as a book of the Clarke-Lewis correspondence, this volume is useful for Clarke's.

The introductory essays consist of four items, the first three by Miller ("Introduction: The Other Clarke and Lewis," 5-10; "C. S. Lewis: 'Protector of the Heavens,'" 11-20; and "Arthur C. Clarke: 'Man of the Century,'" 21-32). After these is a short preface by Clarke (33-34).

Miller's introduction gives a background of the book and the letters, with a contrast of Lewis and Clarke. Oddly, Miller never mentions Clarke's statement that religious belief is indistinguishable from insanity (made in *3001: The Final Odyssey*, in Ch. 19, with a comment in Clarke's notes at the back of the book identifying it as his opinion)—this would certainly have set up a basic contrast of Clarke and Lewis. Also, Miller claims that Clarke's influence brought Lewis down to earth in *That Hideous Strength* (10; cf. 17), which certainly gives Clarke more influence over Lewis's writing career than anyone else has ever found. What in the one letter Clarke had then written Lewis—in Dec. 1943—so influenced *That Hideous Strength*, one wonders? Lewis's book was published in England in 1945, but its preface is dated by Lewis as "Christmas Eve 1943." This implies that the book was written before Christmas Eve. Actually, Lewis writes E.R. Eddison on 29 April 1943 that he has written "about 300 sheets" of the third book of the Ransom Trilogy (*Collected Letters*, II, 571), so Miller's guess (probably based only on the book's date of publication) does not seem supportable.

Miller's essay on Lewis is also dubious at spots, partly because of seeming lack of knowledge. He never cites Lewis's "A Reply to Professor Haldane," which would have shown him that, for example, Lewis knew the canals did not exist on Mars when he wrote, and would have clarified the type of

books that Lewis intended to write in the Ransom Trilogy. Thus, Miller attempts to explain away Lewis's treatment of Mars:

The Space Trilogy was written in a different era from now, a time where [*sic*] we didn't know as much about our neighbor worlds in the solar system. One could still write speculatively about our solar system, and its possibly inhabited worlds. (9)

What is wrong with this is not the basic facts but Miller's assumption that Lewis wanted to be realistic.

One could go through the essay on Lewis, pointing to comments that seem much more at a popular, inexact level than well developed. One example may stand for several:

Lewis's vision [in the Ransom Trilogy] departed from H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, which he read as a child. He produced a vision of the cosmos without evil extraterrestrials and a controlling evolutionary framework. (14)

First, Wells' *The First Men in the Moon* influenced the spaceship in *Out of the Silent Planet* and the discussion with the Grand Lunar in Wells' book influenced the meeting with the Oyarsa of Mars. Horace Jules in *That Hideous Strength* is a parody of H. G. Wells. Thus, Wells is very important to two-thirds of the Ransom Trilogy, and Miller's picking of a poor example of Wells' influence seems beside the point. Second, if Miller had wanted to discuss why *The War of the Worlds* did not influence Lewis, he could have considered Lewis's critique of the book in "On Stories." (If he had wanted to discuss Lewis's ideas on evolution, he could have started with Lewis's "The Funeral of a Great Myth.")

A more interesting comment by Miller on Lewis (if very obscurely stated) is this:

When it came to science, Lewis became uncomfortable when you judged him by the *meaning* of his works, rather than the *intentions* which he denied, but there is justification for doing so. (18)

What he seems to be saying is that Lewis's fictional works reveal Lewis's *real* attitudes, not his cleverly argued essays. Lewis's answer to Haldane's reading of NICE as revealing Lewis's anti-science bias can be used as an illustration, since Lewis strongly denies that NICE has anything to do with real science and points to Hingest as an example meant to make this point. Miller (presumably) would insist that the depiction of NICE *is* an attack on science, even if Lewis did not understand it as such. Of course, some validity may be attributed to Miller's position, for authors do not always control their works thoroughly. Lewis was an odd mixture: he sometimes had great control of his fiction, but nevertheless the works were based on an imaginative core arising as unexplained images to his

mind. One would have liked to see what case Miller could have made for his position, but he did not develop it with specific details.

Equally intriguing is Miller's comment that "some of [Weston's] arguments" in the debate before the Martian Oyarsa are those that will be "sanitized and embraced years later by the believers in scientific progress, including Arthur C. Clarke" (15). Obviously, the arguments for the celebration of Life already existed, and the later believers did not go to Lewis and carefully "sanitize" his arguments, but the tradition that Lewis was attacking is recognizable—Miller's comment shows—in Weston's *apologia*.

(Incidentally, Miller tends to see Clarke too much as the pro-science author. Clarke is an interesting example of someone who sometimes is very technically based in his fiction—as in *A Fall of Moondust*—and sometimes very romantic—as in *Against the Fall of Night*.)

And finally some brief comments on the selections chosen for the authors to fill out the volume. Clarke has the majority of the works—five stories and two essays; Lewis has two stories and one essay. Admittedly, if one is looking for Lewis's short SF, one will not find much beyond "Ministering Angels" and "Forms of Things Unknown" (technically a science-fiction story and a science-fantasy story). Sometimes an interesting connection exists between the choices: presumably Clarke's "A Meeting with Medusa" is meant to balance "Forms of Things Unknown"—one of Medusa's sisters in Lewis and a form of life on Jupiter named after Medusa in Clarke. (Clarke uses a number of classical references in his story.) One of Clarke's essays—"The Moon and Mr. Farnsworth"—oddly pushes the author toward Lewis's position of not wanting mankind to spread its attitudes and actions onto other worlds, although for Clarke it is a quarantine only "for a few more centuries." (Clarke includes Lewis as one of "the most dangerous enemies of astronautics" in this same essay.)

The problem with the selections from Lewis is that they do not argue his position very well. (The second story has flaws in it that may explain why Lewis did not publish it in his lifetime.) How about adding "A Reply to Professor Haldane" and "Unreal Estates" to "On Science Fiction" for more on SF, and "Religion and Rocketry" and "The Funeral of a Great Myth" for more on the relationship of science and religion? Obviously, Lewis has no more SF stories. ("The Shoddy Lands" does not have a science-fictional development). But one could add several poems by Lewis that deal with these themes. The obvious ones are "Evolutionary Hymn," "Prelude to Space: *An Epithalamium*," "Science-Fiction Cradlesong," and "An Expostulation: *Against too many writers of science fiction*."

What this review has said or implied several times is that this book is poor in dealing with Lewis. Its treatment of his letters is, frankly, subprofessional. It is useful for Clarke's letters (only quoted in part in Hooper's edition of Lewis's letters), so anyone wanting to discuss the Clarke-Lewis

relationship will need to have this book available. Clarke's two-page preface to the book has a Tolkien anecdote unrelated to the pub meeting with Lewis and Clarke discussing space travel, and Clarke also says he does not remember for certain but he *may* have encouraged Joy Davidman to send Lewis the copy of *Childhood's End* that then produced the blurb from Lewis. Despite these minor touches of interest, for most readers of Lewis this volume is not recommended.

—Joe R. Christopher



THE MIRROR CRACK'D: FEAR AND HORROR IN JRR TOLKIEN'S MAJOR WORKS. Ed. Lynn Forest-Hill. [Newcastle upon Tyne]: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 246 pp. US\$52.99 ISBN 13: 9781847186348. (Orders www.c-s-p.org).

THIS COLLECTION OF TEN ESSAYS (designated as "chapters") is more narrowly focused than its rather general title might suggest. As the introduction clarifies, the core of the collection consists of expanded versions of the three papers presented at the 2006 Leeds International Medieval Congress, with additional contributions by "established scholars and researchers." Therefore, although all the authors address fear and horror in the works of Tolkien, they do so primarily (though not exclusively) in terms of his medieval sources.

Maria Raffaella Benvenuto's brief contribution "From *Beowulf* to the Balrogs: The Roots of Fantastic Horror in *The Lord of the Rings*" asserts that Tolkien scholars have rather neglected the horror/Gothic aspects of his work, which she sees as his "personal reinterpretation" (6) of various motifs owing much to both medieval roots and nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. In only a few pages she discusses the theme of Middle-earth as a world besieged, followed by the Balrog, Gollum, Shelob, the Ringwraiths and Sauron. The amount of space devoted to each is frustratingly brief, from the admirably succinct to the near-superficial. However, the range of topics covered makes the paper function reasonably well as an introduction.

Many of the essays focus on specific characters or character types usually described as "monstrous." Reno E. Lauro and Rainer Nagel both tackle Shelob (who appears as a supporting player in a number of other papers as well). Lauro's "Of Spiders and (the Medieval Aesthetics of) Light: Hope and Action in

the Horrors of Shelob's Lair" discusses the perceived influence of the medieval philosophy and aesthetics of light (with a nod to Barfield's theories of "ancient semantic unity") on Tolkien in general and his depiction of Shelob in particular. Even this mildly philosophy-phobic reviewer found it compelling. Nagel ("Shelob and her Kin: The Evolution of Tolkien's Spiders") argues convincingly that Tolkien's spiders are consciously constructed symbols of "religious danger"—based on the evidence of etymology and the characteristics associated with spiders in medieval bestiaries (90).

Romauld Ian Lakowski ("Horror and Anguish: the Slaying of Glaurung and Medieval Dragon Lore") carefully traces the development of the Glaurung/Túrin confrontation through its various and often contradictory versions, noting both the clear debt to medieval sources and the occasional departures from that tradition. Julie Pridmore ("Evil Reputations: Images of Wolves in Tolkien's Fiction") looks at the influence of medieval literature and Northern European mythology on Tolkien's depictions of wolves, wargs and werewolves. She notes that unlike other appearances of wolfish creatures in Tolkien's *oeuvre*, the mutual destruction of Huan and Carcaroth in *The Silmarillion* fits the traditional medieval model of the wolfhound as the wolf's primary enemy. Amy Amendt-Raduege ("Barrows, Wights and Ordinary People: The Unquiet Dead in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*") presents a discussion of barrows, mounds and their various inhabitants in Middle-earth. Her satisfyingly detailed evidence for Tolkien's sources includes Icelandic legends, Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon traditions, and medieval ghostlore.

Providing a transition from these papers on specific characters or types to those dealing with broader themes is Jessica Burke's "Fear and Horror: Monsters in Tolkien and *Beowulf*." This is the longest paper in the collection, beginning with an attempt to define the concepts of fear, horror and monstrosity. The last leads to a detailed discussion of the close relationship between the monsters in *Beowulf* and those in Tolkien, particularly Melkor, Shelob and Gollum. Unfortunately, the section defining fear and horror is unconvincing—particularly using Darwin as a source rather than more recent scientific discoveries in neuropsychology—and frankly unnecessary. The detailed *Beowulf*/Tolkien comparison, including speculations on the nature of monstrosity, is much better argued and would have easily stood on its own.

Another contribution that could have benefited by more rigorous editing is Shandi Stevenson's "The Shadow beyond the Firelight: Pre-Christian Archetypes and Imagery Meet Christian Theology in Tolkien's Treatment of Evil and Horror". She argues that Tolkien's unique achievement was to imbue archetypes of Northern European pagan mythology with Christian theology. In the process of this transformation of worldview, people's attitudes changed from the fear of something supernatural but amoral and outside oneself to a

conception of evil that included fear and horror of *becoming* evil. There is much to ponder here (though I wonder if pre-Christian peoples were truly as lacking in hope she claims). However, she drives home her particular argument with too many repetitious examples, leaving little room to cover very broad archetypes of Northern European experience (fire, mountains, forests, beasts) more than superficially. Each of these topics is worthy of a paper in itself.

The remaining two broadly thematic papers are very satisfying in different ways. Kristine Larsen's "Shadow and Flame: Myth, Monsters and Mother Nature in Middle-earth" looks at the mythopoeic role of natural phenomena, particularly disasters. Given the importance of the world-making aspect of Tolkien's legendarium, this geomythological/astromythological approach is effective and refreshing. Michael Cunningham ("*The Cry in the Wind and the Shadow on the Moon: Liminality and the Construct of Horror in The Lord of the Rings*") focuses on a particular type of repeated narrative device in which characters interact with landscape and topography at points of transition and crossings of thresholds. He ably demonstrates how Tolkien repeatedly uses this technique—often very subtly—throughout *LotR* to elicit a frisson of danger, fear, and/or anticipation of distress in the reader.

As is typical of most thematic collections, there is some repetition of coverage among the various papers—the same medieval sources are mentioned frequently, and many of the same characters and incidents are treated multiple times. However, each author has a sufficiently different approach or viewpoint that this repetition is illuminating rather than tedious. Any editor of a collection must make the difficult decision to what extent unique authorial voices should be subjected to editorial control. I think a number of the contributors to this volume would have been served by more of the latter (as would the reader). In addition to tightening the focus of some of the entries, it might have served to eliminate a number of typographical errors and grammatical infelicities. All things considered, however, there is a great deal of interest and value here, and much inspiration for further research. Some of the topics addressed briefly could benefit by additional focused, in-depth treatments. I commend the editor for focusing on the fear/horror theme, an area not frequently addressed in Tolkien studies. (I also commend her for providing an index!) Should this collection inspire others to focus on Tolkien as a horror writer—particularly in terms of more contemporary comparisons and inspirations—a rich new vein of scholarship might be opened up.

—Edith L. Crowe



ARDA RECONSTRUCTED: THE CREATION OF THE PUBLISHED *SILMARILLION*.
Douglas Charles Kane. Bethlehem (PA): Lehigh University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0980149630. Hardcover. 280pp. \$65.00.

W. J. AUDEN, *TOLKIEN'S DEDICATED ADVOCATE* and one-time student, once wrote that "The words of a dead man / Are modified in the guts of the living" (93). Auden was thinking of Yeats in these lines, not Tolkien, but they describe very well the situation Tolkien's readers face today: attempting to digest an enormous (and still growing) body of Tolkien's posthumous writings, with new works *continuing* to appear nearly forty years after the author's death. Douglas Kane's *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion* is one particular attempt, in which the author seeks to digest a wide range of these texts, to sample the complex flavors of their interrelationship(s), and to chew on the role Tolkien's son, Christopher, played in making them more palatable to a larger audience. In *Arda Reconstructed*, then, Kane explores how Tolkien's words were "modified" in Christopher's "guts," and in the process reveals how they have been "modified" in his own as well.

To put it another way, there are many possible "Silmarillions"—Christopher's (published in 1977), Charles Noad's, Douglas Kane's, yours, mine. *Arda Reconstructed* seems to be about objective questions—what Christopher cut, what he changed—but at least as much, it is about *subjective* aspects of the work—*why* was it cut, what was the *effect*, how could the book have been *different*, and so on. In this, Kane acts both as a reader of *The Silmarillion*, and as a reviewer of Christopher's efforts to make sense of his father's "Silmarillion" papers. But we would do well to remember Tolkien's admonition (*Letters* 304): "[a] sharp distinction must be drawn between the tastes of reviewers [...] and of readers!" So warned, *this* reviewer will proceed with caution.

One marvels at the amount of work Kane has invested in his project and appreciates the rigor with which it is documented. Meticulous as it is, one has the feeling that—like all icebergs of scholarship—only perhaps one-tenth of the author's labor has actually made it onto the printed page. The only more thorough inspection of Tolkien's innumerable recensions, drafts, jottings, and marginalia that I can think of was Christopher's own—which Kane has largely retraced and reconstructed (to the extent possible). Kane's book is the most extensive and systematic use to which *The History of Middle-earth* has ever been put. Indeed, one justification for the very existence of that series must have been to make possible studies like *Arda Reconstructed*. Kane's book can be used as a roadmap to the vast welter of writings that form the "hypotext" of *The Silmarillion*, and it has enormous value for this alone, even before one considers the opinions Kane shares and the conclusions he ventures.

Where Kane is at his best is in his relentless ferreting out—so far as he can—of the source(s) of each and every paragraph in the published *Silmarillion*, from the tangle of source texts underlying it. Kane admits the likelihood that “some of the changes, omissions, and additions that I describe reflect textual material not included (for whatever reasons) in those works [*The History of Middle-earth*, etc.], or some other source only available to Christopher (including, perhaps, personal conversations that he had with his father)” (25). This is a prudent disclaimer, and it necessarily circumscribes Kane’s analysis. Not to have seen the original manuscripts housed in the Bodleian (and elsewhere, including any that might still be in Christopher’s hands) makes it difficult for Kane to push his argument to a definitive (or authoritative) conclusion, particularly because Christopher “mostly does not show the final step: his actual creation of the published work” (24).

So it must remain educated guesswork on Kane’s part, limited by what has been made public heretofore. Fortunately for Kane, with *The Children of Húrin*, Christopher has probably now published nearly everything of relevance to Kane’s pursuit. I say “probably” and “nearly,” because I can think of at least one text for which we have still seen none of the intermediate steps, and little discussion of them: *Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age*. But working within these logical limits, Kane has managed to collate the sources of almost every paragraph of *The Silmarillion*, a considerable achievement. These sources consist, in the main, of an intricate *mélange* of various versions of the *Quenta*, *The Annals of Aman*, and *The Grey Annals*, with frequent smaller borrowings from other texts—and in one case, from correspondence by Tolkien. In one extraordinary instance, Kane shows how a single paragraph was constructed from no fewer than six source texts (76). If much of *Arda Reconstructed* is not *revelatory*, it is because of the thoroughness of *The History of Middle-earth*. But what Kane does do is to put the copious source texts into a logical, digestible order; explain how *The Silmarillion* was assembled from that farrago of sources; summarize and comment on the most important changes, omissions, and (more rarely) inventions Christopher made; and finally, speculate as to some of the reasons and motives for them.

But hold on a moment. To make judgments about changes or reductions in “Tolkien’s vision” for “The Silmarillion” presupposes an understanding of just what Tolkien’s vision was—to the extent this was ever fixed and knowable. It seems that Kane sometimes presumes he understands that vision better than Christopher does. Kane repeatedly claims that “Tolkien clearly intended” this or that (26, 63–4, 75, 84, 93, 98, 106–7, 190, *et passim*), sometimes on the authority of Tolkien’s own words, but often not. This is a difficult position to defend—first of all, because Christopher has had access to material and personal experience that Kane has not. Kane accuses Christopher of having made presumptions of *his own*

about Tolkien's intentions for "The Silmarillion"—fair enough—but in his own way, Kane is guilty of this too. To be fair, neither Kane, nor anyone else, can help but make presumptions. To go back to Auden, this is the unavoidable consequence of interpreting the unfinished works of a dead author. Kane laments virtually every omission Christopher made, but surely Tolkien would not have published *everything* he drafted? At one point, Kane cites Verlyn Flieger, quoting Tolkien's own words, that "it is the untold stories that are the most moving" (116). Later, Kane points out that Tolkien himself began a *sixth* version of the Beren and Lúthien story, designed to be a "somewhat more compressed text" than the fifth, "abandoned because it was getting too long" (173). Do not these clues from the author justify some of the omissions by the editor?

In addition to calling for the reinstatement of virtually every omission, Kane argues almost universally that Tolkien's latest writings should trump all others, but should they? There are well-known counterexamples. Perhaps most famous is the story of the Sun and Moon, where Christopher retained the earlier version despite intimations, and even drafts, of a major rethinking late in Tolkien's life. Kane—as I think most readers do—praises Christopher's retention of the earlier telling. Could there have been other situations (other than those where Kane concurs with Christopher's judgment) where the earlier was the better draft? It is difficult to know where to draw the line.

Kane occasionally compliments Christopher on his solution to a particularly thorny problem (63, 151, 175, 188), but much more often, he is critical of how Christopher "cannibalized" (92) his father's works to produce *The Silmarillion*. (I should point out that it was Christopher who first used "cannibalized" to describe his father's own writing habits, but in Kane's application of the word to Christopher, it can't help taking on a more judgmental tone.) Kane often acknowledges that Christopher had few choices for resolving these manifold difficulties, but he takes Christopher to task for not adopting a more inclusive (or "maximalist", as I have called it) approach. But Christopher indeed considered something like this. "[F]or a time," Christopher wrote in 1977,

I worked toward a book that would show something of this diversity, this unfinished and many-branched growth. But it became clear to me that the result would be so complex as to require much study for its comprehension; and I feared to crush *The Silmarillion* beneath the weight of its own history. I set myself, therefore, to work out a single text, by selection and arrangement. (Christopher Tolkien [4])

I think Kane (like Charles Noad, and no doubt others) wishes for something in between the two extremes: something in between the many-branched tree, so over-grown that it collapses under its own weight, as I daresay some would describe *The History of Middle-earth*; and the tree pruned of many of its youngest

branches and loveliest leaves, as Kane might describe Christopher's *Silmarillion*. For myself, I would tend to give Christopher the benefit of the doubt on most matters (as all trees need pruning), but Kane is absolutely justified in questioning what seem to be a large number of small and arbitrary omissions.

But Kane's opinion was shaped in the hindsight of *The History of Middle-earth*. Had Christopher followed Kane's more "inclusive" strategy from the beginning, it is entirely possible that *The Silmarillion* would have been a commercial failure—perhaps such a failure as to have prevented any subsequent material from ever reaching readers. Kane realizes this, but his arguments carry a note of assumed authority which I do not feel is entirely appropriate. Let us not forget that "The Silmarillion," in much the same raw form as Christopher had to work with, was rejected by two publishers during Tolkien's lifetime. Tolkien's reputation by the time of his death was the main reason for its publication in 1977, but Christopher and Guy Gavriel Kay's work to assemble a single text (though not without mistakes, we know) was a large part of its success. And only a modest success, at that.

And what a task it must have been, to assemble a single text from such raw materials! "Dizzying," a word Kane uses more than once (63, 117), aptly characterizes the complexity of the *Silmarillion* text and its relationship to its many precursors. One of the most useful features in *Arda Reconstructed* is its twenty-five tables, detailing the sources, paragraph by paragraph, from which Christopher assembled the work for publication. In rare cases, particularly in the last chapters of the *Quenta Silmarillion*, Kane is unable to identify the source of a sentence or paragraph. He concludes either that Christopher consulted a text as yet unpublished, or else that he introduced the material editorially (Christopher has acknowledged several such inventions explicitly). The tables provide an easily navigable guide for intrepid readers who would follow in Kane's footsteps, as he followed in Christopher's. Thus, readers may be allowed to judge Kane's conclusions for themselves.

For his base text, Kane uses the second edition of *The Silmarillion* (1999), yet he never says anything in his book about the changes from the first to the second edition. A systematic guide to these changes, however few and small they may be, remains a desideratum. Perhaps we may see this as an appendix to a revised edition of *Arda Reconstructed*. If not, we will have to wait for the revised edition of Wayne Hammond's *Descriptive Bibliography* (in preparation). Here is my point: one can, and should, ask—but Kane never does—why, having come to regret some changes and omissions over the course of preparing *Unfinished Tales* and *The History of Middle-earth*, Christopher never made such corrections (reversing alterations, reinstating omissions) as could be done without significant modification. If anything, Christopher's work on *The History of Middle-earth*

would seem to have been the ideal preparation, and justification, for a genuine *revised* edition of *The Silmarillion*.

Throughout *Arda Reconstructed*, Kane takes the most pain to point out when Christopher has omitted passages in the source material from the final published text. Often, the wisdom of such omissions is a matter for legitimate debate, as in Christopher's choice to remove the device of the narrative frame and its satellite characters, Rúmil, Ælfwine, and Pengoloð (36, *et passim*). But Kane spotlights many instances where omissions seem to have been both unnecessary and detrimental to the final text. For instance, Christopher omitted a fuller and more powerful account of Melkor's attack on Formenos, with the much grislier details recounted to Fëanor by his own son (106–7). So too, the actual words of the Oath of Fëanor, of which Kane finds it "remarkable [...] that Christopher chose to leave out this incredibly powerful text [...], and to replace it with the older version in which the oath is simply described in bald terms" (111). I agree. And this might have been an opportune moment for Kane to refer readers to the "Sí Qente Fëanor" text, another extant version of the actual Oath, published in the linguistic journal, *Parma Eldalamberon*. This is a very early, but equally interesting, prose passage, representing Fëanor's Oath in Qenya, the earliest form of the High-elven language.

One objection I would raise in Kane's endless cataloguing of Christopher's omissions is that he too rarely takes the time to consider why they might have been made. Instead, again and again, he "cannot imagine why"—or some variation thereof—Christopher would have cut whatever it is he cut (72, 90, 91, 96, 109, 140, 161, 166, 179, 212, 213, 235, *et passim*). *Arda Reconstructed* would have benefited from Kane's putting more effort into *trying* to imagine why—that is, considering what legitimate reasons there could have been for each omission. This would have strengthened those cases where there genuinely does not seem to have been any good reason. There are a few instances where Kane does dig into the matter, attempt to see both sides, and then register his opinion; had this been the rule and not the exception, his conclusions would have carried more persuasive weight than they do.

Two of the most controversial of Christopher's cuts are the Second Prophecy of Mandos (236–9) and the fuller account of the story of Finwë and Míriel (75–6). The latter, Kane sees as only one example in a larger trend of reducing the roles of female characters in *The Silmarillion*: "There are at least eight female characters whose role or character could be said to be reduced to a greater or lesser extent by the editorial decisions made [by Christopher]: Uinen, Galadriel, Míriel, Nerdanel, Indis, Ungoliant, Arien, and Nellas (in addition to the removal of the two or three daughters of Finwë and Indis, of Baragund and Belegund's older sister, Beleth[,]) and of Andreth from the *Athrabeth*" (252). Of all the changes Christopher made, this is "perhaps [Kane's] biggest complaint" (26).

But if the changes and omissions Kane describes do in fact constitute a purposeful reduction, then there is just as much reduction of the *male* characters (and almost certainly more). For Kane to call attention to only the female characters in this way—and to impute a motive to Christopher to actively reduce their presence in the narrative—strikes me as either disingenuous or careless.

Kane decries also the excision of short passages of description and characterization, and here I tend to agree. Had Christopher retained such passages, this might have helped to mitigate criticism of the spartan nature of *The Silmarillion*, especially as contrasted with *The Lord of the Rings*. One early review, for example, held that “

here [in *The Silmarillion*] Tolkien cares much more about the meaning and coherence of his myth than he does about these glories of the trilogy: rich characterization, imagistic brilliance, powerfully imagined and detailed sense of place, and thrilling adventure. [...] Numerous characters here have interest, [...] and though each important character has his fascinating quirks, the compression of the narrative and the fierce thematic focus give Tolkien no room to develop and explore those quirks as he does in the trilogy. (Gardner)

Many such descriptions and images as Gardner finds wanting were in fact written by Tolkien, but omitted by Christopher, and the compression Gardner alludes to was largely imposed by Christopher. Such objections raise once more the question of the viability of an *uncompressed* volume (as well as the question of whether Tolkien ever intended it to be like *The Lord of the Rings*)—but by now the point may be, as they say, academic.

Kane also highlights a few inventions by Christopher. Two chapters, “Of Aulë and Yavanna” and “Of the Sindar,” were constructed by Christopher out of ancillary material by his father but were never part of any version of the *Quenta*. More (in)famously, there is the matter of the Nauglamîr (141–2) and “The Ruin of Doriath” (207). Regarding the latter, Kane observes that “Tom Shippey cites [one passage] as an example of Tolkien’s genius for creating compelling images. Yet, as we have seen, Thingol’s death in the dark recesses of Menegroth was completely an invention of the editors” (216). Though Kane is circumspect enough, pointing out Shippey’s “mistake” is perhaps insensitive. Handled just a bit more carelessly, it could have appeared that Kane was making a fool of Shippey, implying gullibility. Alternatively, one might say that if Shippey could be “taken in” (as of course, we all were), it is a sign that Christopher’s *invention* was of a quality the equal to his father’s. Kane dodges the bullet—*just*. And let me note here, since I have quoted Kane referring to the “editors” (plural), that throughout *Arda Reconstructed*, Kane accords Guy Gavriel Kay equal status to Christopher as a co-editor. Though probably no one but

Christopher and Kay really know the extent of the latter's assistance, Kane is clearly overstating his role. It would have been better not to inflate Kay's contribution without clear cause.

Summing up, I find *Arda Reconstructed* to be a meticulously researched and valuable new reference work (one of all too few) on *The Silmarillion*. If I have been hard on it, take that for engagement with the book and its author's ideas, and *not* as discouragement to potential readers. Moreover, it has the added benefit of approaching the work from the relatively new angle of considering Christopher's role as a vigorous editor, and Kane is to be congratulated for confronting the matter directly. He presses Christopher hard on many points, even candidly questioning his motives and judgment in a couple of cases (98, 239). He sometimes goes too far, but on balance, I find much of his criticism valid, and most of his questions worth asking. Even when his reach exceeds his grasp, at least he is reaching in interesting new directions. His study also throws a brighter light on just how complex the underlying texts and their interrelationships really are, and how Herculean a task Christopher faced in bringing these inchoate works to a larger audience, both in *The Silmarillion* and fourteen subsequent books. It is a tight and functional abridgement of much of *The History of Middle-earth* itself—an abridgement, but not a replacement. Finally, it is a blueprint to another possible "Silmarillion" (one I might actually like to read!)—and a roadmap to further exploration in that mythopoeic space.

—Jason Fisher

WORKS CONSULTED

- Auden, W. H. *Another Time*. New York: Random House, 1940.
- Fisher, Jason. "From Mythopoeia to Mythography: Tolkien, Lönnrot, and Jerome." *The Silmarillion: Thirty Years On*. Ed. Allan Turner. Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers, 2007. 111–38.
- Gardner, John. "The World of Tolkien." Rev. of *The Silmarillion*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. *The New York Times*, October 23, 1977, Section 7:1.
- Hammond, Wayne G. *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography*. With the assistance of Douglas A. Anderson. New Castle (DE): Oak Knoll Press, 1993.
- Noad, Charles E. "On the Construction of 'The Silmarillion'." *Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on The History of Middle-earth*. Eds. Verlyn Flieger and Carl F. Hostetter. Westport (CT): Greenwood Press, 2000. 31–68.
- Tolkien, Christopher. *The Silmarillion [by] J.R.R. Tolkien: A Brief Account of the Book and its Making*. [Boston]: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter. With the assistance of Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
- . "Sí Qente Fëanor." Ed. by Christopher Gilson. *Parma Eldalamberon 15* (2004): 31–40.

NIGHT OPERATION. Owen Barfield. [United Kingdom]: Barfield Press UK, 2008. 64 pp. \$12.99. 978-0-9559582-1-2.

EAGER SPRING. Owen Barfield. [United Kingdom]: Barfield Press UK, 2008. 143 pp. \$14.99. 978-0-9559582-0-5.

THE THREE PRINCIPAL INKLINGS were noted for their novels – though “romance” would be a better word for most of Lewis’s and Tolkien’s work for adults – but none of the other senior Inklings wrote much prose fiction, except for Owen Barfield, who is a curious case. Some scholars, such as Diana Pavlac Glyer, classify Barfield’s *Worlds Apart* and *Unancestral Voice* as novels, but they are philosophical dialogues with only the thinnest of novelistic coating. In the books in hand, Barfield shows a little more interest in the narrative art, but here too his interest is less in telling a story than in using it as a framework for expressing his ideas of the mind. This is a form of art going back at least as far as Plato, and practiced by such distinguished modern philosophers as Douglas R. Hofstadter, usually with blunter didactic intent than here.

Barfield’s philosophical writings can be abstract or even abstruse – W.H. Lewis notoriously considered them unintelligible – and when faced with a Barfieldian observation that all language is essentially metaphorical, or that our understanding of the physical universe is a result of shared conscious assumptions about its nature, the average reader may wonder: What are you supposed to do with this knowledge? What effect does it have on your personal philosophy and on the way you should live your life?

To address these questions, Barfield turns to fiction. For many authors, fiction is the more opaque medium and non-fiction is where they turn to make themselves clearer—one thinks of Tolkien patiently explaining in letters what he was up to in *The Lord of the Rings*, or Lewis deliberately hiding Christian symbolism in Narnia—but for Barfield, fiction is a practicum, a thought experiment. His fictional works, including the philosophical dialogues, are all intellectual histories of their characters, showing what they think, and what they do, in response to in response to stimuli. Yet in that context they can be interesting narratives.

Apart from those dialogues, however, Barfield’s fiction has been hard to find. His major early novel of the 1920s, *English People*, has never yet been published. Now two shorter works of his later years have appeared as modestly sized separate paperback books from the Barfield Press, an imprint set up by Barfield’s literary estate to make his works more conveniently available.

Night Operation, a novelette or short novella, was written in 1975 and first serialized in a periodical in 1983-84. *Eager Spring*, a long novella written in 1988, was announced for publication the following year but never appeared in that form. This is the first separate book publication for *Night Operation* (which

also appeared in the collection *A Barfield Sampler* in 1993) and the first publication ever for *Eager Spring*. Each short book appears with an introduction by an American Barfield scholar, Jane Hipolito for *Night Operation* and John D. Rateliff for *Eager Spring*. Each offers a clear direction to help the naïve reader into an understanding of the significance of the story.

Night Operation is a dystopian science fiction tale, deliberately reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave, and as robustly denunciatory as Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* or *The Great Divorce*, whose readers may find the satiric descriptions here somewhat familiar. It is a story of three young men raised in a regimented and repellent future society, dwelling in the remnants of our underground sewers. In a wild extrapolation from some 1960s and 1970s fringe cultures, this society teaches its youngsters to love ugliness and depersonalization. But the heroes—who have a relationship of friendship through differences, and even through outright opposition, similar to that which Barfield had with Lewis—can see something beyond that. They—in particular the principal character, Jon—rediscover fundamental morality through studying the old meanings of words, and, in a classic science fiction cliché, become the first people in ages who dare to go Outside. Barfield's breezily caustic anti-modernism, so reminiscent of Lewis, is thus combined with Tolkien's love for rooting around in the depths of language. Barfield's affinity to his fellow authors is no better shown than here.

Eager Spring is less sarcastic than *Night Operation*, but more penetrating in its analysis of what troubles our society. This is Barfield's ecological story. The human focus is on a young woman named Virginia. Like Jon in *Night Operation*, Vi expresses Barfieldian awareness of the world she lives in. In particular there are two things. One is a question which comes up in her reading: Why is Paleolithic art superior to Neolithic? Her husband, Leonard, though an archaeologist, cannot answer the question and does not even consider it important. But to Vi, it suggests the notion that human civilization is not one of continual progress, that earlier humans had an awareness of and connection with nature that may have been lost.

This primes her for further consideration of the second matter, which runs continually through the book: Our specific treatment of the natural environment around us. This is tracked through the fortunes of the spring whose name forms the story's title. When Vi first visits it, it is dry, through deforestation of the surrounding land and its consequent inability to hold water. But she meets a man who has made it his life's work to plant trees in the area, and on a later visit she finds that the spring is running. But later still it is fenced off, as the water is no longer safe to drink. Why? The answer to this question ties in with the reason for the original deforestation, the industrialization of the landscape.

At this point the story, which had begun with a country walk and an intellectual exercise, becomes genuinely exciting, in an Erin Brockovich way, as Vi becomes an active environmentalist and has her own close-up encounter with industrial pollution. This is the equivalent of the point in *Night Operation* where Jon makes the active move to go Outside. At the end of the novella, Vi presents Leonard with a short story, a *conte*, that she herself has written, and which is printed in full in the book. This reinforces the point by telling a similar story in a different setting, this time explicitly connecting industrialization to moral depravity as well as to the destruction of the landscape and the displacement of its people.

In all his fiction, Barfield takes his readers inside the intellectual processes of his characters, but he does not simplify or diminish these characters. The three boys of *Night Operation*, and the married couple of *Eager Spring*, are simultaneously very close and worlds apart in their thinking. Barfield is not interested in a conventional fictional depiction of a friendship or a marriage under stress. Instead, his focus is on Jon and Vi—and also the other principal characters—trying to make connections and conclusions in their minds that they can't always grasp.

But the thinking is always sharp and the language is straightforward. The penetrating thought which is characteristic of all Barfield's work comes through with particular clarity in this form of writing. Barfield is not concerned with the art of literature, but he is very concerned indeed with the art of philosophy.

—David Bratman

(Part of this review is adapted from the author's review of
A Barfield Sampler in *Mythprint*, Feb. 1995)

