10-15-1986

Early Review of Books by J.R.R. Tolkien: Part VI - VIII

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Abstract
Briefly annotated checklist of minor early secondary materials on Tolkien not represented in Judith A. Johnson's *Six Decades of Tolkien Criticism*. The three parts of the final article cover *Tree and Leaf*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, and *The Road Goes Ever On* and *Poems and Songs of Middle-earth*.

Additional Keywords
Sarah Beach

This article is available in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature: https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol13/iss1/12
were the ideas of "emergent evolution" which Weston espouses early in Perelandra (294). The following section, on Gerald Heard, contains several comparisons with Lewis (309, 312). Elsewhere in the book, Lewis is quoted on the eschatological aspects of the scientific romance (37), is pointed to, with Gerald Heard, for attempting the synthesis of "the scientific and religious world-views" (43), and is mentioned, along with others, for being influenced by the speculative essays of the period between the wars and for producing "speculative [appraisals] of the state of contemporary civilization, and... its prospects" (165). That is, Lewis belongs to his period.

Lewis' friendships with Barfield, Tolkien, and Williams are noted in the section on Lewis, but little is made of their works; Stableford does indicate that an analogous situation exists between the scientific romance and the metaphysical fantasy in his period of consideration as exists today between science fiction and the heroic fantasy, the latter flourishing in the wake of Tolkien.


Williams' poem was included in Lord David Cecil's The Oxford Book of Christian Verse (1940); and in An Inkling's Bibliography (29), "a stress on the lack of copyright for the poem in that volume may have implied that it was original there. But Davie, in reprinting the poem, credits Divorce (1920) as the origin (p. 305), although he also does not give a copyright notice — presumably the volume was uncopyrighted. In his notes, Davie prints the relevant portion of The Book of Common Prayer to illustrate this poem (p. 311).

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Early Review of Books by J.R.R. Tolkien
Compiled by George H. Thompson

**Part VI**

**Tree and Leaf**

_T&L '64_ London: A&U, 1964
_T&L '65_ Boston: HM, 1965

Anthony, Mother Mary, S.H.C.J. _Best Sellers_ 24 (15 March 1965), 488. [Tolkien's essay on the fairy-story as art form (a 1938 lecture, enlarged) may well be the most important analysis of the function of the poetic imagination since Coleridge.

_Brillan_ T&L '64

B., V. "More on Fairies". _Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror_. 5 June 1964, p. 5. [A brief review, not seen.]

_Brillan_ T&L '65


_Brillan_ T&L '65

Bingham, Mary. "From the Perilous Realm". _Courier Journal_ (Louisville, Ky.), 7 March 1965, Section IX, p. 5. [A descriptive appreciation with judicious quotations from _OF_. She gives the name "katharsis" to the "piercing glimpse of joy, and hearts desire" that Tolkien finds at the close of the successful fairy tale.]

_Brillan_ T&L '65

Booklist 61 (1 March 1965), 643. [A brief, purely descriptive review.]

_Brillan_ T&L '65

Briggs, K.M. _Folklore_ 75 (Winter 1964), 293-294. [Approaching the book from the point of view of _OF_., he argues that classification is a necessity, though Tolkien does not much approve of it. However, stories have been "handed down for the sake of delight and enlargement of the world," and Tolkien's essay is a timely reminder of this.]

_Brillan_ T&L '65

Brink, Adrian. "Tree and Leaf: J.R.R. Tolkien". _Graanta_ (Cambridge), 5 June 1966, pp. 36-37. [A sympathetic, well-informed summary and review. "So Tolkien presents his case and it is a consistent case. Whether it is credible or not is another matter all together, for its author does not ask for rational belief or disbelief. His philosophy is more a way of looking at the world than of thinking of it." LBN is not one of his best works.]

_Brillan_ T&L '64

Choice 3 (May 1966), 204. ["The essay is unique in the fields of folklore and philology." Brief.]

_Brillan_ T&L '65

Christian Century 82 (3 March 1965), 280. ["A sensible 85 page essay on fairy-stories precedes a fairy story in this over-priced 112-page book." This is the entire review.]

_Brillan_ T&L '65


_Brillan_ T&L '64

Daigless, Alice. "An April Shower to Share". _Saturday Review_ 48 (24 April 1965), 44. [Though not a Hobbit fan, she is favorably impressed by both parts of _OF. It is required reading for the many who are busily engaged in writing so-called modern fairy tales."

_Brillan_ T&L '65

Davenport, Guy. "The Persistence of Light". _National Review_ 17 (20 April 1965), 332-334. [This review of _OF_ is in fact a wide-ranging rhetorical article in praise of Tolkien. The divine vision has often been lost in modern literature but "in Tolkien has been reborn. He has escaped satire and irony on the one side and realism on the other." The theme of the essay on fairy stories is "that the imagination is a metamorphosis of reality rather than an evasion of it." Tolkien's stories are timeless because his creatures represent moral states. The statement that the writing of _LOTR_ was finished before World War II is incorrect. Concerning Tolkien's next work "It is, I was told this summer in England, 'not a romance but a history';"

_Brillan_ T&L '65
Eiseley, Loren. "The Elvish Art of Enchantment". Book Week (New York Herald Tribune), Children's Spring Book Festival, 9 May 1965, pp. 3, 27. Reprinted Horn Book Magazine 41 (Aug. 1965), 364-367. [A substantial review, discussing Tolkien's major fiction and emphasizing the insight to be gained from the essay OFS. "...the human mind is not confined to the universe of primary reality. It can create thought-worlds which outlive the artist and extend beyond the science of the actual." This is Tolkien's achievement in H and LOTR. They stand as a major creative act..."

T&L '65

"Faerie Tales". Church Times. 24 July 1964, p. 5. [A brief review of T&L. Of LBN: "It is a non-Puritan pilgrim's progress and has the simplicity of a parable capable of interpretation at many levels."]

T&L '64

"Fairy Tales". Times of India, 9 Aug. 1964, p. 9. [OFS is a splendid essay; LBN is told with exquisite sensitivity. A brief review.]

T&L '64

Faller, Kevin. "The Bewitched Professor". Irish Independent (Dublin), 20 June 1964, p. 12. [After quoting from the book, he says Drayton and Shakespeare (slighted by the professor) must have bewitched Tolkien's pen to make it write such unimaginative prose. (Summary from the author. Not seen.)]

T&L '64

"Folklore". British Book News No. 288 (Aug. 1964), p. 580. [T&L is briefly described and LOTR is mentioned.]

T&L '64


T&L '65

Lawrence, Ralph. "Recent Reading". English 15 (Autumn 1964) 115-118. [One paragraph on p. 117 is devoted to a summary of the ideas in OFS and a mention of Tolkien's story "which gives his brief study additional distinction."]

T&L '64

Lentricchia, Frank, Jr. "Some Coordinates of Modern Literature". Poetry 108 (April 1966), 65-67. [A brief but informed review. "Tolkien's discussion of the realm of Faerie as an aesthetic cosmos — autonomous, but not quite autotelic — will recall the important trend in modern philosophical criticism emanating from Ernst Cassirer."]

T&L '65

Lewis, Naomi. New Statesman 67 (15 May 1964), 778. [T&L is given one sentence in the "also recommended" category. OFS is called "striking."]

T&L '64

"New Book by Creator of Hobbits Falls Short". Oakland Tribune (Cal.), Entertainment, 28 March 1965, p. 7. [The essay "is of little intrinsic value except for its historical interest." This is because the creative process is indescribable (like Faerie) and hence Tolkien's attempt is doomed. The story "is charming but lacking in the depth and grandeur of the author's other writings."]

T&L '65


T&L '65

Ramson, W.S. "Something for Hobbit Lovers". Canterbury Post (Eng.), 2 June 1964, p. 27. [This is a book for followers of the old master. LBN is pleasant, "more susceptible to allegorical interpretation than are the later stories." The essay is "interesting and occasionally stimulating" but it "remains uncompromisingly academic."]

T&L '64

S., A.F. "Tolkien on Faeries". Southern Evening Echo (Southampton), 11 Sept. 1964, p. 26. [A concise survey of Tolkien's essay. For LBN, it is "a sort of modern parable."]

T&L '64

Schmidt, Sandra. "Taking Fairy Tales Seriously". Christian Science Monitor. 15 April 1965, p. 11. [A substantial review of which half is given over to LOTR. LBN is charming but too sententious. Tolkien's practice in LOTR, where complexity of moral decision makes itself felt, is preferable to the simpler theory of OFS.]

T&L '65

Sykes, Peter. "Tolkien's Fairies". Oxford Mail. 28 May 1964, p. 6. [A brief review summarizing the key idea of the essay and praising LBN for the "economy of phrase and quiet assurance which stamp all Prof. Tolkien's writing..."

T&L '65

Thewlis, D. "Tree and Leaf". Niekas No. 9 (Sept. 1964), p. 44. [A pleasant account of T&L.]

T&L '64

Thomas, Gilbert. "The Clergy in Slippers". Birmingham Post (Eng.), 2 June 1964, p. 7. [LBN is described as "a characteristically charming yet searching fairy-tale" and Tolkien as a "spiritual realist" whose art has imaginative magic of a very rare quality.]

T&L '64

Virginia Kirkus' Service. 33 (1 Jan. 1965), 40. [A brief review: the essay is rather disorganized and digressive, the story slight.]

T&L '65

Walsh, Chad. "In the 'As-if' World". New York Times Book Review. 14 March 1965, pp. 4-5. [A fairly long review surveys the ideas of the essay and describes the story.]

T&L '65

Willis, Katherine T. Library Journal 90 (1 Feb. 1965), 651, [OFS is recommended to all readers of fantasy; and LBN is a penetrating allegory.]

T&L '65

Yolton, John. "In the Soup". Kenyon Review 27 (Summer 1965), 556-567. [This long substantial review is mainly concerned with a clear survey and summary of Tolkien's ideas about Story and Faerie.]

T&L '65
Part VII
The Adventures of Tom Bombadil

ATB '62 London: &U, 22 Nov. 1962
ATB '63 Boston: HM, 22 Oct. 1963

A., W. "Another Tolkien". South Wales Argus (Newport). 4 Feb. 1963, p. 4. [The reviewer comments generally on Tolkien's imaginative world. "The secret is in the excellence of narrative skill which Tolkien brings to his writings and in the care he takes to ensure that it fits together perfectly without internal contradictions."] +

B., J.E. "Nonsense". Canberra Times, 20 Apr. 1963, p. 22. [An appreciative account of the book. "Distinguished by lilting and the superb use of descriptive language one expects of Professor Tolkien, most of the poems are narrative in character." They are recommended for the imaginative child or adult.] +

Beals, Margaret. "Have You Read These?" South Shore News (Scituate), 25 March 1965, p. ? [A brief notice of these rollicking and lively poems.] +

"Bombadil". Oxford Times, 28 Dec. 1962, p. 14. ["Although the verses here have ingenuity, originality... they have not the compulsive quality of the major work." Brief.] +


Brady, Charles A. "The World of Fantasy is Magical Backdrop for Holiday Reading". Buffalo Evening News, 21 Dec. 1963, p. B-8. [The poems are not all of equal excellence but "the best of them mark the finest goblin poetry since Christina Rossetti's Goblin Market.""


Davidson, Avram. "Books". Fantasy and Science Fiction 26 (March 1964), 83. [He finds Tom Bombadil "to be a sort of babbling three-quarters wit." He likes other poems better, but hunger for a new novel.] +

De-la-Noy, Michael. "Make-Believe". National Christian News, Dec. 1962, p. ? [Brief. "This is almost T.S. Eliot on a day off. It is certainly Professor Tolkien at his best..." "Most of these verses are too clever by two-thirds."] +

Derrick, Christopher. "From an Antique Land". Tablet (London) 216 (15 Dec. 1962), 1227. [LOTR has had the misfortune to become a fashion and hence a counter-fashion which has left people with an impression of whimsicality. "These verses...some of them haunt, some worry, some would be good for skipping games, some for comfort and rhythm on a long day spent in breaking stone."] +

Harris, Margaret. "Poetry". Derbysire Times (Chesterfield), 7 Dec. 1962, p. 25. [Brief. "The rhythms and details of the countryside will be a delight to children and their parents."] +

Holbrook, David. "Sensationalists". Manchester Guardian, 7 Dec. 1962, p. 7. [The poems are an amalgam of de la Mare, nursery rhymes, and of the precious pretend world of the Hobbit cult. There is little 'must' in them, and the verbal ingenuity is without roots in metaphor and unconscious meaning." Brief.] -

Hugh-Jones, Siriol. "Children's Corner". Punch 243 (19 Dec. 1962), 912. [One paragraph about ATB says that if you're a hobbit fan you'll like it.]

"Keeping up with Hobbits". Church Times, Children's Book Supplement, 30 Nov. 1962, p. 1. [Very favorable review. But it doesn't really say anything except how delightful the book is.] +

Kennedy, X.J. "The Poet in the Playpen". Poetry 105 (Dec. 1964), 190-193. [A review of 3 poets writing for children. He quotes two passages from ATB with approval, and notes that Tolkien "reaffirms that poetry differs from prose in sounding like something special..." (p. 193).] +

Kitching, Jessie. "Forecasts". Publisher's Weekly 184 (26 Aug. 1963), 276. ["A beautiful little supplement to The Lord of the Rings." The cadenced verses and inspired rhyming are praised in this brief preview.]


"Middle Earth Verse". Times Literary Supplement. 23 Nov. 1962, p. 892. ["These are clever verses, though they did not grip a reader as did all the tales of hobbits and elves." Brief.] +

Reeves, James. "Hobbit". Use of English: A quarterly (London) 15 (Autumn 1963), 50, 52, 54. [ATB will mainly please Hobbit fans. "...the trouble with Mr. Tolkien as a poet is that he has the wrong degree of self-consciousness — either too much or too little. The simultaneous absorption in subject-matter and technique which poetry demands is somehow inhibited by
Part VIII

The Road Goes Ever On & Poems and Songs of Middle-earth

The Road Goes Ever On

RGEO '67 Boston: HM, 18 Oct. 1967
RGEO '68 London: A&S, 28 March 1968
RGEO '68A New York: BB, 14 Oct. 1968

Poems and Songs of Middle Earth

FSME '67 Caedmon Record TC 1231, 18 Oct. 1967
FSME '68 Caedmon Record TC 1231, 28 March 1968

Baptist Times. 20 June 1968, p. 3. [Very brief. Lovers of Tolkien will be delighted to possess this book.]

Best Sellers 27 (1 Dec. 1967), 358. [The tunes are delightful and the poems are equally so.] +


"Book Briefs". The Jewish Chronicle (London), 28 June 1968, p. 25. [A very brief description. "The first six songs were written in the Judean hills outside Jerusalem, ideal terrain for hobbits and elves."] +

The Booklist 64 (15 Feb. 1968), 672. [A short description.] +

Brady, Charles A. "Libeled in Images, angels have their day in literature". Buffalo Evening News, 23 Dec. 1967, p. E-10. [This review article comments briefly on two Tolkien books. The Road Goes Ever On: "Tolkien's own lovely elfin calligraphy lights up the ivory pages with its steel-and-crimson like the arable swords of elfland."

Smith of Wooten Major: One of Tolkien's "incomparable fairy tales." Among its several morals is one found also in the Book of Tobit to the effect that it is often hard to recognize an angel until he... has passed like the wind."] +

C., G.H. "Some New Releases". Herald-Advertiser (Huntington, W.Va), Sunday Magazine, 28 Jan. 1968, p. 3. [A pleasant review of the book and record. The songs "take on added lustre from the inspired Elvish music Mr. Swann has set them to."] +

Choice 4 (February 1968), 1390. ["Swann's music... consists of simple lyric melodies having an uncomplicated Schubertian style of song. This is most evident in the title song, and its melody is used as the motif of the entire cycle. The quality of the rest of the music does not attain this level. Swann's music, on the whole, is congruous to the mood of Tolkien's hobbits and the result is a pleasant combination."] +

Clemens, David. "Scene". The Daily Mirror, 14 Feb. 1968, p. ? [A brief notice, speaking of these "charming ballads."] +

D., K. "Arias at the Bottom of the Garden". The Birmingham Post (England), 25 May 1968, p. ? [The songs are effective, especially in "In the Willow-meads" and "Errantry." Still "the volume is not much more than a cult-object, and I don't have any faires at the bottom of my garden."] +

Des Moines Sunday Register. 26 Nov. 1967, p. ? [Very brief description of this "charming compilation" of poems and music.] +

Ferguson, T.S. "What's Happening: Songs of Middle Earth". The Sunday Telegraph. 10 March 1968, p. 15. [This important review quote Swann: "The setting of the music is in my own style, a sort of mixture of art song, ballad and folk-song -- right down the middle. The poems themselves are most moving and attractive and have a context outside the books: good poetry in the Georgian style. The Elvish song Tolkien himself hummed -- a sort of Gregorian chant, which I've adapted." The review also contains the following statement of fact: The book will be published March 28. On Thursday (March 14 presumably) Tolkien will come to a party in London, to celebrate the forthcoming publication of RGEO. On Friday (March 15) Swann will perform the cycle at the..."
Camden Town Festival. The cycle was first performed in the Lakeland theatre at Rosehill.

RGEO '68, PSME '68

"Forecast: Paperbacks: Music and Art". Publisher's Weekly 194 (2 Sept. 1968), 63. [The publication of RGEO by Ballantine at $2.95 is announced for 14 Oct. 1968. The book is described as 8 1/2" x 11" bound in boards. "The melodies are simple... the harmonies delightful and varied on the piano." The preview gives a sound factual description of the book.]

RGEO '68A

Fuller, Edmund. "Land of Nourishment". Wall Street Journal 170, (29 Dec. 1967), 6. [Fuller begins with a survey of the popularity of Tolkien whose books are "wonder-filled." In an age of relativism "Tolkien's superb fabric tacitly affirms the nourishing virtues." The stories are "faith quickening." After mentioning RGEO, he describes RGEO, PSME, and SWM appreciatively.]

RGEO '67, PSME '67, SWM '67A

Haa, Joseph. "A Cycle of Tolkien's Poems". Chicago Daily News. 23 Dec. 1967, p. 7 [RGEO and PSME are described. The book is handsome, the musical portion of the record sounds like an art-song recital.] +

RGEO '67, PSME '67

Hall, Richard. "Inner Elvish World". The Inquirer (London) No. 6571 (15 June 1968), p. 6 [A favorable description of RGEO. The words and music are matched with "delicate sensitivity."]

RGEO '68

H[ainan], E[thel] L. Horn Book Magazine 44 (April 1968), 188-189. [A brief and informative description of the "elegantly designed book" and of the record with its "lyric romanticism that matches the mood of the texts."]

RGEO '67, PSME '67


RGEO '68

"Hobbitry". The Glasgow Herald. 6 Apr. 1968, p. 7 ["The cult of Hobbitry or... the incurable affliction of Tolkienism is further elaborated or aggravated by the appearance of what may be called the King-students' songbook..." Brief.]

RGEO '68

Johnson, Robert. "Prizewinner". The Irish Press. 30 March 1968, p. 6 ["The Road Goes On Forever (sic) is the most extensively produced volume of songs to have come off the presses for many a moon." But both verse and music are "the kind of questionable stuff that leads us to think that we have heard it all before."]

RGEO '68

Kenny, Herbert A. "A Bonanza for Tolkien Fans". The Boston Globe. 13 Dec. 1967, p. 52. [RGEO is described: PSME is praised, the songs "have a permanent value, the music matching in quality the Lord of the Rings cycle from which the words arise"; and SWM, though independent of LOTR, "is written in the same exquisite English."] +

RGEO '67, PSME '67, SWM '67A

Lewis, Naomi. "Fact and Poetry". The Observer. 4 Aug. 1968, p. 22. [Brief. "Here's some prove out of Middle Earth... lovely and haunting group of songs."]

RGEO '68

Mitchell, David N. "Three for Hobbiters". Milwaukee Journal. 10 Dec. 1967, p. 7 (Date not confirmed.) [You need to be a fan to appreciate these new works of Tolkien esoterics — RGEO, PSME, and SWM. The reviewer — in brief — is left cold by all three.]

RGEO '67, PSME '67, SWM '67A

Morse, Elizabeth A. Library Journal 93 (15 Jan. 1968), 316; identical with School Library Journal. Jan. 1968, p. 96 [A brief factual description: "for the enthusiastic young adults who have responded to Tolkien's books..."] o

RGEO '67


RGEO '67


RGEO '68

Punch 254 (13 March 1968), 402 [A very brief notice. "A rum manifestation of the Tolkien addiction... Attractively presented."]

RGEO '68

Royal College of Music Magazine 64 (Summer term 1968), 59-60. [A brief factual account of the book. The reviewer prefers the last song. "The other songs may on frequent hearing prove to be more subtle and less obvious than they appear to be."] +

RGEO '68

Shaw, Mildred Hart. "Between Book Ends". The Daily Sentinel (Grand Junction, Colorado). 14 Jan. 1968, p. 7. [A brief review noting that RGEO is a fine collaboration which preserves the illt and music in Tolkien's verses.]

RGEO '67

"Swann Songs". The Church Times (London), 11 April
Over the years Mythlore has published a large amount of highly praised fantasy artwork. Few people are inclined to cut up their issues of Mythlore in order to frame these pieces for their walls. Therefore Mythlore has begun a series of portfolios reproducing various pieces on quality paper suitable for framing. A limited number of portfolios are now being offered containing copies signed and numbered by the artists. The first portfolio was released at the time of the Mythopoeic Conference in August, 1986.

Signed portfolios are $25.
Unsigned portfolios are $15.

Included in the first portfolio are the following pieces:

"Meditation of Mordred" (Williams) by Sarah Beach (from ML39)
"Trotphlight at Cerin Amroth" (Tolkien) by Paula DiSante (from ML45)
"The Mistress of the Silver Moon" (MacDonald) by Nancy-Lou Patterson (from ML21)
"Till We have Faces" (Lewis) by Patrick Wynne (from ML39)

Each portfolio comes in a folder with Patrick Wynne's "Triskelion" (from ML35) printed on the cover. The artwork is reproduced on 9X12" sheets. Write the Art Editor (see page 2 for address) to reserve your portfolio (please specify whether you want a signed or unsigned portfolio). All profits are used to support Society activities. Suggestions for future portfolios are encouraged, as they are designed for members' enjoyment.

After reading the announcement about the 18th Mythopoeic Conference in this issue, I hope that you are as pleased and excited about it as I am. Now is the time to make definite plans to attend, especially if you have not as yet attended a Mythopoeic Conference. I regret that with the 17th Conference just recently held, more of you who I know by actual encounter, correspondence, or as a name I recognize from the mailing list, have not shared the pleasure, the intellectual stimulation, and the great variety of creativity found at a Mythopoeic Conference.

Probably the first thing that enters the mind is the perceived difficulty, both in time and funds, in attending. Those who attend could dissuade you of this initial mental block, if you could speak with them. So I am speaking now, and asking you to reconsider your initial reservation. I can hear you saying, "But I won't know anyone there." The actual situation is quite different. New people are quickly disabused of any such fear. The Conferences now attract people from all parts of the United States, and frequently from other nations. We come together to share our strongly mutual interests. Indeed, you would be surprised to find the number of people who are easily approachable ("ready-made" friends, as it were), many whose names you would recognize from reading Mythlore. Whether we are attendees of many Conferences, or coming for the first time, all are united during this very special, almost magical time. We step out of ordinary time, leaving television and newspapers behind, into a different mode of seeing and experiencing.

Next year's Mythopoeic Conference promises to be a very special occasion, and may be the largest Conference to date. There is the possibility that the housing facilities at Marquette (a former hotel, now part of the University, with hotel, rather than dormitory comfort) may be filled. At all costs, don't miss this. Make your plans and reservations early. I hope to see you there.