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## ***The Great Tales Never End: Essays in Memory of Christopher Tolkien***, edited by Richard Ovenden and Catherine McIlwaine

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reading. It concentrates hundreds of ideas into a relatively small space. I thoroughly recommend it.

—Suzanne Bray

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**THE GREAT TALES NEVER END: ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF CHRISTOPHER TOLKIEN.** Eds. Richard Oviden and Catherine McIlwaine. Oxford: Bodleian Library Publishing, 2022. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-85124-565-9. \$65.00.

*THE GREAT TALES NEVER END* WAS DESIGNED BY ITS EDITORS as a festschrift for Christopher Tolkien, with the invited contributors providing essays on both his work and that of his father, but in her introduction Catherine McIlwaine notes that "sadly events overtook us" and so the book became a memorial (22). As such it is a fitting volume, lavishly illustrated, with wide margins, lovely thick paper, and even a dainty ribbon bookmark sewn into the binding. The Bodleian Library makes beautiful, high-quality books (see also their exhibit catalog for *Tolkien: Maker of Middle Earth* (2017) which remains one of the most beautiful books ever published on its subject) and this one will stand on the devoted shelf just as proudly.

The Table of Contents reads like a Who's Who of Tolkien Studies: Vincent Ferré, Verlyn Flieger, John Garth, Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, Carl F. Hostetter, Stuart D. Lee, Tom Shippey, and Brian Sibley all have long essays. Shorter contributions are also provided to emphasize the book's nature as a literary cenotaph: the text of the eulogy given at Christopher's funeral by his close friend Maxime H. Pascal is rendered in its original French verse followed by a translation in English by Christopher's wife (as well as a director of the Tolkien Estate, trustee of The Tolkien Trust, and Christopher's own literary executor), and "A Personal Memory" by Priscilla Tolkien, Christopher's sister—who herself passed away before the publication of this volume. On the one hand, this listing of stars of the old guard emphasizes the

high stature of the collection and underscores their closeness to its subject; on the other, there is a little something corporate about it, too, that reinforces for me, as both reader and scholar, the multiple gates involved when reading or writing about either of the Tolkiens or their work.

The contributions themselves are well done close readings: this is scholarly work for a decidedly general audience, and so notes to all essays appear in a singular section at the back of the book, with the majority of citations being to the primary sources and only a few to other scholarship. Again, this comes back to the book's mixed nature as well as its publisher: one expects the vast bulk of its purchasers will be in in-person at the gift shop and online by academic and fan completionists. Three pages of "Further Reading" go heavy on the Tolkiens, the work of the contributors, and additional recommendations that vary from Priestman's 1992 biography to Anthony Kenny's translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. McIlwane also provides a bibliography of Christopher's work that encompasses his articles, notes, interviews, and maps as well as his books.

The content of the essays is wide-ranging: Vincent Ferré's "The Son Behind the Father: Christopher Tolkien as a Writer" is one of the pieces I suspect will have a long afterlife due to certain claims he makes regarding Christopher as a "co-author" rather than editor of *The Silmarillion*. This is an intriguing argument, but not one that I am fully convinced of in this format, and I suspect bibliographers will get years' worth of arguments out of this essay. Verlyn Flieger's "Listening to the Music," in contrast, is an essay that contextualizes *The Lord of the Rings* within the broader legendarium: a true and interesting piece for the general reader, but not one that really does or says anything new either. John Garth's "The Chronology of Creation: How J.R.R. Tolkien Misremembered the Beginnings of his Mythology" treads similar ground while making better use of bibliographical practices, but he too is limited by the not quite scholarly apparatus at play.

"I Wisely Started with a Map: J.R.R. Tolkien as Cartographer" by Hammond and Scull discusses Tolkien's cartographical training as both an undergraduate and later as a military officer, which informed the maps he created to embody his imaginary world and how it evolved. The chapter is richly illustrated with examples of Tolkien's maps now held both in the Bodleian and the Marquette libraries, and while the topic is somewhat niche, it is interesting. Hostetter's "Editing the Tolkienian Manuscript" briefly examines several Tolkien manuscript texts to demonstrate the bibliographical labors necessary to making Tolkien's unfinished works publishable – and thus explicate the true weight of the work Christopher undertook to make that happen.

The final three contributions are outliers in the sense that they barely or don't at all engage with Christopher's work or legacy. Lee's "A Milestone in

BBC History? The 1955-56 Radio Dramatization of *The Lord of the Rings* is a useful bit of media history, discussing the earliest adaptation of Tolkien's work which has largely been lost in the shuffle of large-screen films. This chapter is also illustrated with examples of Tolkien's correspondence with the radio producers as well as the scripts. It's an intriguing set of documents, and one can hope that a more thorough examination and reproduction may one day be forthcoming. Tom Shippey's "'King Sheave' and 'The Lost Road'" focuses on minor texts that aren't fully connected with the legendarium, but do connect deeply to Tolkien's philological fascinations. This is a chapter that a general reader might read with bafflement or skip altogether, while the scholarly reader may or may not find nuggets of use. And the final essay, Sibley's "'Down from the Door Where It Began . . . ' Portal Images in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" returns us to literary analysis, in this case examining doors in the legendarium—including Durin's Doors and the verbal incantation to enter ("Speak 'friend' and enter" as a kind of "Open sesame!") and the doors of Bag End as the locus of beginning and ending journeys.

Ultimately, *The Great Tales* is a peculiar book charged with performing multiple duties: as a memorial to an important figure, as a general work, and as a scholarly work. It never fully commits to being properly any one of these things. A memorial might have been more personal; a general work more entertaining; a scholarly work more erudite. And yet, perhaps its value is in its messiness, in that it underscores the unique and problematic place that Tolkien has in popular and literary culture and the equally strange place Christopher himself inhabited in it.

—Cait Coker



**TENDING THE HEART OF VIRTUE: HOW CLASSIC STORIES AWAKEN A CHILD'S MORAL IMAGINATION.** Second Edition. Vigen Guroian. New York NY: Oxford UP, 2023. 310 p. ISBN 9780195384314. \$19.95.

OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAVE PASSED since the original publication of Vigen Guroian's *Tending the Heart of Virtue* (1998). As Guroian's own children have grown, so has the book: this new edition boasts an additional three chapters. While the rest of *Tending the Heart of Virtue* has received minimal edits, Guroian has clarified his audience—though still intended for “parents and teachers who want to explore the moral and religious significance of [fairy tales] with their own children and students” (5)—he highlights the book's renewed relevance for the “worlds of homeschooling and classical schooling” (xi).