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Reviews

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Reviews

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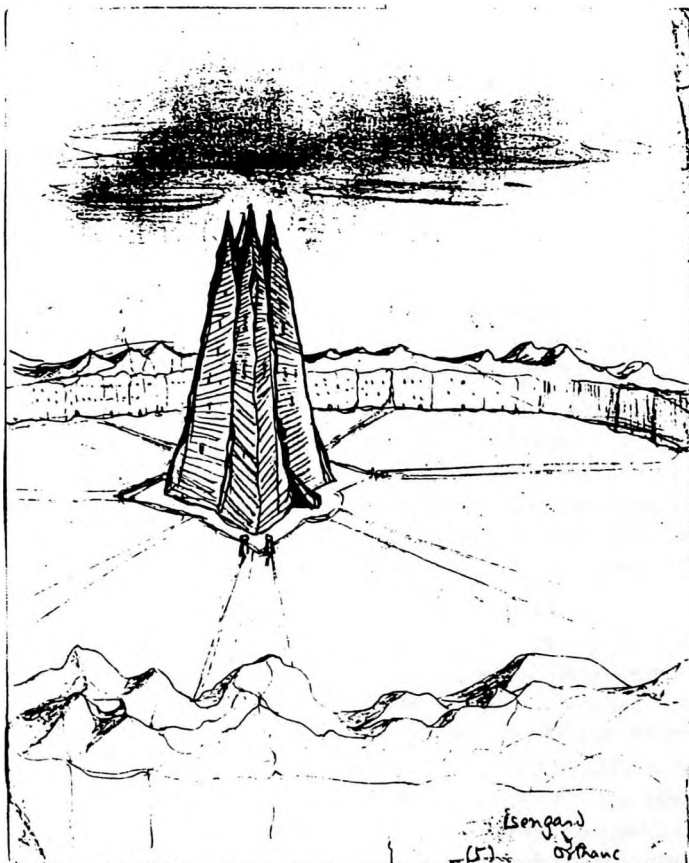
REVIEWS

The Gathering Clouds

J.R.R. Tolkien. *The War of the Ring: The History of The Lord of the Rings, Part Three; The History of Middle-earth, Volume VIII.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. (Houghton Mifflin Co, Boston) 1990. 476 pp. + two frontispieces. ISBN 0-395-56008-X

This book is out sooner than was rumored to be expected. It covers the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* from the Battle of Helm's Deep to The Last Debate and The Opening of the Black Gate. Here, as with the other volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*, we are given Tolkien's outline drafts and variant versions that preceeded the final text. This volume has more illustrations than usual, some twenty-one in all. These include two color frontispieces — "Shelob's Lair" and "Dunharrow," various sketches of Orthanc and Minas Tirith, maps of both Harrowdale and of Southern Middle-earth (from which Christopher made final copies) and facsimiles of Tolkien's handwritten drafts. Again, we have material for both textual scholars and those of us who enjoy seeing how the story took shape.

— Glen GoodKnight



"Orthanc '5'" from Tolkien's *The War of the Ring*

Farewell to Middle-earth

J.R.R. Tolkien, *Bilbo's Last Song*, Illustrated by Pauline Baynes (London, England: Sharon, Ontario: Signpost Books Ltd.; Riverwood Publishers), 32 pp. ISBN 1-895121-00-0.

Combining Tolkien's profoundly poignant meditation on death with Pauline Baynes' most exquisite depictions of Tolkien's writings, this beautiful book should be a treasure to every admirer of this author and this artist. C.S. Lewis said that if you cannot say what you believe to be true in simple language then you probably don't understand it, and Tolkien's perfectly simple and simply perfect poem has meaning for children and elders alike: "Farewell, friends! I hear the call. / The ship's beside the stony wall." (p. 6) Thus begins Bilbo's song, and thus it concludes: "Farewell to Middle-earth at last, / I see the Star above your Mast! (p. 26)

Each of the twelve couplets is accompanied by a rondel showing a stage in Bilbo's progress, after a praeternaturally prolonged life, to the Grey Havens, and beyond, even unto "the West, / and fields and mountains ever blest." (p. 29) Below, divided by whimsical depictions of the sleepy Bilbo contemplating this progress, are exquisite images of his memories of his first great adventure as told in *The Hobbit*. This little masterpiece will be a delight to everyone who takes it up, from those who have never read Tolkien (who will immediately look for his books) to those (like most readers of *Mythlore*) to whom it will offer a source of long meditation.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

The Third Lewis

Owen Barfield, *Owen Barfield and C.S. Lewis* (G.B. Tennyson, editor. Middletown, Connecticut; Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 171 pp. ISBN 0-895-5233-X.

This elegantly designed little book contains essays, introductions, interviews, poems, and other ephemera written by the prolific solicitor/photographer Owen Barfield on C.S. Lewis. It will be a pleasure to Lewis fans of every level of development because it contains not only works already in many libraries but more difficult to obtain works and, delightfully, several very interesting pieces never before published. Despite its editor's understandably pleased remarks (it was a great idea, after all, and he has carried it out very well), this book is not the definitive work of Lewis scholarship.

For one thing it contains at least one statement about the opinions of Lewis which entirely contradict the evidence of Lewis' writings, the astonishing notion that

"In his view pagans are just heretics and just wrong." Anybody who has read about Emeth in *The Last Battle* must be surprised by this statement. Lewis in fact dealt very profoundly as well as compassionately with pagans, as did the medievals whom he studied. His was the classical view of Christian thought which — with loving reluctance — placed Virgil in Limbo instead of Hell. The pagans couldn't be heretical because the final revelation (a concept which Barfield quite correctly attributes to Lewis) had not been vouchsafed to them, and they were not so much wrong as incomplete.

The main tenor of the book is a continuation of Barfield's early (and by no means, on his attestation, life-long) series of arguments with this (otherwise life-long) friend. Apparently, like those Roman Catholics who wonder why Lewis never "went over to Rome," the Christian Anthroposophist Barfield still wonders poignantly why his friend never became an Anthroposophist. I have said previously that Lewis did not become a Roman Catholic because he was already a catholic (small "c"); I think he did not become an Anthroposophist because he did not believe in Anthroposophy. Barfield also argues for the concept of the evolution of consciousness, in which Lewis emphatically, and I think rightly, did not believe. This argument alone would make *Owen Barfield on C. S. Lewis* useful because it makes a fundamental element in Barfield's role as "second Friend" (the one who disagrees with you) so abundantly clear.

Happily, we get some powerful clarifications of attitudes Lewis is often said to have held. Especially delicious is Barfield on Lewis' attitude toward science: "he had a pretty sharp line between his intellectual self and imaginative self; he accepted the conventionally scientific basis of knowledge and that all real knowledge depended on scientific evidence drawn from sense experience ... when it came to converting that imaginative subject matter into actual knowledge you had to go back to the ordinary scientific method, to put it on the laboratory table, so to speak. (p. 135) No wonder Lewis, unlike T.S. Eliot, had never seen the sun looking like a patient etherized upon a table!

Again, Barfield gives a wonderful insight into the life of detachment as Lewis lived it: "The process, the events of life, are all determined by causality, but man is not unfree. He is ultimately, if he think it through, really at one with the life of the universe." (p. 129) This idea is attributed to the Lewis of 1929, the same man who in that year became a Christian, so it does not mean that Oneness in which you lose yourself in the All (as in the East), but that Oneness which means that you need no longer *want* anything, because all you could want is already yours (as in, say, the thought of St. Francis of Assisi).

Perhaps the most useful insight of all is Barfield's special gloss (indeed, improvement) upon the now-standard argument that Lewis combined in uneasy tension rational argument with imaginative evocation: "they do sometimes seem like two completely different men — so different, I sometimes feel, that it required

something approaching a third Lewis to discover an area in which they could come together and work more or less in harmony. Of course there was a third Lewis: the Lewis of literary scholarship and literary criticism..." (P. 94). The third Lewis was the professional man, the existence of whom resolves the apparent dichotomy of the other two. Lewis, whose complex personality so engages and fascinates us, was obviously puzzling to Barfield too. This lovely little book invites us to join this wise, observant man, in contemplating one of the great minds of our century, on the eve of its concluding decade.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

A Cause for Celebration

Andrew Walker and James Patrick, editors, *A Christian for All Christians: Essays in Honour of C.S. Lewis* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), 258 pp. ISBN 0-340-51384-5.

The contributors to this excellent, fresh, and stimulating volume read as a compendium of transatlantic scholarship: Joe R. Christopher (Texas); Lyle W. Dorsett (Illinois); Paul S. Fiddes (Oxford); Brian Horne (London); Peter Kreeft (Boston); Aidan MacKay (Beaconsfield); Basil Mitchell (Oxford); James Patrick (Fort Worth); Richard Purtill (Bellingham, Washington); Peter J. Schakel (Holland, Michigan); Bernard Sellin (France); Jacques Sys (France); and Andrew Walker, Director of the C.S. Lewis Centre, Oxford, which has produced this book. The only notable deficiency I can see is that none of these authors is female, but nothing made by human hands can be perfect, so I accept this flaw in what I hope was the spirit in which it was offered.

The volume begins with a conversation between Basil Mitchell, a retired Professor of Christian Religion, and Andrew Walker, "Reflections on C. S. Lewis, Apologetics and the Moral Tradition," which discusses a number of elements appearing later in the book: the young Lewis, Lewis' encounter with Elizabeth Anscombe, the philosophical milieu of Lewis' Oxford, and praise for *The Abolition of Man*. Second is a long, quotation-filled, and convincing consideration of the question "Did C.S. Lewis Lose His Faith?" by Richard L. Purtill, who finds in the negative, as well he should. Third is a brief but useful item, "Under the Russian Cross: A Research Note of C.S. Lewis and the Eastern Orthodox Church" by Andrew Walker, bringing out some intriguing contacts and parallels.

Aidan MacKay discusses "The Christian Influence of G.K. Chesterton on C.S. Lewis" as only he can do, which is very well indeed, concluding that "The years which separated the lives of these two Christian warriors are irrelevant. They stood, and stand, shoulder to shoulder..." (p. 82) Brian Horne contributes the first fully detailed and fully convincing study of "A Peculiar Debt: The Influence of Charles Williams on C.S. Lewis." His essay is likely to remain essential to any future discussion of this important subject. Equally interesting is Bernard Sellins' "Journeys

into Fantasy: The Fiction of David Lindsay and C.S. Lewis," a magisterial study of a difficult author who, despite his vision's polar opposition to everything Lewis believed to be true, taught Lewis that outer space (as in Lindsay's *Tormance*) is "a region of the spirit." (p. 105, quoted from "On Stories") This essay is likely to be regarded as essential.

Peter J. Schakel provides an excellent analysis of the use of narrative in "Elusive Birds and Narrative Nets: The Appeal of Story in C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*," and Paul S. Fiddes, in "C.S. Lewis the Mythmaker" ably discusses myth (a vexed subject here presented perfectly clearly) and Lewis' use of myth in the *Ransom Trilogy* and the *Narnian Chronicles*. James Patrick discusses with equal clarity the philosophical foundation of Lewis' early writings and conversion in "C.S. Lewis and Idealism. Jacques Sys presents the consequences for Lewis' thought of that conversion in "Look Out! It's Alive!: C.S. Lewis on Doctrine." And finally, Peter Kreeft presents, with more than a few asides (read "his own opinions") a lively essay entitled "How to Save Western Civilization: C.S. Lewis as Prophet."

The volume concludes with a note on "Researching C.S. Lewis" by Lyle W. Dorsett, listing the main centers where Lewis' writings are collected, and an excellent overview by Joe R. Christopher on "Biographies and Bibliographies on C.S. Lewis." In the first half of his study, Christopher expertly, succinctly, and trenchantly discusses the biographies of Lewis beginning with the *Memoir* by Warren Lewis, his brother, in *The Letters of C.S. Lewis*, passing on to *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* by Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, which he deems "still the best" (p. 217) and "the other basic biography, *Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times* by George Sayer, and *The C. S. Lewis Hoax* by Kathryn Lindskoog which "anyone who wants to do scholarship on Lewis should read." (p. 217) Other biographies follow, of which the worst is graciously left nameless. Second, the Bibliographies are listed, included those by Walter Hooper, Stephen Thorson and Jerry Daniel, Joe R. Christopher and Joan K. Ostling, and the standard literary guides: *CSL*, *The Lampost*, *Christianity and Literature*, and *Mythlore* are also, very kindly, mentioned.

All in all this fine volume is a cause for celebration not only because of its quality, which is very high, but because it indicates the development of a fully transatlantic school of C.S. Lewis scholarship. I found the book delightfully stimulating and informative from cover to cover.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

The Comicbook Hobbit

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*. Illustrated by David Wenzel; adapted by Charles Dixon with Sean Deming. (Eclipse Books, Forestville, CA. [distributed by Ballantine Books, New York] 1990. 136 pp. ISBN 0-345-36858-4.

Genius, despite all of Tolkien's perfectionistic reconsiderations and procrastinations, is one of his writing's

hallmarks. His usually very generalized descriptions of characters and places fairly invite our imagination to *coparticipate* in the mental visualization process — thus becoming 'sub-subcreators' ourselves. Because each reader comes from a different background of visual images and experiences, as well as having different gradations of aesthetic, spiritual, and ethical cultivation and awareness, it is no wonder the many admirers of Tolkien have distinctly different interpretations of what — among other things — the people and places of Middle-earth look like!

Since, upon humble reflection, each of us realizes that we cannot assume to be the final and undisputed authority as to how a certain place or character should look beyond the actual and literal words of Tolkien's text itself. This is the approach I take when viewing "Tolkien inspired" artwork; I may not like or agree with it, but turn aside shrugging mentally to myself, saying "Well, I might possibly look that way if...."

Thus it is with the David Wenzel illustrated version of *The Hobbit*. Some will enjoy see this story presented in comicbook form, rather crowded with speech balloons and narration boxes; some will not. Wenzel overall accomplishes the setting forth of entire story, even if Tolkien's text has been simplified and vastly reduced; he leaves no episode out, even if they are covered in one or two pages. I cannot argue with him making elves and men look the same except for the elves pointed ears, but do think his trolls, goblins, and Gollum are too grotesque to be believable. Bilbo's bulbous pink nose throughout the book is an annoying feature, as if he had been on the bottle for years. I presume this is to give him an "everyhobbit" look and makes him identifiable as a loveable character from a children's book.

Technically overall the artwork is much better than the Rankin and Bass cartoon film of *The Hobbit*, but after having seen the film and later the full text book edition of the same with scenes from the film included, this Wenzel book seems like an afterthought. I will keep it on the shelf as part of my Tolkien curiosity collection, but when I want to read a passage of *The Hobbit*, I will go to a full text edition. Nobody is better in interpreting Tolkien than when he works directly on my imagination.

Note: A previous edition of the Wenzel *The Hobbit* (Part I) — up to where Bilbo meets Gollum — was published in 1989, with the rumor that the second part was due out in November 1990. Instead I have now encountered the full story in one volume, even though the credits mention that Parts II and III were published in April and August in 1990.

— Glen GoodKnight

The Incomprehensible Made Clear

Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*, introduction by Madeline L'Engle (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 229 pp. ISBN 0-06-067077-0.

This essential work by Miss Sayers is probably her best non-fiction work of theology (I say non-fiction because

some commentators regard her sixteen volumes of detective fiction her best religious works). It appears here in a solid new paperback edition complete not only with "the relevant portions of the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed," but a witty and, as always, intelligent Introduction by Madeleine L'Engle.

The Mind of the Maker is one of the most useful studies of the doctrine of the Trinity in our century, quite as fresh in the nineties as it was when published in 1941. In it, Miss Sayers takes as humankind's most characteristic trait in having been made in the image of God, the urge to create. Creativity begins in the mind (the Father), proceeds to become concrete (the Son), and eventuates in the understanding of the beholder (the Holy Spirit), while remaining at all times the thing created. Human creativity is taken as a model or metaphor or projection or (dare I say it) an example of divine creativity.

Written in Miss Sayers' deliciously clear and assertive manner, full of delightful examples taken from her own experiences as an author, and cogently argued, this book has much of value to say about writing as well as about the deepest mystery (which the Athanasian Creed forthrightly describes as "incomprehensible") of the Godhead.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

A Close Reading

Roma A. King, Jr., *The Pattern in the Web: The Mythical Poetry of Charles Williams* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1990), 189 PP. isbn 0-87338-412-1.

A study in exquisite (not to say excruciating) detail of the Arthurian poems of Charles Williams, this close reading will require copies of *Taliessin Through Logres* and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (as well, if you can get it, of *Heroes and Kings*), close at hand, since the author presupposes an intimate line-by-line familiarity with these intense and profoundly esoteric works.

Most usefully, King has made excellent use of the occult materials upon which Williams drew so heavily. A word should be said about these materials. Williams knew them, I think, not through having himself read the cabalistic writings of ancient and medieval Jewish Mystical thought, but through a close contact with the writings of A.E. Waite, A Christian occultist. I would suggest that King himself has used astrology in a very general way rather than as a specialist, in calling upon the "houses" of the Zodiac. Williams did participate in an occult society, an offshoot of the Golden Dawn. Much has been written about how Williams lived in a dual world of the natural and the supernatural, specifically the occult. This is probably true, at least in psychological terms. To understand his life and mind, nothing is more useful than the superb anthropological study, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* by T.M. Luhrman, in which the author describes the temporary alteration of her own consciousness as she fulfilled her fieldwork by personal participation in occult meditations and rituals.

Although Williams finally parted company with his own occult society at a certain point, he never abandoned the insights he had gained, and King makes excellent use of these materials as Williams himself understood them.

What Williams did with the *Arthuriad* was turn it into an intensely private myth. However well you know your Arthurian literature you cannot interpret Williams without reference to his complex and highly personal theology. Here King again serves as an excellent guide. With the poems at your side and King at your ear, and a lot of time and self-discipline, you will find these materials illuminating. Whether you will find them illuminating is another matter: Williams was at all times so heavily in the grip of his own projections that he really thought his esoteric insights were realities. His intensity was influential upon and convincing to many, not always, as is made clear in *Letters to Lalage*, to their benefit. Very strong personalities like his friends C.S. Lewis drew richly upon Williams (Lewis drew richly upon other's mythologies, including Tolkien's). But Williams is not T.S. Eliot. His mythology is so personal and so complex that only a close coterie (please understand me — I regard myself, with humility, as one of them) of devotees is likely to sustain appreciation of even his finest work. Certainly Williams' last volumes of poetry are his best. They can be read deliciously without any guide at all. You are free to do your own close reading or loose reading as you choose. But Roma King's contribution will help you over the bumps, and must be added to C.S. Lewis' indispensable *Arthurian Torso*, which contains Charles Williams' own comments, the excellent work already contributed by the British Charles Williams Society, and by Williams' broadest and perhaps best commentator, Glen Cavaliero, in *Charles Williams, Poet of Theology*.

The first time I read *Taliessin Through Logres* and *The Region of the Summer Stars*, in February 1958, I was only 29 years old. I approached it in perfect innocence and read the whole double volume at a gallop, inhaled it, swallowed it complete, in a "passion of patience" indeed. That was, I guess, my sweetest encounter. There is a lot to be said for young love. On (I hope) mature considerations, I think Williams' work is too resolutely esoteric to last. His best effects are poetic rather than theological. They do not require detailed ratiocination to appreciate. Deeper inquiry may even raise doubts. And after reading King's endless emphasis upon Williams' internal rhymes, especially those repeated one after the other, I found myself unable to resist comparison with rhymed burlings of Gurgi in the Taran books by Lloyd Alexander. After all is said, and King says a lot in his closely packed pages, Williams' *Arthuriad* is a dizzy, gorgeous, overwhelming read. Who cares what it means? Indeed, why must it mean? A better poet than Williams says a poem must not mean but be. The Williams *Arthuriad* is not *The Waste Land* and *The Four Quartets*, but it is smashing poetry. That ought to be enough.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson



A Very Rich Cake Indeed

Brian Sibley, *The Land of Narnia*, Brian Sibley Explores the World of C.S. Lewis, with Illustrations by Pauline Baynes. (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers.) 1990. 96 pp. ISBN 0-06-025626-5

This book — first published in Great Britain — was reviewed most enthusiastically in the last issue by Nancy-Lou Patterson, but now that I have seen the American edition, distributed by Harper and Row, I want to give a few additional details.

Nearly — but not all — of the illustrations that appear originally in the British editions of the seven Narnia books are included in this book. In addition to this we have the several maps that have only been available before in the British hardcover editions, and a full page reproduction of Pauline Baynes' well known poster map of Narnia. Also included is a color plate of Aslan dancing with Lucy and Susan — which is unfortunately reproduced in tiny size on the credits page. Pauline Baynes — a Mythopoeic Society member and reader of *Mythlore* — has done six new line drawings, two of which are presented in this review. She has also done four full page color illustrations: Digory seeing the Phoenix in the Earthly Paradise from *The Magicians Nephew*; Lucy and Mr. Tumnus walking through the snowy woods from *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (also featured on the cover); Lucy viewing the undersea hunting party from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; and Puddleglum, Eustace and Jill's first encounter with the Gnomes of Underland from *The Silver Chair*. These four color illustrations, so rich in Baynes' inimitable style, make are the visual topping on a very rich cake indeed.

Besides the Baynes' illustrations there are numerous photographs of Lewis, places connected with him, Tolkien, Pauline Baynes, illustrations from Lewis' Boxen stories, pictures from childhood works that influenced Lewis and covers of various Lewis books. Brian Sibley, the book's author, also wrote the book *Shadowlands: The Story of C.S. Lewis and Joy Davidman*, and worked as consultant as the film was made into the television film.



This book, printed on thick cream stock, is a visual delight and thoroughly enjoyable for child and adult lovers of Narnia alike.

— Glen GoodKnight

The Educated Woman

Susan J. Leonardi, *Dangerous By Degrees: Women at Oxford and the Somerville Novelists* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1989, 254 pp. ISBN 0-8135-1366-9.

The novelists of the title are Dorothy L. Sayers, Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, Margaret Kennedy, Murial Jagger, and Doreen Wallace. The several chapters dedicated to Miss Sayers offer superbly detailed and extremely useful close readings of her *Unnatural Death* and *Gaudy Night* which reveal the strongly differing presentations of the educated woman in the two works. The opening chapters give a most illuminating background to Miss Sayers' years at Oxford. Leonardi is not afraid to contradict other interpreters of Miss Sayers' biography, in regard to several episodes of her younger years which others have tended to exaggerate, and she gives a crisp and convincing presentation to the complexly mixed message delivered to women in those early days: learn all you can, but don't rock the boat.

The educated woman was regarded as a monster, a being engaged in an endeavor variously (or simultaneously) regarded as impossible, undesirable, or unnecessary. All the novelists wrestled with the conflict between the "romance plot" — a woman's truest and best goal is to marry and bear children — and the idea that a woman's true and best goal is, as it is for a man, to prepare for and then do whatever work she does best.

Leonardi's impressive reading presents this "monster" as the most violent of Miss Sayers' murderers, the nurse of *Unnatural Death*, and contrariwise, presents the educated woman as a new creation, one who can — as men are expected to do — manage to marry as Harriet Vane agrees to do on the last page of *Gaudy Night*, even as the villainess has been exposed as a woman besotted by marriage to a villain.

Interesting, this fine study is haunted by the spirit of Virginia Woolf, who, although she did not attend Oxford (let alone any women's college) appears on seventeen different pages. A comparison between Miss Sayers and Mrs. Woolf would make a study in itself, of a length well beyond that a review!

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

Howe in Middle-earth

The 1991 J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar. Illustrated by John Howe. New York: Ballantine Books (1990). ISBN: 0-345-36757-X.

John Howe contributed illustrations to the 1987 and 1988 Tolkien calendars. I like his previous work even

though there are some issues about his artistic liberties. His illustration of Smaug in the '88 calendar was used on a poster for the 50th Anniversary of *The Hobbit*, available in Britain. One of the pictures for the '88 calendar titled "The Ravens" was rather controversial for the 'pip-squeak' figure of Bilbo. Others seem to have disliked the portrayal of the Dwarves, muscled as the original pumpers of iron.

The cover to the '91 calendar is a large detail of the illustration of Old Man Willow which is placed at July. I do wonder if it might have been better to enlarge this section a little more or to have cropped it so as not to show the figure in the water under the tree's root. Would it have been better to show the one Hobbit peering around the tree as an invitation to come look and see? Having Frodo under the root would perhaps be an indication of what one would not want to see.

The first illustration, entitled "The Company of the King Approaching Caradhras," is the most problematic for me in the calendar. It shows a background of wind-blown, snow covered, very sharp peaks below an intensely blue sky. It shows the nine companions working through a boulder field alongside a stream as they approach the pass. The problem is the boulder field through which they are walking could easily be entitled "The Fells of Giant Russet Potatoes." The stone texture appears to be done with a watercolor technique, and is not very stone-like. From growing up in the Colorado Rockies, I'm not used to seeing boulders of this size appear this smooth, or this brown. Also, I would quibble with Gimili's horned helmet. The figures are quite small and to my mind too small compared to the boulders.

February is entitled "The Dark Tower." It shows a portion of Barad-dûr and it seems appropriately huge and complex. There is enough detail given that I wonder what those different halls are like and who's behind those window openings. The lower portion of the tower contains a fair number of red-lit windows. The top of the tower is not shown in this picture. There are portions that look like they're a cancerous or decaying rock around or on which the tower is built. In the foreground is the Witch-king upon his winged steed. This is a large reptilian form with a long neck, two suitably huge wings claw-tipped and a long tail. The tail is like Smaug's in the '88 calendar but this tail seems to have flattened and be clinging to the rock upon which the beast is perched. It reminds me of something leech-like and helps give the beast quite a grotesque appearance. The wings seem like they're about to decay. The neck of the beast is bent in a rather awkward position. It's mouth is wide open with a huge metal bit and a harness hung with stirrups for the Witch-king. The top half of the beast's head is covered with an iron mask with sieve-like coverings over the eyes. For the month of February this is a pretty gloomy picture but intriguing enough to be tolerable for 28 days.

March is another picture of Sam fighting Shelob, entitled "Sam and Shelob." Shelob is appropriately spider-like but her legs taper to what looks like horny points with

no visible claws. Sam seems to be flying between her legs with a very determined grimace on his face. He is holding in both hands a rather over-large version of Sting. The elvish blade is here anomalously glowing white as is the area in the center of Shelob's abdomen. This perhaps represents where Sam has struck at her. The white may actually be different in the original and white here due to an error of printing. The background is very indistinct, though the Tower of Cirith Ungol can be seen rising over Sam. Frodo lies between her legs appropriately wrapped in silk. For me this picture has problems with accuracy but it is overall artistically well done and I think will be tolerable.

April is entitled "Galadriel." It's another version of the Elven Queen and her mirror. The illustration shows a woman with dark blonde hair dressed in a purple gown standing beside a white basin. There is a faint glow in the air above the basin. The water does not show as you see the basin on edge. The scene is set in early evening or early morning with a background of silhouetted trees and stars in a purple sky. Galadriel's left hand is held up perhaps having just passed over the basin and the hand shows a glow emanating from one of the fingers, apparently representing her Ring. This picture is self-framed with several small detailed borders. Below the picture are vining leaves with white, morning glory type flowers. The most disturbing thing about this picture for me is Galadriel's face. It seems as if she is wearing a mask. Nevertheless, I find the picture has a fair artistic effect in part because of the composition of values and Howe's choice of hues.

May is entitled "Gandalf" with the wizard striding along a wet track through a field of grass. In the hazy distance you can see what is probably a vision of the country of the Shire during a rain storm. Gandalf has a rucksack upon his back and is striding along with a tall wooden staff in his left hand. There is perhaps a faint glow from the tip of the staff. He is wearing an appropriately wide brimmed conical hat. His eyebrows show up well but don't stick out very far. Overall, this should be enjoyable for the month of May.

June is entitled "At the Ford" and is quite dramatic though I find it incongruous to the "Fellowships" description. First of all, Frodo sits upon a small sized horse, though other than size I like how it is portrayed. Compared to Frodo the horse seems totally adequate in size to carry a Hobbit but not a man or an elf. The horse seems to be backing up a rock with its ears laid back and in the one visible eye there is a white glint of resistance. Frodo sits atop the horse, the stirrups are appropriately short, as if he's about to run a race and is saddled as such. There's a bit and bridle but no reins seen. Frodo is holding, again, an over-large Sting pointed at the apparent figure of the Witch-king, who holds a very long sword. He is in the midst of the stream. The stream has risen up and there are the heads of white horses, portrayed in anger among the waves about to crash down on the two black riders that

appear in the scene. The biggest problem is that Frodo is almost on the same level as the black riders and there is no place in the picture for the bank Glorfindel's horse climbed before Frodo turned. I suppose this was taken out to simplify the artistic problems and increase the dramatic effect of the scene; however, Frodo seems to be as much at risk of being washed away as the black riders. But, again, Howe did a skillful job with this picture and I think I will enjoy watching it through the month of June.

"Old Man Willow" is portrayed in July; a very green picture as far as the general tint is concerned. As mentioned above, it shows two Hobbits. The face that you can see is peering around the tree and looks much like a young boy, rather Huck Finnish. The concept of the tree I think fits the story quite well. It's rather difficult to tell where the old willow begins and where it ends, I think reflecting the influence of the tree on the Old Forest. A bothersome aspect of the picture is I can not find any willow leaves. Like many other artists' versions of Entish trees, it's easy to imagine a face in this tree. It is intriguing because I find more than one face in the tree and, in fact, many different sizes and shapes of gnarls and knots in the bark could be construed as parts of a face. This is an illustration I will appreciate more and find more in it the longer I look.

August is entitled "Turambar and Glorund." It seems Howe took liberties with the storyline in order to have an effective illustration. It basically shows Turin stabbing the dragon. The ravine is rather shallow, Turin being able to straddle the stream, and with both arms up-thrust stab the dragon. He stabs the dragon quite close to his head. The dragon is snapping its head to the side with fire erupting from its mouth and nostrils. There is one too tiny red eye showing. Turin has a metal skull cap with a spike on top. The Black Sword, or what you can see of it, looks appropriate but little else in this illustration seems to fit the tale. The ravine seems far too shallow for someone to throw themselves in and die except accidentally. The dragon itself looks like a Hollywood iguana done up for a B movie. On the other hand, this is a dramatic picture, well constructed, and I think well executed. It, too, will be enjoyable to look at for a month.

September "Eowyn and Nazgul." This picture is of Eowyn about to strike the head from the Nazgul steed. As in the earlier picture, the Nazgul has an iron helm unlike that described by Tolkien as it has an opening for the eyes but extends below that so that there is no empty space between helm and mantle. The beast has its wings outstretched, is in the air, with perhaps only the very tip of its overly long tail touching the ground. The tail completely surrounds Eowyn and she is turned with her back almost to the Nazgul. Her sword is pointed over her left shoulder as she winds up to strike the head off. The Nazgul seems to be trying to rein the beast in, not really looking like it's driving the beast forward to attack. In fact, it appears he's pulling back on the rein for all he's worth and his legs are stretched straight out as if he's trying to stop the beast.

Eowyn has a grimace on her face that reminds me of Sam attacking Shelob. The background of the painting is rather hazy, golden and brown grass receding into the distance and some riders roughly indicated in the distance. There is no sign of the King and Snowmane or Merry. Other than the long tail and the Nazgul's helm, this could be a fairly accurate picture of what is described in *The Return of the King*. The only other discrepancy perhaps is the clearly visible scales on the beast.

Suddenly the great beast beat its hideous wings, and the wind of them was foul. Again it leaped into the air, and then swiftly fell down upon Eowyn, shrieking, striking with beak and claw.

Still she did not blench: maiden of the Rohirrim, child of kings, slender but as a steel-blade, fair yet terrible. A swift stroke she dealt, skilled and deadly. (III-117)

Overall, I find this a very dramatic and acceptable illustration. Howe's reptilian figures I find quite good and the composition of this illustration is well focused and exciting. It very much portrays the action and the touch of having the beast just above the ground I find very effective, especially with the placement of the wings. They seem to be scooping the air for all they're worth.

"In Mordor" is the title of October's picture. In many ways it seems a rather familiar picture. It shows the Orcs marching with Sam guiding Frodo along one edge of the column. The Orcs shown in this picture are very similar to the Orcs in "The Great Goblin" from the '88 calendar except that these Orcs are better armed and armored than those of the Misty Mountains. The overall tone of the picture is similar to Howe's "The Uruk-hai" from the '87 calendar. Similar to that illustration, the Orcs are carrying long, pole-type bladed weapons and knives and swords with very elaborate hilts and pommels. "In Mordor" is quite atmospheric and I think well done. Howe certainly shows a lot of variation of Orc faces and they are not pleasant to see. I think, though, the Hobbits would not pass as Orcs marching to battle the West.

November is entitled "Glorfindel and the Balrog." This shows, apparently during the day, a picture of Glorfindel and his battle with the Balrog on the pass from Gondolin. Below them is a sea of clouds and across the way is a massive mountain peak as the background. The Balrog, not fully seen as he is coming around a bend in the path, has taken a swipe at the Elf with a huge scimitar. The blow has missed a rather frail looking Glorfindel, who has an up-raised shield and sword and seems to be falling back behind that guard. The demon's blade though was deflected by the mountainside of which it has shattered a small portion. You can see the rock flying off in stones and sparks. The Balrog is basically a Minotaur with huge wings and very long black mane. He has appropriately red eyes and a large red tongue amidst many large teeth. He has two long black horns coming out from either side of his head. Once again many details, including the time of day, do not fit the storyline with much fidelity but this is a very dramatic picture. It is well executed artistically and is very

active. The Balrog definitely means business and it seems quite hopeless for Glorfindel to do anything to harm this monster. The principals are at one side of the frame helping to portray their precarious position and lending to a sense of action 'on the edge!'

December is entitled "Minas Tirith." As many people commented at this year's Mythopoeic Conference, it is done in lighting that is very reminiscent of Maxfield Parrish and is quite beautiful. A portion of the city is shown, apparently from a northern viewpoint, with the viewer situated someplace between the Tower and the Pier that thrusts out over the gate, giving a profile-like view of the city. The main gate is not visible at all. I think the illustration is to show the top five tiers of the city. The bottom part fading off into clouds and the very top part of the Tower and the Pier are showing the first light of dawn. This viewpoint avoids having to compare the city with Mount Mindolluin. I think this is quite a beautiful picture but the city itself does not compare with Nasmith's masterpiece from his 1990 calendar. The effect of color in this illustration I think is better though. The more dramatic colors and strong contrast in value may be easier to capture in this print medium than colors grayed to portray distance.

Howe crops his subject so as to focus attention and avoid comparisons with the surrounding landscape or action. This allows him to create dramatic and I think effective scenes. Overall, I'm going to find this an enjoyable calendar to watch through the year except for the month of January. Those foothills of potatoes are going to be quite difficult to 'swallow.' The other complaint I have with this calendar may resolve itself with time and that is of the apparently computer-generated graphic borders around the calendar portion of the page. They are uniformly built on rather simple designs, black over a primary color, which changes from month to month, and to me, detract from the illustrations. I think they're supposed to represent a simplified version of Celtic designs.

I notice in my own response to the calendars over time and that of other viewers a lack of sympathy for the artist's use of their own imagination. Perhaps I hang too much on their portrayals as illustrations. If I go with the feeling, scenes like "Glorfindel and the Balrog" or even Garland's mountain top Smaug (1989) work just fine.

[Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. Vol. III, 117. 1966, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, ISBN 0-395-19395-B.]

— Bruce Leonard



Tales Newly Told (continued from page 50)

measure—the model for Alessan) stands against the Dark Lord, we know intimately — because Tolkien has done a splendid job of showing us — just what he stands for: the pristine beauty of the Elvish and Numenorean heritage of the early ages of Middle-earth. Alessan has nothing as poetically convincing as this at his back, and we remain

free to question the moral legitimacy of his actions, and even to feel greater sympathy for Brandin as the invader comes to truly love his adopted land.

Also frustrating is Kay's tendency to present us with unusual and fascinating characters, and then do very little with them. Alienor, for instance, an aristocratic woman who aids the rebels, is given an intriguing persona, darkened by nymphomania and sado-masochism, which begs to be developed further and put to better narrative use, but her role in the plot is allowed to fizzle out inconclusively. And Marius, the crippled King of Quileia, another larger-than-life figure, who has, in the past, with the aid of Alessan and Baerd, toppled an oppressive matriarchy, demands to have his story told in full, rather than dismissed with a few flashbacks (or could this be Kay's next project?).

Of all the novel's vividly drawn characters Brandin is unquestionably the most memorable, and because his heroic traits are as impressive as his evil ones, his tragic destiny affects us all the more. It is the uncompromising sense of tragedy that, I think, most differentiates Kay from Tolkien (despite the presence of tragic figures in Tolkien's work, like Túrin). Kay has already shown a concern for the theme of the sacrifice, the victim who comes to a tragic end so that others may live — Kevin Laine in *The Fionavar Tapestry* comes to mind. Of course, Tolkien's Frodo himself incarnated this theme when he told Sam: "It must often be so... when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them"; and Dianora echoes him when she thinks that "Hers was not a life meant to be made whole." Yet Frodo, even if he loses the life he once had, does reap some form of spiritual and emotional reward for his suffering. For Dianora, "that grace could not come by so easy'y," and the destruction she and Brandin must suffer is devastatingly final, despite the suggestion that they may live again happily in Fionavar. Kay's universe, in contrast to Tolkien's, is fundamentally non-Christian: there can be no eucatastrophe. The only metaphysical premise governing the moral world here is the Law of Return: the sins of Brandin's past find him out and destroy him, before his evident transformation through love can lead him to undo them. The power of the tragedy, for the reader, casts a pall over the "happy" ending granted to the rebels.

Yet Kay's skill as a writer is evident, especially in matters of detail. He is at his masterful best when constructing vivid dramatic scenes: the youthful Baerd defying the Ygrathen authorities shortly after the cursing of Tigana; the death of Pasitheia, Alessan's proud and unforgiving mother; Baerd's Otherworld battle at the side of the Carlozzini (who are modeled after the Berandanti of late mediaeval Italy); Dianora's vision of a riselka (a sea-sprite that seals the destiny of the one to whom it appears); Dianora's great Ring Dive, which weds Brandin to the land of the Palm (and which, in an Inklings novel, would most likely have brought on the climactic eucatastrophe). These episodes are remarkably literary achievements in themselves, and augur well for Kay's future ventures into mythopoeic fantasy.

