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## Reviews

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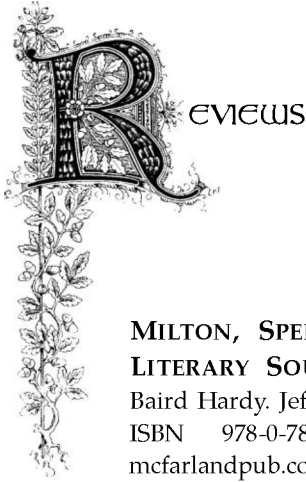
### Abstract

*Milton, Spenser, and the Chronicles of Narnia: Literary Sources for C.S. Lewis's Novels.* Elizabeth Baird Hardy. Reviewed by Charles A. Huttar.

*C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy.* Edited by Bruce L. Edwards. Reviewed by Jason Fisher.

*The Company They Keep: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien as Writers in Community.* Diana Pavlac Glyer. Reviewed by Andrew Lazo.

*Roots and Branches: Selected Papers on Tolkien.* Tom Shippey. Reviewed by Jason Fisher.



# REVIEWS

**MILTON, SPENSER, AND THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: LITERARY SOURCES FOR C.S. LEWIS'S NOVELS.** Elizabeth Baird Hardy. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007. vii + 188 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-7864-2876-2. (Orders 800-253-2187 or [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com).)

Although this book is aimed at a general audience, even readers who are familiar with the abundant scholarship on the Chronicles as well as the tales themselves will find fresh insights in it. The author has read the series thoroughly and perceptively and has arranged a host of observations in five well-organized chapters. The first three deal with characters—the two witches; others who do evil, including “mised protagonists”; and “Girls Whose Heads Have Something inside Them: The Characterization of Women.” The other two chapters deal with settings (the creation of Narnia, the garden of Digory’s temptation, the sea, Underland, natural beauty vs. artifice, and Aslan’s Country) and teachings (the relation of pagan mythologies to Christianity, the nature of the divine, obedience and free will, sin and redemption, and moral and spiritual discipline). Along the way, Hardy seeks to correct several persistent misunderstandings: for example, she believes that starting the series with *The Magician’s Nephew* reduces its effectiveness, that Lewis’s characterization of girls and women is generally quite positive, and that the series ends with Susan Pevensie not irretrievably lost.

The particular topics treated in the five chapters were selected because they were considered to reflect Lewis’s reading of Spenser or Milton or both. With each topic, Hardy juxtaposes what Lewis does in the Chronicles with something from *The Faerie Queene* or *Paradise Lost*. Thus in the first chapter Jadis is compared to Spenser’s Duessa and Lucifera and to Milton’s Satan, and this pattern is followed throughout. As a result many interesting similarities are noted. But resemblances are not necessarily “sources,” as the book’s subtitle claims, and phrases like “distinct possibility” or “strikingly similar” are no substitute for arguing a case. The springs of artistic creativity are mysterious. Lewis famously deprecated the game of source-hunting, and what he wrote about Spenser applies to him also: “His mind was so concoctive and esemplastic

that the fruits of his reading met and mingled and transformed one another till they became unrecognizable—as happens on the ‘road to Xanadu’” (*English Literature*, 355). The *Chronicles* contain, to be sure, some undoubted borrowings from Spenser and Milton, most of which had already been identified in the scholarship, and Hardy duly records nearly all of these (not always giving due credit). Most of the similarities that she finds, however, likely indicate common influences on Lewis and the two earlier poets, especially biblical and classical influences (as Hardy finally acknowledges on p. 160) as well as archetypes underlying even those, rather than borrowings—consciously or not—from either Spenser or Milton. An unfortunate side effect of the narrow focus on these two poems that Lewis knew so well is to diminish the richness of his allusiveness to the whole range of earlier literature. To say, in discussing Aslan’s Country in *The Last Battle*, that “the concept of something with a bigger inside than its outside is one that Lewis does not draw from his sources” (132) is to ignore a long tradition exploring this paradox, one that includes Donne (“Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb”) and Dante’s Celestial Rose. (And after the discussion of the subtleties of “Lewis’s paradise” existing not “in the literal heavens” but “in another dimension, [without] spatial limits,” it seems a bit simplistic to say in the next paragraph that he “believed [heaven] to be an actual place” [132].)

Surprisingly, Hardy misses the association between the silver chair in which Prince Rilian is imprisoned and that in the Garden of Proserpina in *The Faerie Queene* 2.7.53 (see John D. Cox, “Epistemological Release in *The Silver Chair*,” in Peter I. Schakel’s 1977 collection *The Longing for a Form*, 162–63. My own contribution to *The Longing for a Form* points out a few other parallels [but not “sources”] in *Paradise Lost*). Moreover, her decision to limit discussion of Spenser to *The Faerie Queene* precludes noting a possible connection between *The Last Battle* and *Mother Hubbard’s Tale*, with its Ape disguised in a cast-off lion’s skin and ruling the gullible masses (though the Ass in Spenser’s poem plays a more exalted role than the donkey Puzzle. It may also be significant that twice in this poem Spenser uses the word “shift” to refer to crooked dealing.)

But even though its assertions are often highly speculative—as an example, Caspian’s “usurping uncle” Miraz has less in common with the relatively obscure uncle of “Tristram [sic]” in Spenser (54) than with Shakespeare’s Claudius—the book offers much good commentary on Lewis’s work. Sometimes it takes the form of an instructive contrast (rather than parallel) with an earlier poet’s handling of similar material, as for example between Prince Rilian and Spenser’s Verdant Knight (47–48). I found illuminating the comparison between Lucy Pevensie and Spenser’s Una (80–84) as well as Hardy’s insights on Lewis’s phrase “farther in” (174n20). Other readers will have their own favorites.

For the retail price of this paperback, one could wish that the publisher had invested a bit more in copy editing, to improve grammar, spelling, style, and

factual accuracy, and in proofreading. But there are mistakes that mere in-house checking probably wouldn't have caught, ranging from the misspelling "Rubblebuffin" (repeated three times, 61f.) to identifying Milton's elephant as "leviathan" instead of "behemoth" (115). I seriously question equating the garden in *The Magician's Nephew* with the one in which Eustace is undragoned: a fountain is not the same as a well. Nor is the Redcrosse Knight's ordeal in the House of Holiness (*FQ* 1.10) accompanied by "baptismal imagery" (72, 151); that comes in the next canto, as part of a different episode. And I wondered whether the needless insertion "[sic]" after "vice-gernet" (90) resulted from failure to check the quotation against Lewis's text or from simply not being familiar with Lewis's word "vice-gerent."

Finally, a word must be said about the confusing documentation. Packing all references for a given paragraph into a single note—the regular practice here—presents readers with an unnecessary challenge, making it hard to sort out who said what, especially when (as is often the case) the paragraph contains several quotations with no in-text attribution.

It is perhaps in the nature of a review to give disproportionate space to negative comments where these are deemed necessary. I would not want them to obscure this book's real merits—its often judicious commentary on the characters and teachings of the *Chronicles* and the glimpses it provides into at least some of the ways Lewis's literary heritage informed his creative work.

—Charles A. Huttar

**C.S. LEWIS: LIFE, WORKS, AND LEGACY** [Four Volumes]. Edited by Bruce L. Edwards. Westport: Praeger (An Imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group), 2007. Hardcover. 1416pp. \$300.00. Set ISBN 978-0-275-99116-6.

IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN TEN YEARS since the first appearance of Walter Hooper's *C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide* and almost as long since the arrival of Jeffrey G. Schultz and John G. West's *C.S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia* – for which Bruce Edwards wrote twenty-five entries and advised on the editorial board. This being the case, a new reference work that could help to bring the Lewis community up to date on the scholarship of the last decade was overdue. Edwards's *C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy* ostensibly seeks to do just that. But somewhat surprisingly, Edwards makes little mention of either of the preceding

works on whose shoulders the present collection, in some ways, stands. Rather, he writes in his Preface that “[s]cholars and admirers alike have long sought a full-fledged, balanced bio-critical treatment of the life and works of C.S. Lewis” (xiii); but what then are the *Companion and Guide* and *Readers’ Encyclopedia*, one might well ask?

Be this as it may, *Life, Works, and Legacy* is an ambitious and generally very good collection of more than fifty essays by some forty assorted contributors in the field of Lewis studies. Edwards has organized this enormous undertaking into four distinct volumes, each taking as its primary focus one aspect of Lewis; and he has written an introductory chapter to set the scope for three of the four volumes (Victor Reppert does the job for Volume 3). Over the course of each volume, the apparent mission is to treat the titular features of Lewis’s life, works, and legacy. All too often, however, the last is given the shortest shrift, though it is arguably the most important of the three.

The first volume, *An Examined Life*, consists of thirteen primarily biographical essays, arranged in roughly chronological order. Several of the chapters focus on more specialized subjects—for example, Lewis’s service in World War I, or Lewis’s relationships with Owen Barfield, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Joy Davidman. The second volume, *Fantastist, Mythmaker, & Poet*, presents a further thirteen essays on the bulk of Lewis’s creative *oeuvre*. These include an essay each on the three books of the Space Trilogy, three essays on *The Chronicles of Narnia*, three on Lewis’s poetry, and one each on *Till We Have Faces*, *The Screwtape Letters* (which could have fit equally well in the third volume), and on Lewis’s shorter fiction. In the last, Katherine Harper addresses the *Dark Tower* controversy deftly and without bias. The third volume, *Apologist, Philosopher, & Theologian*, contains twelve essays discussing Lewis’s apologetics, sermons, and theological writings. This includes treatment of *Mere Christianity*, *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, *The Great Divorce*, *The Abolition of Man*, *Miracles*, *Letters to Malcolm*, *Reflections on the Psalms*, and *Surprised By Joy*, *inter alia*. *The Problem of Pain*, surprisingly, does not have its own chapter, though it is mentioned in several. Finally, the fourth volume, *Scholar, Teacher, & Public Intellectual*, concludes the collection with thirteen essays on Lewis’s academic and scholarly accomplishments. These essays treat *The Allegory of Love*, *The Discarded Image*, *The Four Loves*, *Studies In Words*, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, as well as several more general discussions of Lewis’s role as scholar, teacher, and prolific correspondent. *An Experiment in Criticism*, however, does not get its own dedicated essay; nor do any of the other collections of Lewis’s academic essays (e.g., *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*). All told, this is, if not an *exhaustive* collection, at least a thorough one.

Between them, the four volumes contain some excellent contributions to Lewis studies. The tastes of individual readers will certainly vary, but for me, some particular gems include “C.S. Lewis Scholarship: A Bibliographical

Overview" by Diana Pavlac Glyer and David Bratman, which presents a summary of the secondary literature on Lewis (necessarily selective, but all the more valuable for the discernment shown by the authors), as well as a usefully annotated bibliography of some of the key contributions to Lewis studies. It's an excellent warm-up for readers who will go on to Glyer's superb book *The Company They Keep*, with its appendix by Bratman. Another excellent piece is "English Literature in the Sixteenth Century: C.S. Lewis as a Literary Historian" by Donald T. Williams, a cogent treatment of one of Lewis's least read but most interesting works. I would also highlight "'Gifted Amateurs': C.S. Lewis and the Inklings" by David Bratman, which provides a clear, concise, and *accurate* biography of Lewis and the Inklings. Don W. King's three chapters on the poetry of Lewis are also rewarding, as is Devin Brown's essay on *The Screwtape Letters*, though Brown could have delved into the legacy of that work a little further than he does—for example, to consider the numerous imitations it has inspired since its publication. All these essays share common features, in particular: that they are lucidly written, indeed following Edwards's "exhortation to all contributors [...] that they try as much as it is within their power to emulate C.S. Lewis in style and substance" (xvi); that they work hard to treat their topics contextually, making many points of contact with Lewis's other writings and with other writers in his *milieu*; and that they do not neglect to consider, at least to some degree, that often overlooked third goal of the collection, the *legacy* of Lewis.

As I have said, the collection generally sets the bar quite high; however, at the same time, it is hampered by many faults—some endemic to works of its kind (a large reference work written by many hands), others unique to this specific collection. One example of the former is overlap. At least three different contributors, for example, discuss the famous conversionary conversation on the "true myth" of Christianity that took place in Oxford in 1931 between Lewis, Tolkien, and Hugo Dyson; however, each offers different details, none the complete picture. Likewise, several scholars discuss the origins of the Inklings, but only David Bratman gets it right (III 283): contrary to popular belief, the Inklings predated Lewis and Tolkien, having been formed as an undergraduate club at University College by one Edward Tangye Lean (Carpenter 56-7). Unfortunately, too many scholars prefer to overlook the real origins of the Inklings and attribute its inception either to Lewis or to Tolkien. Perhaps these disagreements and overlaps are due to the logistical difficulty of coordinating so many distinct voices or to the desire to give each contributor his own say, without constraint, but isn't resolving such difficulties precisely the function of an editor?

Yet another common deficiency in such collective works is the tendency for essays to vary greatly in quality. Some are excellent, models of concise and important scholarship on their subject—I've highlighted a few of these already.

But others are, sadly, of much less value. For example, I find the treatment of *The Chronicles of Narnia* to be rather too thin for what Edwards calls Lewis's "greatest triumph and most enduring works" (II 3). Of course, a collection as ambitious as this, aiming as it does at near completeness in the treatment of Lewis's life, writings, and historical importance, must make difficult choices and occasional sacrifices, but here, I am judging the failure of these essays on Edwards's own criteria. From his Preface:

*Exposition and analysis essays* focus on single works in the Lewis canon and offer the reader a comprehensive overview of the work, including coverage of its origins and place in Lewis's life and times, its historical meaning and contemporary significance, its reception among readers, scholars, academics, critics, and a reflective judgment on its enduring influence or impact. The readers of these essays will come away with a profound grasp of the value and impact of the work in itself and the reputation it creates. (xv-xvi, italics original)

It is clear that the three chapters on Narnia fall far short of this. The first, Marvin D. Hinten's "The World of Narnia: Medieval Magic and Morality", sadly, reads like the crib notes to a *Narnia for Dummies* book, with tables on the publication versus chronological order of the books (II 73), a facile list of "themes" for each (74-78), an arbitrary assortment of "sample allusions" (82-86), and a boring recapitulation of "what Lewis has to teach us" (86-88). The second and third chapters on Narnia are better assembled and more interesting, but they are perhaps too specialized for the intended purpose of the collection. One treats *The Chronicles of Narnia* from an environmentalist perspective, while the other makes an extended examination of the maps of Narnia (long overdue). But though better than Hinten's essay, they both have their problems, too. Marta García de la Puerta's chapter, "Cartography and Fantasy: Hidden Treasures in the Maps of *The Chronicles of Narnia*," does a fine job comparing the maps of Narnia with medieval *mappaemundi*, and it does unearth a few "hidden treasures" toward its conclusion; however, it conflates Lewis's intentions for the maps with Pauline Baynes's own independent choices in their execution. And though it begins (II 115-6) and closes (128-9) by invoking Tolkien, the author misses a terrific opportunity to contrast the maps of Narnia with those of Middle-earth. Even taken together, the three chapters on Narnia offer much too little discussion of the origins, meaning, and lasting significance of Lewis's extended religious allegory.

In summing up, I would just like to point out (as promised) a few problems particular to *this* collection, as contrasted with the problems likely to bedevil any similar work. For one, the Indexes are far from complete. I have found many oversights and omissions from the index for each volume. Also,



considering that this set is intended to be sold as a unit (indeed, the four volumes cannot be purchased individually), why not opt for a single, comprehensive index covering all four volumes? And since the set must be purchased as a whole, why are the Acknowledgments and Preface duplicated across all four volumes? Isn't this just a waste of the first ten pages in Volumes 2–4? Another problem is the price, which is much higher than necessary. For the sake of comparison, consider that Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond's *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*, a similar work, recently published, is of superior production quality and almost twice as long, but at a third the price. It is clear that Praeger's intended market, in contrast to Houghton Mifflin's, consists of libraries and professional scholars, but even those may find it difficult to justify the cost in this case.

*Life, Works, and Legacy* is a solid and worthwhile collection, if not a stellar one. There are many essays worth reading with rapt attention – but several worth merely skimming, and a few worth skipping altogether – but the price is more than a little prohibitive. And given its other faults, I can only recommend the purchase to the most serious of Lewis scholars and completists. For all others, I suggest you contact your local municipal or university library about obtaining a copy for your community to share.

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–Jason Fisher

**THE COMPANY THEY KEEP: C.S. LEWIS AND J.R.R. TOLKIEN AS WRITERS IN COMMUNITY.** Diana Pavlac Glycer. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2007. 293 pp. \$45.00. 978-0-87338-890-0

With the passing of the generation that included Owen Barfield, Humphrey Carpenter, and George Sayer, people who knew the Inklings personally and who wrote about them, the mantle of Lewis scholarship rests upon a new generation. But with such creative and assiduous work as we are witnessing from Bruce L. Edwards, David C. Downing, Peter Schakel, and Michael Ward, it appears that the legacy of insightful and scholarly books about C.S. Lewis has fallen into very good hands. Reading the deeply satisfying feast that is *The Company They Keep: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien as Writers in Community* proves that Diana Pavlac Glycer has vaulted herself into the company of the very best thinkers and writers on the Inklings.

In her book-length study, Glycer stands on the shoulders of giants, and yet with balance, style, and sheer hard work she manages to dwarf them. In particular, she completes nearly twenty years of work by updating and even surpassing Humphrey Carpenter's *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and Their Friends*. In so doing, Glycer has crafted an eminently readable and thoroughly scholarly book. She explores in depth and in careful detail the ways that Lewis and Tolkien and their friends wrote in community, and points to collaboration as a key not only to understanding the Inklings but also to comprehending their several writing processes.

The structure of her book lends much to its helpfulness. In the Introduction, Glycer addresses a fundamental misreading of the concept of influence among the Inklings, a misreading into which many writers have justifiably fallen. She calls into question the way that scholars and biographers mistakenly have accepted at face value Lewis's and Tolkien's assertions that they influenced each other little or not at all.

Chapter One, "Inklings: Building Community," sets the stage for the book, offering one of the clearest accounts ever attempted concerning the formation of that collaborative community which produced so much intriguing writing. Indeed, Glycer pinpoints the date of the inception of the Inklings, suggesting the authorial risk Tolkien took in December 1929 in first sharing his Beren and Lúthien poem with Lewis as the starting point for all that followed. Lewis responded with just the right combination of enthusiasm and criticism, cementing their personal and collaborative relationship for years to come and effectively birthing the Inklings. To have in one chapter such a clearly-written and well-documented account of the formation of the Inklings itself makes Glycer's book invaluable.

In Chapter Two, "Influence: Assessing Impact," Glycer makes the central argument of the rest of the book—that the Inklings indeed shared varied and multivalent influence. She sets the framework for the rest of the book by adopting Karen Burke LeFevre's four-fold model of writing communities: Resonators, Opponents, Editors, and Collaborators, using these categories as the themes for most of the remaining chapters. As with all of the concepts Glycer discusses, she deftly introduces her topics and immediately supports her claims with a tower of research. In fact, this reader often found himself delightedly absorbed in the footnotes, wishing they themselves comprised a companion volume. Such attentive and diligent scholarship in such clear prose offers practical joy for those of us who want to think clearly about the Inklings and their writings.

Chapters Three through Six follow LeFevre's framework, tracing how the Inklings supported each other's progress, issued challenges to write or to improve their writing, made changes to books in progress, and worked together to bring their books to completion. These chapters form the heart of Glycer's perceptive study. They showcase Glycer's gift for combing through all of the biographies and commentaries and then cohesively presenting the most salient material in a way that will intrigue readers new to the Inklings while delighting those familiar with the scholarship. *The Company They Keep* impressively serves as both useful compendium and thoughtful argument, offering all readers fresh ways to consider old material, inviting us to read more widely and to think more deeply about such matters. (And this surely was Lewis's most persistent purpose in all of his writing and teaching.)

In Chapter Seven, "Referents: Writing about Each Other," Glycer takes both LeFevre's model and Carpenter's biography a step further, gathering together all of the Inklings's comments about each other that she could find. This chapter accomplishes two remarkable things. Those who have read the primary and secondary sources on the Inklings at one time or another will find gathered much of what they have encountered, and perhaps half-remember, from their peripatetic reading. Glycer has vigilantly and laboriously collected all these chestnuts, ordering them neatly in one spot. Second, Glycer has achieved for Lewis readers a semblance of what Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull have done for years for Tolkien studies. Hammond and Scull's inimitable scholarship into primary source material has cleared a path for Tolkien scholars for decades to come. So now too has Glycer, both in this chapter and throughout her remarkable book. Glycer's work gives rise to the hope of more such scholarship to come—if not from Glycer, then at least inspired and encouraged by her example.

Her final chapter, "Creativity: Appreciating Interaction," points to the wider themes of the collaborative project, and also indicates the direction which

Glyer's next work might take. She inspires readers of the Inklings to follow their example by developing their own writing communities. She also rounds out her study with a much-needed exploration of Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* and the resulting critical conversation regarding the concept of influence. As she so deftly does throughout the book, Glyer in her conclusion marshals primary text, biography, and criticism to address the larger implications of her topic, touching upon theorists including Michael Oakeshott and Michel Foucault in order to explore the ramifications of her study. In her last chapter as throughout the rest of her book, Glyer's clear thinking, careful research, and lucid style do what all such books should do—invite readers to follow her example, thoughtfully doing more of the same.

David Bratman's Appendix of nineteen biographical sketches of the "canonical" members of the Inklings slots nicely into Glyer's book, achieving the same effect Lewis so often has with his own literary name-dropping: namely, making readers want follow the trail of the authors he discusses. Rather than an afterthought, Bratman's Appendix forms a vital addition and ratifies the usefulness of *The Company They Keep*. It deliberately finishes the volume, arriving almost like a perfectly tasteful dessert at the end of an excellent meal, completing and unifying a deeply-satisfying feast.

This reader is left at a loss as to how to deride this outstanding volume, and he can only find one complaint. Glyer has indicated in private correspondence that her bellwether of a book shrunk upon revision, to the point of eliminating two Appendices. The greatness of *The Company They Keep* is tempered only by making us wish there were more of it. This book represents a major landmark in Inklings scholarship.

Nearly half a century after his death, in significant ways the best scholarship on C.S. Lewis (and especially on the manifold implications of his work) lies ahead of us. If Diana Pavlac Glyer's excellent work offers any indication, the path forward promises much. Readers and scholars alike shall surely find more light on C.S. Lewis so long as books like *The Company They Keep* appear, guiding us with such clarity and insight on our way.

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—Andrew Lazo

**ROOTS AND BRANCHES: SELECTED PAPERS ON TOLKIEN.** Tom Shippey. Berne and Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers, 2007. Softcover. 432pp. \$24.20. ISBN 978-3905703054.

ANY EXCUSE TO REVISIT the essays of Tom Shippey, arguably the world's preeminent Tolkien scholar, is a welcome one, and the convenience of having so many collected together in one place already makes *Roots and Branches* well worth its cover price. Shippey's papers and talks are always illuminating and lively; anyone who has heard him speak publicly will perceive his witty and droll delivery coming through from every printed page in this long overdue collection. The twenty-three essays that comprise the volume represent some of Shippey's finest work, broken down into four sections, each reinforcing the central metaphor of the ramifying Tree so dear to Tolkien: "The Roots: Tolkien and his Predecessors," "Heartwood: Tolkien and Scholarship," "The Trunk: The Lord of the Rings, The Silmarillion," and "Twigs and Branches: Minor Works by Tolkien."

Along with previously printed essays, the collection presents several new, unpublished papers. These include the lead essay, "Tolkien and the *Beowulf*-Poet," a logical companion piece to "Tolkien and the *Gawain*-Poet," published with the *Proceedings of the J.R.R. Tolkien Centenary Conference* in 1995. That essay, long out of print, is here too, and both are essential reading for anybody who would learn how Tolkien's professional studies informed his creative processes. In many cases, as Shippey demonstrates, Tolkien sought to solve or rectify in his own mythopoeic creations the apparent mistakes, cruces, and lacunae he discovered in the course of his academic work on *Beowulf*, the Eddas, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and other medieval writings. Other new essays include "The Problem of the Rings: Tolkien and Wagner," "Fighting the Long Defeat: Philology in Tolkien's Life and Fiction," "'A Fund of Wise Sayings': Proverbiality in Tolkien," and the marvelous "Tolkien and Iceland: The Philology of Envy" (this last has been available online, though never formally published).

Of the remaining eighteen papers, all previously published, several have been expanded, updated, or otherwise revised from the forms in which they originally appeared. This includes, for instance, the minimization of "the signs of original oral delivery" (i), and the addition of explanatory notes, annotations, and even translations, as in the case of "Tolkien and Iceland." All of this adds up to a collection that is, in many ways, new and refreshing—even for readers already familiar with many of the volume's constituent parts.

At the same time, I must call into question the ostensible premises on which the collection has been assembled. In his Preface, Thomas Honegger asserts that "many of [Professor Shippey's] essays are, though still highly topical, no longer readily available. It was this unsatisfactory situation which prompted

Walking Tree Publishers to approach Tom Shippey and propose to him the republication of his older essays." If that was indeed the case, then the collection has not quite succeeded in its mission. The majority of the papers collected in *Roots and Branches* are recent, still in print, and readily available (though to assemble them all on one's own would be a time-consuming and expensive endeavor). To give an idea of what I mean: fourteen of the twenty-three essays in the book were printed or written in just the last seven years (2000-2006), and almost all of them are still in print. For the decade of the 1990s, there are only five representative essays, and for the 1980s, only four. Even the majority of *these* are still in print and available today. For the 1970s, there are none, though this decade admittedly precedes the "period of some twenty-five years" (i) professed in the Introduction.

One can readily see how the skew toward Shippey's most recent work could have been better balanced by the substitution of older, rarer essays for some of those published more recently and still in print. To be more specific, where is "Creation from Philology in *The Lord of the Rings*" (originally published in *J.R.R. Tolkien, Scholar and Storyteller*, and unavailable since 1979)? Where is "Tolkien as a Post-War Writer" (published in the notoriously out-of-print *Proceedings of the J.R.R. Tolkien Centenary Conference*, alongside an essay that *did* make it into this collection)? Where are Shippey's engaging and insightful speeches to the Tolkien Society's Annual Dinners of 1980, 1983, and 1991 (published in *Digging Potatoes, Growing Trees*, volumes 1-2)? Perhaps these would have presented too great a challenge for editing out the artifacts of orality, but they are delightful to read and difficult to come by. And while I must congratulate Walking Tree for unearthing Shippey's 1982 review of Tolkien's neglected opuscule, *Mr. Bliss*, the present collection could also have benefited from the inclusion of his reviews of the Carpenter biography, *The Silmarillion*, and *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (published in the *Oxford Mail* and *Times Literary Supplement* between 1977 and 1981). Had all these essays been included, the temporal distribution of Shippey's work would have been much more level, and the works reprinted much more difficult for the average reader to obtain, thereby increasing the value of the present collection many fold.

Regarding the speeches at the Tolkien Society's Annual Dinners, I would note that one of the most interesting—and entertaining—aspects of these talks is their interactive nature. The speeches as printed in *Digging Potatoes, Growing Trees* include not just Shippey's declamations, but also the questions and interjections of his audience—sometimes including well-known names, such as Charles Noad, Jessica Yates, and Helen Armstrong, to name a few. Each one is a *conversation*. As noted earlier, this might have presented a dilemma to Honegger and Shippey in the preparation of the present volume: whether to remove those traces of orality or to print the piece(s) intact. But one of the essays that *is* included in *Roots and*

*Branches* presents just the same problem: "Allegory versus Bounce: (Half of) an Exchange on *Smith of Wootton Major*." Shippey explains in a footnote that the essay "began as a public debate between myself and Verlyn Flieger" (351), and it was subsequently published, as a *dialogue*, in the *Journal for the Fantastic in the Arts*—so why prune Flieger's worthwhile perspective out of the conversation here in *Roots and Branches*? Perhaps it was done in the interests of keeping the volume entirely in Shippey's own voice, but though that would make sense, something is definitely lost in the revision.

But lest I sound too negative, let me hasten to reassert that, despite some exaggeration of the age or unavailability of its contents, and despite a few missed opportunities to reprint genuinely rare essays, the collection is nevertheless an essential addition to any serious Tolkien library. Some particular gems include: "Grimm, Grundtvig, Tolkien: Nationalism and the Invention of Mythologies," which set the stage for such later essays as Anne C. Petty's "Identifying England's Lönnrot" (*Tolkien Studies*, 2004) and Verlyn Flieger's "A Mythology for Finland: Tolkien and Lönnrot as Mythmakers" (in Jane Chance's *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, 2004); "Tolkien and 'The Homecoming of Beorhnoth'," a genuinely hard-to-find essay on one of Tolkien's most overlooked works, and which may have paved the way for Richard C. West's superb essay, "Túrin's *Ofermod*: An Old English Theme in the Development of the Story of Túrin" (in Verlyn Flieger and Carl F. Hostetter's *Tolkien's Legendarium*); and "Tolkien's Academic Reputation Now," a dated but important assessment of Tolkien's impact on the scholarly study of Old and Middle English, as assessment which has been considerably furthered in Michael D.C. Drout's more recent essay, "J.R.R. Tolkien's Medieval Scholarship and its Significance" (*Tolkien Studies*, 2007).

Additionally, readers should not overlook the short but valuable Introduction, in which Shippey sets his own work in context, and more importantly, delivers his verdict on what Tolkien studies has not yet adequately addressed. These few preliminary pages offer a kind of "to do list" for Tolkien scholars and will hopefully spur further investigation of: Tolkien's literary antecedents, particularly the Victorian and Edwardian; the significance of the parallel efforts at comparative philology and comparative mythology undertaken in Tolkien's *milieu*; the interplay of *topoi* in the works of Tolkien, Lewis, Williams, Barfield, and their friends—which Shippey calls the "Inkling conversation"; Tolkien's early poetry in all its varied forms and revisions; and more besides. But the work continues unabated, of course, by Shippey and others. And one may hope that the coming years will yield ample material for a second volume of Shippey's essays on Tolkien. In the meantime, *Roots and Branches* stands as an excellent checkpoint in an enviable career.

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