Early Review of Books by J.R.R. Tolkien

George H. Thompson

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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*.

Additional Keywords
Patrick Wynne
Early Review of Books by J.R.R. Tolkien
Compiled by George H. Thompson

Part III
Smith of Wootton Major & "Smith of Wootton Major & Farmer Giles of Ham"

Smith of Wootton Major
SWM '67A Boston: HM, 24 Nov. 1967
Smith of Wootton Major & Farmer Giles of Ham
SWM & FGH New York: BB, March 1969

Berglund, Sonja. Review of SWM. Portland Oregon Journal. 8 March 1968, p. ? [A Brief, youthful review by a student of Lake Oswego Junior High.] + SWM '67A

Best Sellers 27 (1 Dec. 1967), 358. [A brief favorable description.] + SWM '67A

"Box of Spice." Times Educational Supplement. 24 Nov. 1967, p. 1219. ["This is a story about the Land of Faery... The book has that haunting quality characteristic of the best of the 'deeper' folk-tales." A brief review, mostly summary.] + SWM '67E

Derrick, Christopher. "And See Ye Not Your Bonny Road?" Tablet (London) 222 (10 Feb. 1968), 132. [It is a "myth of great delicacy" but a "graceful and skillful story." To express an idea, they are lacking depth.] + SWM '67E

Ezard, John. "Headington's Spellbinder." Oxford Mail. 14 Dec. 1967, p. 8. [This is "the best single thing" Tolkien has written. It perfectly illustrates what a fairy story is. Moreover, it is moving to read and it's moving also to find that Prof. Tolkien, writing from Headington in his 70th year, is still adding new strings to the bow of his imagination.] + SWM '67E

"Fiction", Virginia Kirkus' Service 35 (15 Sept. 1967), 1164-1165. ["The star is a trinket, and we, virtually this..." Brief.] - SWM '67A

Ford, Stephen C. "Dying Cult Pushed Along: Tolkien Offers Falttering Fantasy for Adults". Courier-Post (Camden, N.J.), 14 Dec. 1967, p. 20. [Mainly a plot summary. "It's a story strictly for the palest set, regardless of what it claims to be." ] - SWM '67A

"Forecasts: Fantasy". Publisher's Weekly 192 (18 Sept. 1967), 62. [SWM is announced for 24 Nov. 1967. This gentle little fantasy is, "purely and simply, a fairy story." It belongs to the children's book realm. The writing has a poetic quality.] + SWM '67A

Green, Roger Lancelyn. "Slicing a Magical Cake". Sunday Telegraph (London), 3 Dec. 1967, p. ? [SWM is worthy to rank with FGH and LBN. Like LOTR, "the true Tolkien magic is as securely hidden as the star in the Master Cook's cake and can only be found by those who chance to swallow it unknowingly." ] + SWM '67E


Head, Victor. "Some New Books for Children: Tolkien's World of the Hobbits". The Field. 23 Nov. 1967, p. 1027. ["This slight and magical fairy tale will serve as introduction to H, now in paper. It in turn is prologue to LOTR, a prophesy of imagination and a classic to rank with those of Lewis Carroll, Kenneth Grahame, T H White and A A Milne." ] + SWM '67E, H '66P

Hudson, C.H. "Tolkien Territory". Oxford Times, 10 Nov. 1967, p. 26. [Some of the spell may come from memories of LOTR, but SWM has its own moments of awe and terror. The cook who comes among the people is compared to Strider. Brief.] + SWM '67E

The Junior Bookshelf 32 (Feb. 1968), 54. [A very satisfactory story which will probably appeal to a larger audience than the Hobbit sequence. "The central portion might almost be by MacDonald but the story does not seem derivative in any way, just a new and rather nicer bit of Tolkien." ] + SWM '67E

Lauritsen, Frederick M. Review of SWM. Library Journal 92 (15 Nov. 1967), 4175. [Unlike FGH, SWM develops Tolkien's ideas about the land of faery. "Because Tolkien uses both plot and characters merely as mediums to express an idea, they are lacking depth." Brief.] - SWM '67A

Lewis, Naomi. Review of SWM. The Humanist (London) 83 (Feb. 1968), 59. [She comments on Tolkien's popularity and quotes his statement: "Hobbits have what you might call universal morals. I would say that they are examples of natural philosophy and natural religion." The fairy element in SWM recalls George MacDonald's Phantastes. It is a graceful and skillful story.] + SWM '67E

Lobdell, J.C. Review of SWM. National Review 20 (7 May 1968), 461. [The story is "even a little too charming" but the reviewer is thankful for a new story from Tolkien and a few great moments. Brief.] + SWM '67A

"Lord of the Royalties". Manchester Guardian. 29 Nov. 1967, p. 8. [A news item. After two weeks of slow sales for SWM, the deluge began. With 25,000 copies already gone, Allen and Unwin have discovered it "is being used as the newest trend in opulentlyarty Christmas cards." ] + SWM '67E

Malcolm, Janet. "Children's Books for Christmas". New Yorker 43 (16 Dec. 1967), 177-178. [SWM "admirably succeeds in persuading the reader to suspend his analytical powers while he is reading it." The "curious medieval illustrations by Pauline Baynes spell out what Tolkien has been good enough to leave unsaid." Most of the review is a summary of the plot.] + SWM '67A

Moss, Elaine. "The Boy Who Swallowed the Inner Light". The Times, 11 Nov. 1967, p. 21. [A brief review with a drawing by David Levine. SMH is a pocket sized allegory. "Through this patent fantasy, Tolkien urges the rationalist to respond, while there is time, to the spiritual springs within him, to travel, like Smith... awake to love and beauty, to life and death, to terror and compassion but above all to mystery."] + SMW '67E

Peckham, Stanton. "Readers' Roundup". Sunday Denver Post (Col.). Roundup Magazine, 26 Nov. 1967, p. 12. [SMW might be a good introduction to Tolkien's work, and it "just might become a fay classic."] + SMW '67A

Phelps, Robert. "For Younger Readers". New York Times Book Review, 4 Feb. 1968, p. 26. [A substantial though fairly short review. "Like everything Tolkien has written, Smith of Wootten Major is an elegy for the decline of our human capacity for awe." For all its wonderful faery quality, "it is first and foremost a good tale..."] + SMW '67A

Prescott, Peter "Books". Women's Wear Daily 115 (17 Nov. 1967), 30. (Also Fairchild News Service.) [A brief, thoughtful review: "...by pointing out the perils of the land of Faery, the realm that 'cannot be approached without danger,' he restores to the genre an uneasy edge too often replaced by sentimentality."] + SMW '67A

R., M.G. "Magic and a Moral". The Yorkshire Post (Leeds), 21 Dec. 1967, p. 5. [Brief. "It is a very moral fairy story which can be enjoyed by anyone having passed his tenth birthday — or any decade thereafter."] + SMW '67E

Slavin, Jan. Luna No. 8 (January, 1970), 27. [These beautiful fairy stories are reminiscent of Oscar Wilde. They contain only wholesome characters. The first is loosely written; the second is enjoyable but to be recommended only for younger fans. Others may find it shallow. Brief.] + SMW & FGH

Smith, Ann. "Tolkien is for All Ages". Canberra Times, 10 Feb. 1968, p. 10. [A modest perceptive review. "Much of Tolkien's success in this short and basically simple tale lies in his splendid characterisation and sense of humour. But his great achievement is his juxtaposition of the ordinary, earthy details of village life with impressionistic glimpses of the land of Faery.""] + SMW '67E


"Under Nines - 1/Out of the Ordinary". Times Literary Supplement, 30 Nov. 1967, p. 1153. [In a review of 10 children's books, one paragraph is devoted to Tolkien. He has simplicity, but is too studied and balanced."] + SMW '67E

V., R.H. "Folk Tales, Legends, and Fanciful Stories". Horn Book Magazine 44 (Feb. 1968), 63. [A brief comment on Tolkien's story: "Like his others, this new one is recounted gracefully and as naturally as a bit of village history."] + SMW '67A
the Daughters of Beatrice: women in fantasy

the 17th Mythopoeic Conference
commemorating the Charles Williams' centennial
August 8-11, 1986 california state university: Long Beach

Author Guest of Honor: Charles de Lint
Scholar Guest of Honor: Judith Kollman

events

Mythopoeic Conferences are a very special blend of the best points of academic conferences and science fiction and fantasy conventions, resulting in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere conducive to many forms of creative expression and stimulating intellectual interchange.

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The "Masque of the Silmarils" will be performed. The Committee is seeking volunteers to take part in this production; actors, costumes, stage hands. Enjoy the camaraderie of working on such a project. Please contact Margaret Purdy who is co-ordinating this production. Please write: Margaret Purdy, 307 Kensington Drive, Ridgewood NJ 07450.

Also, a drama by Diana Paxson will be performed during the weekend.

Besides papers, panels and dramas, there will be films, an art show, an auction, music, a masquerade, dealer's room, a banquet and Bardic circles. The Committee welcomes further suggestions and participation.

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call for papers

The Conference Theme is meant to explore the role of female characters in fantasy literature, particularly the type Charles Williams called the "Beatrician Figure," the inspirer of imagination. Williams discussed this type in his book on Dante called The Figure of Beatrice. We hope to explore the development of female characters in the evolving genre of fantasy. Papers on various aspects of Charles Williams' works in light of the 100th anniversary of his birth are also encouraged. Papers dealing with other authors and topics are welcome.

Papers will be given orally, with 30 to 50 minutes allotted for the presentation, allowing the rest of the hour for questions and discussion generated by the paper. Authors are encouraged to attend and personally present their papers. Arrangements may be made for the papers to be read in absentia.

A brief description of the intended paper should be sent as soon as possible.

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