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***Inklings of Truth: Essays to Mark the Anniversaries of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Paul Shrimpton**

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impressive range of scholarship being conducted and, one would hope, sparking curiosity in readers for scholarship yet to be explored. While of varying length, depth, and—in some cases, perhaps—quality, these analyses have in common a praiseworthy goal, one echoed in the introduction to the volume and to this review: to elevate Tolkien’s status within the literary community, and to offer new ways of reading and thinking of the classics, Tolkien included. It is an invitation to return, to re-read the “greats,” and to see what new and exciting connections to Tolkien and his writings yet exist. In my estimation, this collection accomplishes what engaging scholarship should: it leaves one wanting more, in the best sense.

—Willow DiPasquale



INKLINGS OF TRUTH: ESSAYS TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARIES OF C.S. LEWIS AND J.R.R. TOLKIEN. Paul Shrimpton, ed. Grandpont House, 2018. 102pp. ISBN 9780952216728, £8; order at grandpont-house.org.

FEATURING CONTRIBUTIONS BY Stratford Caldecott, Walter Hooper, Simon Stacey, and Michael Ward, this brief collection publishes a series of talks given at Grandpont House in Oxford in 2013. It bears its title because, according to Shrimpton, the pursuit of literary truth is a common theme emerging from each of the papers. Shrimpton also notes engagement with Tolkien’s doctrine of sub-creation and with the subtle Christian sensibilities underlying the fictional worlds of both authors.

The first essay, by Michael Ward, is titled “The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God: C.S. Lewis, Narnia, and the Planets.” Ward’s *Planet Narnia* is required reading in Inklings scholarship at this point, but this essay provides a good summary of his argument for those who have not yet read Ward’s lengthier work. He argues that each of the Narnia books represents the personality and tone of one of the seven medieval planets, which thus provide the hidden but coherent through-line for the series. This is in large part the standard form of the talk that Ward gives when he is invited to lecture on this subject. He nuances this presentation with the idea of a hidden yet ever-present purpose or pattern to the world of Narnia which apologetically buttresses the hidden yet ever-present purpose of our own world. “Can our real world truly have a purpose and a pattern? Lewis believed it could, despite all appearances to the contrary. And he reflects this apparent conflict in Narnia” (39). Since Ward has already treated this subject exhaustively elsewhere, there is very little to surprise us here.

Stratford Caldecott's essay, "Tolkien's Search for England," argues that for Tolkien "'England' is not a place but rather a *story*. We talk, dream, and imagine something called 'England' into existence, and if we cease to tell the story, it will cease to be" (42). The story that is England can only be told in mythic and folkloric form, and this was what Tolkien was attempting to do. Influenced by William Morris, G.K. Chesterton, and others, Tolkien attempts to capture the essence of Englishness in his works. This essence, Caldecott claims, was almost extinguished by the Norman Invasion, an event which left lasting scars on the psyche of the land and which Tolkien always resented. While informative, Caldecott's essay overplays its hand in making the search for 'Englishness' the central theme in Tolkien's *oeuvre*, rather than, say, his drive for a personal language and a context in which that language might grow. If, as Caldecott believes, the Normans are Tolkien's villains, we would expect him to say more about them. Similarities between Sumerian Uruk and Uruk-hai, or between Gilgamesh and Gil-galad, are bootless.

Walter Hooper's "Memories of C.S. Lewis and the Other Inklings," take the form of a narrative reminiscence of his growing relationship with Lewis and thus his entry into the orbits of the other Inklings. Hooper gives a charming and personal account of Lewis and his daily habits at the Kilns ("a *monumental* tea drinker," 59). Late in the essay, he expresses puzzlement that many biographers such as Carpenter and Wilson claim the relationship between Lewis and Tolkien fizzled in their later years. Untrue, says Hooper. Both complained to him about seeing so little of the other, and Tolkien gave up Thursday meetings not to distance himself from Lewis but to spend more time with his family (70).

The final essay, "Tolkien's Tone and the Frequent Failure to Hear It" by Simon Stacey, is a rare study of Tolkien's diction and authorial craft. Tolkien, writes Stacey, evinces an emotional and spiritual elevation in keeping with an epic. Grand without being lavish, he adopts the simplicity and restraint of other great epics. Yet Tolkien is not all pseudo-archaism and inverted sentence structures; he modulates between high and hobbitish depending on the needs of the scene. His tone evokes a sense of beauty, of loss coupled with hope, which comes from the providential ordering of the world under the hand of God. As has been observed before, one of the unique appeals of Tolkien's work is its sense of unexplored depths, and the author addresses the benefits and losses of filling out some of the allusions we find in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Stacey acknowledges the Christian influence on Tolkien's style and content throughout, and provides a fascinating footnote on Newman. The second half of the essay's title, dealing with a frequent failure in appreciating Tolkien's authorial style, must presumably have been a victim of the substantial cuts for time for which Stacey apologizes at the beginning of the paper. Overall, the outline of this chapter is a bit diffuse.

The book as a whole is quite short—this reviewer finished it in a day—but it provides some good engagement with key issues in the study of Lewis and Tolkien. There are no groundbreaking conclusions to be found here, though each entry is a solid piece of work. They are engaging and easy-to-follow, retaining their oral character. Since Ward and Caldecott’s major theses have already been presented elsewhere (in *Planet Narnia* and “Tolkien’s Elvish England,” respectively), this volume is enjoyable but not essential.

—Austin Freeman



CELTIC MYTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE GODS AND THEIR STORIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. Emily Lyle, ed. Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press. 2018, 210 p. ISBN 978-1-78683-205-4. \$65.00.

IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO COLLECTION EDITOR Emily Lyle’s *Celtic Myth in the 21st Century*, series editor Jonathan M. Woodling finds it important to remind readers that scholars today “more than ever” must be “mindful that conceptions and associations of the ‘Celtic’ may be socially and politically constructed, as well as historically situated” (1). This frank statement—part admission about the inherent nature of historicizing and part recommendation that scholars remain aware and responsible when their work involves anything akin to historicizing—is reiterated when Woodling points out that “the last century was, in varying degree, a decolonising period in Celtic cultures, in which process ‘tradition’ became a politically charged concept—and, latterly, a contested one” (2).

Both for Woodling, as editor of the University of Wales’s *New Approaches to Celtic Religion and Mythology* series, and for Lyle and the other scholars whose work is collected here, new work in Celtic studies and on Celtic mythology must navigate the tensions between established conceptions of the field and its subjects on the one hand, and on the other, a critical need to re-examine that same field during a time when former shortcomings and potential misapplications are becoming more visible. And today this need extends beyond even a growing awareness of “the colonial—especially orientalist—context” (2) that fields such as anthropology, religion, and folklore studies have often worked from. As I read *Celtic Myth in the 21st Century*, I was constantly thinking about how such projects are crucial despite their fraught complexity—particularly in the context of related fields experiencing grimmer versions of myth being reified as history or tradition, as is happening with white supremacists claiming an imagined Nordic past and its symbols, or the ongoing