



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,  
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

---

Volume 28  
Number 3

Article 12

---

4-15-2010

## Reviews

David Bratman  
*Independent Scholar*


Joe R. Christopher  
*(emeritus) Tarleton State University, Stephenville, TX*


Edith L. Crowe  
*Independent Scholar*

Kim Coleman Healy  
*Independent Scholar*

David D. Oberhelman  
*Oklahoma State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>

 [See next page for additional authors](#)

 Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Bratman, David; Christopher, Joe R.; Crowe, Edith L., et al. (2010) "Reviews," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 28 : No. 3 , Article 12. Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol28/iss3/12>

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:  
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSU<sup>TM</sup>

---

## Mythcon 51: A VIRTUAL "HALFLING" MYTHCON

July 31 - August 1, 2021 (Saturday and Sunday)

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-51.htm>



## Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-52.htm>

### Abstract

*Where the Shadows Lie: A Jungian Interpretation of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings.* Pia Skogemann. Reviewed by Edith L. Crowe.

*Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story.* Evan I. Schwartz. Reviewed by Richard Tuerk.

*Out of My Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman.* Ed. Don W. King. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

*Collected Poems.* Mervyn Peake, edited with an introduction by R.W. Maslen. Reviewed by David Bratman.

*C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy.* Sanford Schwartz. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

*Death and Fantasy: Essays on Philip Pullman, C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, And R.L. Stevenson.* William Gray. Reviewed by David D. Oberhelman.

*Stephen R. Donaldson and the Modern Epic Vision.* Christine Barkley; Series editors Donald E. Palumbo and C. W. Sullivan III. Jefferson. Reviewed by Kim Coleman Healy.

*The Fantastic Horizon: Essays and Reviews.* Darrell Schweitzer. Reviewed by David Bratman.

### Authors

David Bratman, Joe R. Christopher, Edith L. Crowe, Kim Coleman Healy, David D. Oberhelman, and Richard Tuerk



**WHERE THE SHADOWS LIE: A JUNGIAN INTERPRETATION OF TOLKIEN'S *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*.** Pia Skogemann. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 2009. Trade Paperback. xxi + 210 pp. ISBN 978-188860245-6.

JUNGIAN INTERPRETATION BY LITERARY SCHOLARS has rather gone out of fashion—especially in mainstream academic criticism. Even in the more compatible territory of fantasy criticism, it no longer enjoys the flurry of interest it did in the late 1970s to early 1990s. *Mythlore* doesn't seem to have published any in about fifteen years, for example, and Gergely Nagy has referred to the “mystical Jungian paradigm” as “hopelessly dated” (176). Carl Jung's theories remain of considerable interest in the formative history of psychology, but the mainstream of psychology as academic discipline and clinical practice has moved in the direction of evidence-based treatments, neuropsychology, and hard science in general.

It may well be argued that the “analytical psychology” developed by Carl Jung in the early years of the last century was always more an art than a science anyway. Jung was intrigued by the imagery of dreams and waking visions experienced both by himself and his patients, and how this same symbolic imagery appeared repeatedly in religion, mythology and alchemy—areas of which the patients in question were most often ignorant. His concept of archetypes and archetypal imagery has permeated our culture, especially in the arts and humanities. There remains something irresistibly fascinating about how closely fiction, especially in the fantasy genre, often unconsciously illustrates Jung's archetypes. (Ged's journey in the first three Earthsea novels is, for example, an almost textbook case of Jungian individuation—even though Le Guin was not familiar with Jung at the time.) Skogemann expresses surprise that no Jungian had previously published an analysis of *The Lord of the Rings*. She is aware of O'Neill's 1979 book-length study, *The Individuated Hobbit*, but notes dismissively that he “seems to have no professional training in analytical psychology” (x). That much is true, although she fails to mention that O'Neill was a professor of psychology. Skogemann is certainly immersed in analytical psychology, having been a Jungian analyst for over thirty years and a co-founder

of the C.J. Jung Institute in Copenhagen. Interestingly, her own educational background is not psychology but comparative religion, in which she has a Master's degree. She has published a dozen books and a long list of articles, although *Where the Shadows Lie* is her first work in English (it was originally published in Danish as *En Jungiansk Fortolkning af Tolkiens Ringenes Herre*, by Forlaget Athene in 2004.)

With these credentials one might expect to find in Skogemann a much more detailed Jungian analysis of Tolkien than that found in O'Neill. The books are similar in page count but the latter assumed no real knowledge of Jung's theories on the part of the reader and spent quite a few of his pages providing a primer of analytical psychology for the uninitiated. One of the most disappointing aspects of *Where the Shadows Lie*, however, is the surprisingly large percentage of the text (my rough estimate is eighty to ninety per cent) that is comprised of lengthy direct quotes or paraphrased retellings from *The Lord of the Rings* (and occasionally *The Silmarillion*). This leaves very little room for actual analysis. Skogemann is clearly a great admirer of Tolkien's work; her expressed aim "is to illustrate how C.G. Jung's theory of archetypes offers an important key to understanding the imagery of Tolkien's masterpiece—and thereby a key to understanding ourselves" (viii). Like Shippey (the only Tolkien scholar to whom she refers frequently) Skogemann sees Tolkien as a modern writer whose work reflects the "collective unconscious of this era" (viii).

Of the fourteen chapters, several focus on a single archetype of personification (such as Trickster, Hero, Anima, Old King, among others). Playing "spot the archetype" with Tolkien's characters is a game that many scholars have played with relish—although if Skogemann is aware of this literature she does not acknowledge it—and the primary interest in these chapters is to compare the conclusions of others to hers. Chapters that deal with the so-called archetypes of transformation, or more general concepts, are often more interesting and/or satisfying. In the first chapter, "Faëry or the Collective Unconscious," she argues that Tolkien and Jung's early experiences with the Perilous Realm (whether one calls it Faërie or the Unconscious) had much in common, even to the style of the language in which their experiences were expressed. She offers an alternative and non-literary explanation of the "archaic and humorless style" (2) of *The Silmarillion*, in that Jung found such language to be characteristic of archetypes (as he recorded in his journal, synchronistically called "The Red Book"). More generally, she argues that Jung and Tolkien both felt that a serious problem with the modern era and the art that grew to express it was a lack of any means of spiritual transformation, of that necessary connection to an inner life that was being overwhelmed by science and technology. In her view, Tolkien has created that kind of art.

The Jungian concept of individuation is tailor-made for studying the coming-of-age story, and *The Lord of the Rings* is rife with such stories. In "The Archetype of Consciousness: The Hobbits" Skogemann examines the four hobbits first as a kind of group consciousness with each individual representing one of the four Jungian psychological functions (thinking, intuition, sensation, feeling). She then provides a more detailed analysis of each separately. This is a satisfying chapter, particularly her insights about how repeated literal losses of consciousness and subsequent awakening of the hobbits correlate with the awakening of the various psychological functions, and are perhaps even indicative of Tolkien's writing process. (I encourage those who are more familiar with the chronology of composition to address that.) Another satisfying chapter is the third, "The Journey Out: Archetypes of Transformation." The chapter deals with the landscape of Middle-earth and the actual journey of the Fellowship through it. The places and experiences having particular archetypal significance are discussed in most depth: rivers and forests; descent (death and rebirth); changing of the wind; and man-made towers. Her discussion of the importance of borders, crossroads, river crossings and other points of decision, and their relationship to the Unconscious, is interesting and rather convincing. An otherwise solid chapter is marred by her surprising contention (with no evidence offered) that Tolkien's "so-called trench fever" was actually PTSD. She attributes his ability to portray Frodo's suffering so well to his own experience with this disorder. Unfortunately, the fact that the cause of trench fever is known to be the *Bartonella quintana* bacterium rather undercuts her argument.

One serious misstep in O'Neil's otherwise enjoyable and readable book was his identification of the thoroughly evil One Ring with the Self, based on its superficial symbolic characteristics. In a chapter on the One Ring and the Three, Skogemann provides a useful correction to this, and gives us a much more satisfying and nuanced view of both of the Self archetype and the relationship of these rings. The number four is very significant in analytical psychology. Elsewhere Skogemann argues convincingly that the Fellowship is not really nine but eight, divided into two quaternities. In this chapter she relates the three Elven rings plus the One Ring to Jung's "analysis of the Christian age in the light of alchemical symbolism, with the good Trinity and Satan or the Antichrist as the hidden fourth" (149).<sup>1</sup>

The last few chapters switch focus from the archetypes of personification and transformation primarily in relation to individual psychological development, and turn more toward the broader social and cultural stage. "The Collective Shadow" looks at evil in relation to Sauron. She

---

<sup>1</sup>Jung discusses this in *Aion* (1951); found in volume 9ii of his *Collected Works* published by Princeton University Press.

considers, in relation to opinions expressed by both Jung and Shippey, the nature of evil as *privatio boni*—the absence of good—as opposed to a force of its own, and concludes that Tolkien seems to suggest the latter (though not necessarily on purpose). While admitting that *The Lord of the Rings* is in no way an allegory of World War II, she believes historical reality affected the conception and portrayal of both Mordor and Sauron. In an impassioned digression that would be of interest to a scholar of postcolonial bent, she declares that “Mordor is a true representation of the white man in the nineteenth as well as the twentieth century” (162), based on the legacy of genocide perpetrated both by colonial powers and the Nazi regime. She makes an interesting comparison between Stockholm Syndrome and the effects of the Ring—“the normal identity disappears and is taken over by the norms and values of the guardian or leader” (166). Chapter 12, “The End of an Age,” discusses eschatology, although her view of people’s attitude toward religion in the contemporary West is perhaps a better fit for Europe than the United States. She traces a route from early animistic beliefs through Christianity to modern science, a trajectory that leaves people cut off from the idea of nature as alive and mythologically significant. Here Skogemann looks briefly at a number of other fantasy novels in terms of their treatment of time and death. The last two chapters: “Anthropos: The Cosmic Man” and “The Renewal of the Shire” focus on the social implications of the Fellowship’s journey and what Joseph Campbell would identify as the Return phase of the hero quest. Aragorn is discussed as both a personification of the Self archetype and the Green Man. The hobbits, with the exception of Frodo, are now fully individuated and mature characters who can revivify the Shire.

Although *Where the Shadows* has significant drawbacks, it should still be worthwhile reading for anyone interested in Jungian interpretations of Tolkien. The Tolkien scholar (or any well-versed Tolkien reader) may find the extensive quoting and paraphrasing of the original text frustrating—it’s rather like having to burrow through a great deal of tissue paper to get to a present (and one finds one doesn’t always like the present). Analytical psychology acknowledges the importance of the spiritual life, but is not tied to a specific religion. Those focused on Tolkien as a Christian author might find Skogemann’s alternative psychological explanations thought-provoking or infuriating (or more likely some of each); others may welcome such an alternative. One of the most problematic aspects of this study is the failure to acknowledge any of the periodical or dissertation literature undertaking Jungian analysis of Tolkien. Whether the author is unaware of such literature or believes studies by those who may have “no professional training in analytical psychology” are not worthwhile, her failure to engage with this literature—even to refute it—is a significant weakness.

—Edith L. Crowe

Works Cited

- Jung, Carl. *Aion. Collected Works* v. 9ii. Princeton University Press, 1951
- Nagy, Gergeley. Rev. of *Interrupted Music: The Making of Tolkien's Mythology*, by Verlyn Flieger. *Tolkien Studies* 3 (2006): 173-177.
- O'Neill, Timothy R. *The Individuated Hobbit: Jung, Tolkien and the Archetypes of Middle-earth*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.



**FINDING OZ: HOW L. FRANK BAUM DISCOVERED THE GREAT AMERICAN STORY.** Evan I. Schwartz. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. Hardcover. xiv+374pp. \$28.00. ISBN 978-0-547-05510-7.

EVAN I. SCHWARTZ'S BOOK IS A WELL WRITTEN ADVENTURE STORY tracing the genesis of L. Frank Baum's classic novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Other books, most notably Katharine M. Rogers's *L. Frank Baum: Creator of Oz*, treat Baum's entire life. Schwartz's work focuses on twenty years of Baum's life, from 1880 to 1900, during which, Schwartz claims, Baum conceived of and wrote his masterpiece. After briefly summarizing Baum's childhood, Schwartz's book starts with his meeting of his wife-to-be, Maud Gage, daughter of Matilda Joslyn Gage, the great woman's rights activist, and ends with his establishment as a very successful author of children's literature. More important, however, is Schwartz's attempt to trace Baum's quest for his true self.

Rather than writing a biography, Schwartz writes what he calls "a transformation-of-consciousness story" (288) in which he says that Baum finally found "happiness and harmony" (296). Schwartz insists that Baum is the true hero of the story. Naturally, such a tale involves a great deal of speculation on the author's part as well as a strong reliance on theories of psychology, especially Jungian psychology as interpreted by Joseph Campbell.

Recently, several biographies of Baum have appeared, advertised as books for children. I've seen *Finding Oz* advertised as being for children ten and up. However, Jung and Campbell, at least as Schwartz uses them, seem pretty heavy stuff for ten-year-olds, as do many of the other things Schwartz discusses, such as detailed treatment of American attitudes and Baum's changing attitudes toward Native Americans, Schwartz's treatment of Theosophy, and his discussions of the teachings and activities of Baum's mother-in-law. It seems to me that the intended audience of the work is clearly adult.

Schwartz does an excellent job putting Baum's life into the context of American history and culture but often has a little more trouble putting *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* into the contexts that he explores so well. He nicely traces the ways Baum's attitudes changed toward Native Americans during his years in Aberdeen, South Dakota, including his infamous call for the extermination of the Native Americans. But then he treats the call for extermination as a source of great guilt for Baum from which he could only escape by atoning "for his small role in the great American tragedy that had just transpired [that is, the wars against the Native Americans, especially the Battle of Wounded Knee], to somehow commemorate those whom he had wronged with his bitter pen" (189). Schwartz explains the poppy field in Baum's book as a "powerful symbol" of Baum's sorrow over destruction of Native American cultures and buffalo (190). Yet he presents no textual support for any of these ideas and really no explanation for them. According to Schwartz, atonement for Baum takes place in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy falls asleep in the poppy field: then, "she becomes metaphorically at one with the dead spirits." And he adds that being "'at one' is to 'atone.'" Again, however, Schwartz does not support this assertion by showing exactly how the poppy field has anything to do with Native Americans or explaining how Dorothy's sleeping indicates she is at one with anything. Certainly, the poppies' being red does not in itself align them with Native Americans. In fact, it seems at times as though everywhere Schwartz looks in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, he sees Native Americans. He sees Baum's entitling a chapter "The Council of the Munchkins" as a reference to the words "Tribal council" which, he says, "is the signature term for a Native American political structure" (275). He compares the Winkies, whom the Wicked Witch of the West enslaves, to the Native Americans lorded over by "frontier forts" and corralled "onto reservations" (276). And he says that in the Quadling country, where the people are "a good-natured tribe of stocky people dressed all in red," readers find "perhaps the clearest reference to Native Americans in the tale" (287). Yet I have no idea how wearing red makes the Quadlings into a clear reference to Native Americans.

As a result of his guilt and atonement over calling for the extermination of the Native Americans, Baum, according to Schwartz, "wouldn't succumb to the terrible allure of racism and prejudice ever again" (277). Yet as studies by several critics, including me, show, Baum's work is rife with racism. In fact, in its magnificent edition of Baum's Oz books (1985-2000), HarperCollins bowdlerized some parts of the books to eliminate racism.

Schwartz at times also relies on supposition when he relates episodes in the book to Baum's life. For example, he sees Baum's unpleasant experiences as a traveling salesman for a firm that sells chinaware as somehow analogous to Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow, and the Cowardly Lion's search for the



Wicked Witch of the West. Baum's uncertainty about his future while he sold chinaware, is, Schwartz feels, reflected in the search for the Witch. While such a comparison may be interesting, I am not sure that it illuminates the book. For that matter, I guess that Baum had a number of other experiences in which he felt uncertain about the future that could just as easily be compared to the companions' journey to the Wicked Witch of the West's castle. Nor am I sure that there is, as Schwartz asserts, any connection between Baum's selling chinaware and the chapter of Baum's book entitled "The Dainty China Country," a land the companions reach on their way south to see Glinda, since in it Baum treats not chinaware but china dolls.

Schwartz follows others in showing that the idea that Baum's book is a parable of Populism is utterly false. Yet Schwartz himself makes the book into a kind of parable of Theosophy. In fact, he states explicitly that Baum's book takes "the reader on a journey guided by Eastern philosophy" (265). Yet just as the reader need know nothing about Populism to enjoy *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, so the reader need know nothing about Theosophy or its embodiment of Eastern philosophy. Although I am not sure that most of the information Schwartz gives about Theosophy is in any way relevant to Baum's book (or even Baum's life), it is fascinating. He explains Theosophy more clearly and in more detail than any other book I have read about Baum. In the last analysis, however, I think Michael Patrick Hearn correctly notes about Baum's attitude toward Theosophy, "Whether he actually believed all this is debatable" (xciii). That he used some Theosophical beliefs in his writing is undeniable, but that the tenets of Theosophy are central to and extensively embodied in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is also highly debatable. Such readings seem to ignore the strong surface texture of Baum's book and the power of the story itself and the characters in it.

One other problem, I feel, is that Schwartz tries too hard to connect the 1939 motion picture, *The Wizard of Oz*, starring Judy Garland, directly to the book. He argues that since Maud Baum was a consultant to the making of the film, Baum's ideas must be embodied in the film, and he sometimes seems to confuse book and film. He writes that when they first meet the Wizard, the four companions see him as "a giant head who bellows mean and terrible things" (139), yet that idea is embodied in the movie, not the book. In the book, each companion sees the Wizard as something different. Only Dorothy sees him as a giant head, and there is no indication in Baum's words that the Wizard "bellows."

Finally, Schwartz makes at least one additional misstatement about Baum's book. He calls the Good Witch of the North the "old, wrinkled, white-haired sister of the young and beautiful Glinda" (274), although the book gives no indication that they are sisters. In the 1939 movie, the old Good Witch of the

North is entirely absent, but the Wicked Witch of the West and the Wicked Witch of the East are sisters, a relationship that Baum hints at in no way.

A bibliography would have made it much easier for scholars and others to follow Schwartz's sources. Schwartz gives extensive notes, but it is often difficult to tell to what work each note refers.

It is relatively easy to find problems in a book as long as Schwartz's. In spite of its inaccuracies and unsupported speculations, Schwartz tells a very good story, and that, after all, is his aim. The book is very interesting and well written. It has a much tighter focus than other books on Baum's life, although even there, the book, I feel, would have been helped by omitting much of the speculation involving the 1939 movie. Nonetheless, Schwartz has produced a readable, exciting book that truly does depict Baum as a quest hero.

—Richard Tuerk

### WORKS CITED

Hearn, Michael Patrick. *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*. Centennial ed. New York: Norton, 2000.  
Rogers, Katharine M. L. *Frank Baum: Creator of Oz*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2002.



**OUT OF MY BONE: THE LETTERS OF JOY DAVIDMAN.** Ed. Don W. King. Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans, 2009. xxxiv + 387 pp. \$28.00. ISBN-13 978-0-8028-6399-7.

FIRST, A MATTER OF COMPLETENESS. IN THE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, King says, "I managed to collect most of the surviving letters written by Davidman" (ix). In the Introduction, he says, "[...] this book publishes for the first time the letters of Joy Davidman" (xix). How complete is this collection? In reply to a query from this reviewer, King replied that, so far as he knows, this book collects all available letters by Davidman. No doubt a scattering of letters to people and periodicals will be discovered. A possibility of two groups of letters to known correspondents exists—but those letters *may* have been destroyed. After all, Lewis destroyed letters sent to him—including all but one of those from Davidman (the exception, written after their marriage, is on pp. 331-32).

What the book contains is very impressive. One hundred sixty nine letters, with their contexts, sometimes with partial or complete quotation of the

others' letters before or after the related letter by Davidman. King divides Davidman's letters into time periods:

Poet, Zealot, Critic [1936-1946]—24 letters, 8 poems  
 Eyes Opened [1948]—7 letters  
 "The Longest Way Round"—an essay published in 1951  
 Growing in Belief [1949-1951]—9 letters  
 Crisis and Hope [1952-1953]—15 letters  
 Anglophile [1954]—35 letters  
 Hard Times [1955]—27 letters; a P.S. to a son's letter (246-47)  
 The Sword of Damocles [1956]—16 letters  
 Agape, Phileo, Eros [1957]—15 letters  
 A Sweet Season [1958-1960]—21 letters

As indicated, between the letters of 1948 and 1949, King reprints Davidman's essay about her conversion to Christian belief. (The essay was published in 1951. According to King's "Chronology of Joy Davidman's Life" [xxxi-xxxiv]—and according to Lyle Dorsett's biography of Davidman—her mystical experience happened in 1946. King's chronology indicates that the Christian understanding of the experience came in 1947-1948.)

The book starts with an 18 August 1936 letter to Stephen Vincent Benét, a well-known poet of the time: his long poem in a variety of verse forms, *John Brown's Body*, had appeared in 1928. He evidently praised an early form of Davidman's *Letter to a Comrade* in typescript. Benét was involved with the Yale Series of Younger Poets for a decade, and presumably this was tied to that series. Davidman's book was published in the series in 1938. Several of these early letters are to him (as a mentor), all addressed to "Mr. Benét"; a few letters are addressed to his brother, William Rose Benét, as "Bill." (One letter is to the widow of the former.) On p. 70, Davidman lists Stephen Vincent Benét with Robinson, Frost, and Eliot as being "modern American" poetry. Her last mention of SVB occurs in a letter in 1951 (123)—a loyalty to her mentor.

Other early letters are in connection to Davidman being poetry editor of the Communist magazine *New Masses*. Davidman is likely, in her Communist phase, to praise writing in a simple style for the common man (35-37), although she also tells one writer that his poetry needs greater education behind it—with a reading list (59, 68-71). A few letters complain about Davidman's brief period of writing for movies (e.g., 25-26).

By 1945 Davidman is married and has a child (no letters at the time of the marriage). She complains of the brainlessness of housework (40-41). Her mystical experience of God was in the spring of 1946, as said above (no letters at the time). By 1948 she is reading Engels and Lenin and slowly abandoning Marxism (e.g., 44-55). She has started reading Lewis (53-54). In the next section,

the first of the letters to Chad Walsh appears (104-06). Essentially, the rest of the book follows the familiar pattern known to any student of Lewis. But, of course, interesting details appear. In a 1951 letter to Kenneth Porter (a poet), Davidman mentions Lewis:

Since I am one of C.S. Lewis's converts I tend to follow him fairly closely. [...] I'm not quite as traditional as my teacher though on several points, particularly things like birth control, on which I've been having a running argument with him on and off [by mail] for a couple of years. (122)

As should have been expected, her attitudes are at this point often on the conservative side of her times—as in her comments on homosexuals (cf. 120). (She does not seem to have realized that her friendly acquaintance in London later, Arthur C. Clarke, was a homosexual—cf. her comments to Gresham about Clarke's brief marriage [223].) She also has many comments on Jews and Judaism, speaking of herself as a Jew (e.g., 122-23).

A number of references to Dianetics appear, since Davidman and Gresham worked in that movement before it became the religion of Scientology. For example, Gresham in his late 1952 or early 1953 letter about having fallen in love with Renée Rodrigues Pierce (133-37), refers to the "red-headed sea captain"—that is, L. Ron Hubbard (although King does not footnote the reference)—who had saved Gresham's and Davidman's psychic lives (137). Davidman comments to Gresham in a 22 December 1953 letter, *re* Dianetics, "We wuz had" (165). But in a 7 December 1956 letter, she says, "I remain convinced there's *something* in it" (303).

In a letter to her cousin—Renée Rodrigues Pierce again—on 10 March 1953, Davidman speaks of having to discuss divorce with Gresham in a particular way: "I keep at it, gently, and make slight but visible progress. [...] [If she doesn't,] he will just drift from day to day in his usual pattern" (143-44). This suggests that Davidman's friendly tone in most of her letters to Gresham after their divorce and her move to England, was mainly intended to keep him sending her checks, as she normally requested in the final paragraphs. When he did send checks, she usually celebrated the fact in her next letters' opening paragraphs. (Occasionally she threatens legal action against him for the child support.)

Many other interesting things appear. For example, Nevill Coghill, in a 1965 essay, wanted to compare Lewis with a similar man as balance—and he chose W.H. Auden. Whatever one thinks of the comparison, the interest lies in a final detail: "I believe that when they met, they liked each other. I wish I had been there" (Gibb 66). Lewis and Auden met? Where? When? Many must have wondered about that comment through the years. It turns out to occur during

Davidman's period of health as Lewis's wife: she writes Gresham, "I'm beginning all sorts of new social activities; had [...] [W.H.] Auden, now a rather limp middle-aged man with the face of a sad bloodhound, to tea" (337). Unfortunately, she does not say anything about how Lewis and Auden got along; instead, she says something Gresham can relate to: "He's the only person I ever met who not only *likes* living in New York but has chosen St. Marks' [*sic*] Place (remember that?) to do it in! I'd sooner live in hell" (337).

Much more could be said about this book. It is, with some minor exceptions, very well edited. The "Chronology of Joy Davidman's Life" has been mentioned. King also provides a long "Introduction" (xii-xxx). He lists in it five areas of interest the letters discuss (his list is on p. xiv), and he goes on to expand on these. The fourth is of particular significance to this Society: "4. Her letters illuminate her relationship with C.S. Lewis and demonstrate her influence upon his later writings, including *Surprised by Joy* and especially *Till We Have Faces*" (xiv). Much of this has been known, but it is very good to have the original letters available. King's "Bibliography" (301-75) begins with "A Chronological Bibliography of Joy Davidman's Works" (301-68); it is the basic guide to Davidman as a writer. (Although her book of poetry—*Letter to a Comrade*—is listed, its contents are not in the bibliography; instead, the list of its poems appears on pp. 4-5, with page references.) "The Critical Bibliography" begins with reviews of Davidman's books, and continues with the list of articles and books significantly on Davidman. A good index follows.

But the previous paragraph mentioned some minor exceptions. For example, Davidman suggests to Gresham that he might meet Arthur C. Clarke during a visit to the U.S. "at the Hydra Club" (170). King has no footnote on the Hydra Club, and it is not listed in the index. Science-fiction historians will know that it is the club established by Frederik Pohl, Lester del Rey, and seven others in New York City in 1947—for years, it was *the* meeting for SF pros, living in New York or visiting. Evidently Davidman and Gresham attended sometimes. (Gresham did publish some SF.) A second minor exception: when Davidman mentions J.B.S. Haldane (77), King comments in his footnote that Lewis attacked Haldane's ideas in *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*, but does not mention the more direct work: Lewis's "A Reply to Professor Haldane," a response to a essay by Haldane on the Ransom Trilogy. Similarly, the footnote about Lewis and Davidman's trip to Greece lists three sources for information, but does not refer to the diary entries of Roger Lancelyn Green printed in the Green-Hooper biography of Lewis. A different type of point: one could wish for a list of all the writings by Davidman that are referred to but were never published—such as a typescript of a second book of poetry (28-9). These are lost, evidently, but it would be interesting to have the list. But these, and similar minor matters, do not affect the over-all quality of this book. King lists in his bibliography of

Davidman's writings her school publications and her *New Masses* reviews, essays, and poems, as well as more obvious works. He collects all available letters—and identifies most of the persons addressed. He writes introductions and afterwords to particular letters (set in italics). He prints some previously unpublished poems. And so forth. This is a *very* good collection. Davidman's letters are one of her major works.

—Joe R. Christopher

#### WORKS CITED

- Coghill, Nevill. "The Approach to English." In *Light on C.S. Lewis*. Ed. Jocelyn Gibb. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1965. 51-66.
- Green, Roger Lancelyn and Walter Hooper. *C.S. Lewis: A Biography*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.
- Lewis, C.S. "A Reply to Professor Haldane." In *On Stories*. Ed. Walter Hooper. Mariner, 2002. 69-80.



**COLLECTED POEMS.** Mervyn Peake, edited with an introduction by R.W. Maslen. Manchester [U.K.]: Fyfield Books/Carcanet, 2008. xvi, 259 pp. \$25.95. 978-1-85754-971-3.

ON OPENING the *Collected Poems* of MERVYN PEAKE and discovering that, despite the title, the volume excludes his nonsense verse, the reader experiences the same dampened feeling as on finding that T.S. Eliot's *Collected Poems* excludes *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. They've left out the best part! And the exclusion misrepresents Peake even more than it does Eliot, for the wild imagination of his nonsense verse, most of it for children, is central to Peake's imagination: so central indeed that it appears in a more serious, adult form in many of the poems here. (One poem on the edge of his children's verse is included: "An Ugly Crow Sits Hunched on Jackson's Heart" [204], which appears to be a grim out-take from the children's book *Letters from a Lost Uncle*.)

But for what it does have—putting together a vast array of scattered poems, and including much previously unpublished work—this is a magnificent collection of absorbing work, edited with great care and attention. Reading through such an unprecedentedly large collection gives a distinct and heightened sense of the author's personality. There is less focus here than in Peake's

drawings from life on his family, though there are some, including a couple of touching memorial poems on his mother's death (49-50) and several love poems to his wife. What really strikes me on reading this collection is how much Peake was a poet of World War II, the more so as the vast majority of these poems date from the decade-plus between 1937 and the late 1940s. (Most of the previously unpublished ones come from two notebooks, dated *terminus ad quem* 1939 and 1946.)

Kingsley Amis—another British poet of Peake's generation who, like him, is better remembered as a novelist—once suggested that the reason the World War I poets are considered better than the World War II ones is that, for health exemptions or other reasons, "a good half of the Second lot managed to stay out of it" (41). Amis did not stay out of it, and neither did Peake; and his response to the war was not limited to the experience of military service. Peake was sent to Belsen, as a documentary artist, immediately after the liberation of that concentration camp. The poem he wrote reacting to seeing the dying prisoners there, "The Consumptive" (133-4), is one of his most powerful, employing the intensely visual language of a pictorial artist. A more positive war-time work, his long poem "The Glassblowers" (125-7), commissioned by the Ministry of Information, is one of the most brilliant depictions ever written of the artistic beauty that may be found in high technology. Reading it here, I realized that the only other copy I had was severely truncated. One of the paintings Peake made after the same factory visit appears on the cover of the book.

Other poems remind us, in the oblique manner typical of lyric poetry, that Peake was a man living through the anxiety of his times. There is bitterness and alarm in many of the war poems. A simple, almost casual poem on the outbreak of war, "September 1939" (47), though nowhere near as searing as W.H. Auden's "September 1, 1939," contains a striking piece of verbal war imagery. Peake's fiction is notable for the distancing effect he achieves in his descriptive language. Here, an allusion to the chilling advent of "the men of the equal tread" drops the reader into the cold futurity of *Titus Alone*. The poem also makes a point Peake repeats in his long and desperate epic war ballad "The Rhyme of the Flying Bomb" (178-201)—that while the number of the year is a constant reminder of the length of time since the birth of Christ, we're still as far as ever from a reign of peace. Printed with "The Rhyme," by the way, are small reproductions of the 22 appropriately stark felt-pen illustrations he drew for it in 1961, in a struggle against the final collapse of his health. Peake's final word on the times he lived in was the resigned but defiant "To live at all is miracle enough" (207).

There are fantasy elements in many of Peake's poems, and not just in the omitted nonsense verse, ranging from the hallucinatory late poem beginning "Heads float about me; come and go, absorb me" (214) on up. "The Rhyme of the

"Flying Bomb" may be seen as a symbolical religious fantasy, in the form of a dialogue between a sailor, mired in reality, and the spiritual being of a new-born, eternally re-born child whom he has rescued from a London air raid and hidden in a ruined church. The dialogue has some of the manic quality found in the Titus books, but is grounded in the anxiety of the primary-world war, described with stark simplicity. The resemblance in both tone and verse style to Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is likely to be intentional.

The remaining long poem in Peake's oeuvre, "A Reverie of Bone" (106-15), was written with less haste and more ornate language. It is a contemplative vision of a desert landscape covered with the bones of a lost people. Apologizing for its own morbidity, the poem has an elegiac tone distantly akin to Tolkien's, and even more to Shelley's "Ozymandias." As a text, this is the most remarkable poem in the collection, for as given here it includes seven stanzas never previously printed, which had been crossed out, for some unknown reason by some unknown hand, in the original typescript, despite the fact that the poem makes much less sense without them.

Though the few longer poems stand out due to size, as many memorable images and lines come from the shorter work. The gazelle inside his wife's body "That moves as you move / And is one with the limbs / That you have" (38), the moon as God's lost fingernail (75-6), the firelit glassblowers, the heads that float about him. For an author best known for monumentally Dickensian novels, as a poet Peake is remarkably gifted at being very brief indeed. But verbal imagery was the coin of Peake's novels as well as of his poems, and he knew it: "Into the dusty well / Of English words / I dip / My wavering pitcher" (158).

—David Bratman

#### Works Cited

Amis, Kingsley. *Memoirs*. New York: Summit Books, 1991.





**C.S. LEWIS ON THE FINAL FRONTIER: SCIENCE AND THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE SPACE TRILOGY.** Sanford Schwartz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. xvi + 224 pp. \$27.95. ISBN 978-0195374728. (The index on pp. 199-224 was not in the advance review copy.)

SCHWARTZ'S BOOK IS THE FIFTH BOOK-LENGTH STUDY of Lewis's Ransom Trilogy written by an individual, the others being:

- Martha C. Sammons, *A Guide through C. S. Lewis's Space Trilogy* (1980)
- Walter Hooper, *War in Deep Heaven: The Space Trilogy of C. S. Lewis* (1987)
- David C. Downing, *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C. S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* (1992)
- Jared Lobdell, *The Scientifiction Novels of C. S. Lewis: Space and Time in the Ransom Stories* (2004)

By general agreement, Downing's is the best of these. Schwartz matches it in value, but his approach is very different. Since the index is missing from the review copy, Schwartz's use of his forerunners is difficult to check; but so far as this reviewer noticed he does not refer to them in his main text except for a *pro forma* acknowledgement of three of them at the first of the book, saying he draws heavily on them (6). Downing is cited at least a couple of times in the endnotes (194.n33, 196.n39). (Schwartz does not cite Hooper's book in the early reference, but that may be because Hooper incorporated his material into his *C. S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide* [1996].)

Schwartz is interested in two things, mainly—a type of structural analysis explained in Mary Douglas's *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (2007), and a discussion of the basic intellectual ideas Lewis is opposing in his three books.

The structural approach looks at first like the standard five-step Freytag's Pyramid for plot analysis (used first for the five-act tragedies and then more broadly):

- A. Exposition
- B. Rising Action
- C. Turning Point (or Crisis)
- D. Falling Action
- E. Resolution

(This is a simplification of what Freytag actually explained, but this is the form often used in schools.) Freytag's pyramid has been applied by critics to *Out of the Silent Planet* and to *Perelandra*, but here is what Schwartz is doing with *OSP* (with his terms from p. 23):

- A. Abduction on Earth (Chs. 1-2)
- B. Voyager to Mars (hero captive) (Chs. 3-6)
- C. Flight from *sorns* (Chs. 7-9)
- D. Boat to *hrossa* (Ch. 10)
- E. Residence with *hrossa* (cp. Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms) (Chs. 11-12)
- D. Boat from *hrossa* (Ch. 13)
- C. Journey to *sorns* (Chs. 14-16)
- B. Meeting Oyarsa (villains captive) (Chs. 17-20)
- A. Voyage home (Chs. 21-22)

He uses a diagram, but this list with the reversal of letters suggests the parallels in structure that he is proposing. His diagrams and one-page discussions for *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength* have seven sections each, not nine as *OSP* does (56, 83). All three diagrams are interesting—and Schwartz may be right that Lewis planned these structures. (Since the planetary influences were discovered in the Narnia books, who knows what cleverness Lewis may have been up to?)

Two more comments about the structures. First, a basic difference between the Freytagian plot analysis and that above is that the turning point (crisis) surely occurs when Ransom accepts his duty to go to Oyarsa at the end of Chapter 13. Schwartz's structural analysis has a central plateau of two chapters, not a point of a pyramid—and the two in this case do not contain the turning point. But Schwartz, in his "Conclusion," has a discussion of the crises for Lewis's protagonists, and locates each crisis in the chapter following the book's central plateau (117-123). Thus, although he is concerned with a different type of structural analysis, he sees the significance of the protagonist's psychological/spiritual shift in the meaning of each book. Second, although Schwartz does not mention it, the great example of the type of structure he is discussing appears in Homer's *Iliad*. (See the elaborate diagram in Cedric H. Whitman's *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* [1958].) No doubt to emphasize Homer as a model would be to distract from Schwartz's emphasis on Lewis as involved in modern ideas—Whitman sees Homer's structure as related to the geometric patterns of the Greek vases of Homer's time—but the Lewisian critic needs a larger overview than Schwartz's approach allows: which is not to say that Schwartz's is invalid.

This brings up Schwartz's other concern. He sums up his second topic this way: each book of the Ransom Trilogy "examines another facet of the seemingly impassable conflict between Christian tradition and the evolutionary or 'developmental' tendencies of modern thought" (6). In short, he rejects Lewis's image of himself as a dinosaur and sees him as a man involved in the ideas of his period.

In *OSP*, in general, Schwartz sees the theme as a Darwinian “struggle for existence” *vs.* the Martians’ peaceful rationality. More specifically, Schwartz considers Devine and Weston as “an exposé of European imperialism and the ideological apparatus employed to legitimate it” (22). That is, Devine is the colonizer seeking profits; Weston shows the belief in racial superiority. Weston’s attitude toward Harry (the retarded boy) may link him to the Nazis and certainly links him to the “eugenics” movement of the early twentieth century. Ransom’s fears (on the spaceship and afterwards) reflect the confusion of the humane in the time of a “ruthlessly belligerent enemy” (32). Thus, in several ways Schwartz is reading *OSP* as a depiction of its time.

Literarily, Schwartz—not very surprisingly—sees the book as answering H.G. Wells and as using Jonathan Swift. These come in the references to Wells during the space trip to Mars and in Ransom’s fears upon seeing the Sorns and in the general allusion to Swift in the parallel to Gulliver with the Houyhnhnms (as on his structural chart). Schwartz does not point to the obvious parallel—*hrossa* is Old Norse for *horse*, and the Houyhnhnms are rational horses. Also, he does not discuss the dialogue with the Oyarsa in terms of Gulliver and the King of Brobdingnag and of Cavor and the Grand Lunar. (The latter pair is referred to on p. 25.)

Schwartz discusses at length the *hmakra* hunt, finding a dangerous hunt, in which the hunter may lose his life, to be in contrast with the three intelligent races of Mars living in peace: “The main difficulty is that the unfallen rational *hrossa* are engaged in a form of violence that cannot be dismissed as the consequence of an unnatural rupture of creation’s original order” (39). Next, Schwarz considers Ransom’s tendency to think that one Martian species must rule the others (perhaps another example of Darwinian “survival of the fittest” — or, rather, a rule of the fittest). Schwarz’s discussion of the rationality of the three species and its implications is carried out without reference to Lewis’s belief in Natural Law (the *Tao*)—probably—again—because it would threaten his emphasis on Lewis as involved in *modern* thought. Schwartz’s tying of Ransom’s “The animal *I am* is called Man” with Descartes’ “Cogito, ergo *sum*” (43, italics added) is clever—a way of saying “This thinking animal is Man.” But it could equally be a statement of mankind *hubris*, since “I Am” is God’s name (to Moses): “This God-animal (or this animal who claims to be God) is Man.”

In the meeting with Oyarsa, “Weston’s old-fashioned colonialism mutates into a cosmic version of modern racism that echoes the most militant forms of fascism” (46-7). (Oddly, Schwartz does not mention Weston’s statement “it is enough for me that there is a Beyond,” which is an echo of the end of Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw’s play about Lamarckian evolution. Either Schwartz is deliberately avoiding points that have been made by other scholars or the Shavian reference complicates his treatment of the survival of the fittest in

connection with *OSP*.) And Schwartz sees a pun in Ransom upon his return to earth asking for “a pint of bitter” (49).

The discussion of Schwartz’s treatment of the other two books will be brief, since the above discussion indicates his general approach. The chapter on *Perelandra* is the best in the book. Schwartz sees *Perelandra* as embodying Lewis’s response to Henri Bergson’s philosophy. He traces the development of Bergson’s thought through four books (46-51). In something of a digression—but an important one—Schwartz points to a section of *Creative Evolution* that influenced Lewis’s thought about nothingness and so undermined his youthful pessimism, as Lewis indicates in *Surprised by Joy* (without being certain where in Bergson’s writings he found the argument) (53-54).

Weston is at first (before he becomes completely the Un-man) a convert to a “self-serving vulgarization” of creative evolution (73), not at the level of the sophisticated version of Bergson nor the popular version of Shaw; what Lewis does is put this intellectual conflict over evolution within the context of a world which is continually in the process of change, of development. Schwartz gives many examples of this changing world—e.g., the prohibition against living on the Fixed Land, which implicitly is a denial of a static life, of security; the fairly new appearance of Tor and Tinidril on their world; passages in the Hymn of Praise (before the Great Dance) such as “Never did he make two things the same [...]. After earths, not better earths but beasts [...]” (qtd. 84). In other words, Lewis’s version of an unfallen Garden of Eden is not static. Lewis is presenting a Christianized version of Bergson’s belief in development. Schwartz finds the Christian understanding of “the singularity, sanctity, and divine indwelling within each moment of the creative process” (85) indebted to the Christian Neoplatonism of Nicholas of Cusa—thus Schwartz is making Lewis only half modern in this combination of Neoplatonism and continuous development.

*That Hideous Strength* has its ties to the evolutionary emphases of the other books. In part, N.I.C.E. wants to move beyond the physical into a human-controlled (or “macrobe”-controlled) next step. Filostrato looks forward to the time when men “reproduce [them]selves without copulation” (qtd. 112). Again, “Nature is the ladder we have climbed up by, now we kick her away.” Perhaps the keeping alive of Alcasan’s head belongs here, although that is described by Straik more as an attempt to create God. More clearly tied to the earlier emphases on evolution (“Wellsianity” as Lewis said elsewhere) is the satiric sketch of H.G. Wells as Horace Jules, the nominal director of N.I.C.E.

But a reader will find the evolutionary emphasis a minor one in *THS*. Schwartz spends much of his space summarizing the actions in the book, with extensive connections in the endnotes to twentieth-century movements having resemblances to the actions. The most interesting discussion in Schwartz’s chapter, however, has little to do with these matters. He treats the St. Anne’s

material as that of the romance, and the N.I.C.E. material (eventually) as that of its parody, the Gothic. His discussion of the Gothic connections are the best this reviewer remembers. Consider this partial list of the Gothic conventions in *THS*, for example:

[T]he pervasive atmosphere of “terror,” “dread,” and “horror” (the terms occur frequently); nightmares that record actual events otherwise unknown to the dreamer; imprisonment and persecution in the “haunted castle,” the domain of oppressive authority; the interest in the relations between love and power, and the attendant problems of marriage, family, and inheritance in a changing but intractably patriarchal society; the creation of a “monster”—“that hideous strength”—associated with lust for the kind of knowledge that confers mastery over life itself; and the ancient crypt that marks the ever present threat of a “return of the repressed”—the power of the past to haunt or invade the world of the living. (93-4)

This reviewer would quibble with one item on the list as it is phrased, but the general idea is certainly there.

Schwartz has an appendix on “The Dark Tower,” in which he discusses the controversy about the work (he uses only the first edition of Lindscoog’s book, so he misses her final position); summarizes most of the action; analyzes the varied ideas about the two time tracks; and makes occasional references to cultural background. He ends with a number of questions a completed work would have had to answer.

As basically a study in ideas—how do Lewis’s ideas tie to the modern age?—this book is valuable. The style is very academic. Both Christian readers and literary readers will find the book slightly off the focus of their main concerns, but still of interest. The progressing Eden of *Perelandra* should intrigue the first; the structural analyses and the discussion of Gothicism, the second. But the cultural historians will find a bonanza.

—Joe R. Christopher

#### Works Cited

Douglas, Mary *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2007.  
Whitman, Cedric H. *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1958.



**DEATH AND FANTASY: ESSAYS ON PHILIP PULLMAN, C.S. LEWIS, GEORGE MACDONALD, AND R.L. STEVENSON.** William Gray. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. ISBN: 9781847188717

WILLIAM GRAY'S *DEATH AND FANTASY* IS A COLLECTION of his published and unpublished essays ranging from 1996 to 2007, loosely organized around the theme of death in fantasy literature from George MacDonald to Philip Pullman. He turns to the French psychoanalytic school, particularly the work of Julia Kristeva on the relationship between the matricide and suicide, to provide a framework for reading the manner in which the fantasists come to terms with the death of the mother as well as their own relationship to death in their works. Although the disparate essays gathered together in this volume do not provide a comprehensive treatment of death in British fantasy, they nonetheless demonstrate how psychoanalytic criticism can shed some light on the significance of death in MacDonald, Lewis, and Pullman.

The first half of the book focuses on two nineteenth-century Scottish fantasists, MacDonald and Robert Louis Stevenson. Gray's first two essays on MacDonald's *Phantastes* and *Lilith* are the most overtly Kristevan readings in the collection. Using Kristeva's theory of the maternal "semiotic *chora*," the pre-linguistic matrix out of which the individual must arise to attain selfhood, Gray examines the "suicidal" impulses of the protagonist in MacDonald's early novel *Phantastes*, and then Gray looks at representations of the mother's death in *Lilith*. At times the application of Kristeva's psychoanalytic concepts is a bit strained, but they fit the dream-like state of MacDonald's narratives and pervading tone of melancholy he picked up from Novalis and other German Romantics. Gray then turn to an examination of the presence of MacDonald in the works of fellow Scotsman Stevenson—specifically references to MacDonald in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—as well as Stevenson's own efforts to write German *Märchen* [fairy tales]. The Stevenson chapters, which on their own offer some fascinating insights into his ties to the tradition of fantasy and the literary construct of Faërie, nonetheless do not quite fit the theme of death that occupies the other essays and perhaps would be better suited for a different collection.

In the second half of the volume Gray provides some key insights into the function of death in the fiction and apologetics of C.S. Lewis, and offers a detailed examination of the literary legacy of MacDonald, Lewis, and Pullman. Gray looks closely at Lewis's reflections on death of his mother and the death of his wife in his writings and at death in his science fiction and the Narnia books, most importantly the figure of Digory's dying mother in *The Magician's Nephew*. Gray invokes Harold Bloom's Oedipal drama of the "Anxiety of Influence" to read both Pullman's "misreading" of Lewis's ideas on death and to find parallels between Pullman and Lewis's literary forefather MacDonald. Gray effectively

defends Lewis from Pullman's condemnation of the deaths in *The Last Battle* by analyzing the complex representation of death and immortality—the “witch's time”—in their fiction.

*Death and Fantasy* thus offers a tantalizing glimpse at how psychoanalytic criticism can be applied to the analysis of fantasy literature and its preoccupation with death. Gray gives critics some new approaches to the study of these authors, and hopefully will in the future expand upon the nature of death in their works and in the works of other fantasists.

—David D. Oberhelman



**STEPHEN R. DONALDSON AND THE MODERN EPIC VISION.** Christine Barkley. *Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy* 17. Series editors Donald E. Palumbo and C. W. Sullivan III. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland and Company, 2009. 213 pp. ISBN 978-0-7864-4288-1

*Mythlore* readers may remember Christine Barkley from her 1984 paper “Donaldson as Heir to Tolkien.” Her new book germinated from that work and has grown beyond the Donaldson-Tolkien comparison in a most fruitful direction. She traces how the Chronicles of Thomas Covenant (First, Second, and nascent Last) engage concerns of modern literature (not only those traditional for fantasy) to achieve Donaldson's stated goal for the series: “to reclaim the epic vision [...] as part of what it means to be human” (*Epic Fantasy in the Modern World* [15]) Where Sartre had asserted that “Man is a futile passion” is the credo of modern literature, Donaldson insists, “Man is an effective passion” (*Epic Fantasy* [7-8]). Barkley shows how Donaldson evolves Thomas Covenant, Hile Troy, and Linden Avery, and with them his readers, from futility to effectiveness. For Barkley, experience cannot be unmade into innocence, and a world view turned ironic must regain epic vision by maturing, not by regressing. She characterizes the Chronicles' journey from futility to effectiveness as a journey from either/or to both/and thinking, in which irony and heroism are joined in the eye of the paradox, forming a larger and more inclusive world view. Her concentric-circles illustration of the relations of the Land to Covenant's “real” world—and *our* real world where Donaldson writes—shows the “timeless mythic realm” as encompassing *all* these (35).

Barkley's discussion of how courage works in the Chronicles conveys the uniquely penitential and irreducibly modern quality of Donaldsonian heroism. "Twentieth century literature complicated any exploration of heroism and courage when Joseph Conrad forced us to acknowledge our own heart of darkness, our own potential for evil. Once we admit we are flawed, it is hard to attempt to be courageous" (11). Covenant's stubborn capacity to go on despite his crimes, ignorance, powerlessness, and wish to remain uninvolved "shows a special kind of courage, one which seems to paralyze most others in the modern age" (11). The bridge from modern to epic vision, from futility to effectiveness, is undergirded by this special kind of courage, which is a constant substratum of the Chronicles. Not only Covenant and Linden, but Land-born characters too—Bannor, Foamfollower, Sunder, and Memla, to name only a few—use this kind of courage to keep moving forward when they feel they least deserve to. Donaldson thus illustrates the passage from paralyzing guilt to a capacity for concern that is more effective than innocence could have been. Cail of the *Haruchai* sums it up best: "It is agreed that such unworth as mine has its uses" (*White Gold Wielder* 201).

For Barkley, Thomas Covenant and the Land-born characters co-evolve. While Covenant rejoins an epic vision of meaning to his modern ironic viewpoint, characters native to an epic worldview temper it with modern self-awareness, creating an alloy more effective than frangible heroic purity. This process is most conspicuous in those Giants and *Haruchai* who interact most closely with Covenant, for their cultures start nearest the heroic pole and must travel farthest to integrate modernity. Sunder and Memla in the Second Chronicles travel the reverse direction. Under the Sunbane their world is even more filled with futility than Covenant's "real" world, and their path back to epic vision leads through Covenant's disproof of the Clave's false "truths" and requires acceptance of culpability for Rede-required actions. Such co-evolutionary developments advance the reintegration Covenant derives from interactions in the Land, which can be read as encounters with external Others or with internal dream beings. As Barkley puts it, "Self-awareness rather than global peace may be the overall goal of Donaldson's fantasy story" (34).

Barkley's most generative chapter, "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Leper," examines Thomas Covenant's leprosy as a metaphor for modern futility and Thomas Covenant's authorship as a metaphor for modern myth-making. Covenant as leper endures social rejection and projected fears similar, Barkley states, to those often inflicted on persons with AIDS in our world. Barkley affirms that as the Land healed Covenant of leprosy's consequences, Covenant's experience provides a mythical coping tool for readers contending with chronic disease. Although I find the layer of mythotherapy for disability much more salient in Lois McMaster Bujold's Vorkosigan series than in Donaldson, I know



of a real-world AIDS activist whose work was continually inspired by the Chronicles.

Covenant as “real-world” author refracts Donaldson at work on the Chronicles, suspended between the ecstasy of myth-making and the irony of the late twentieth century. Barkley observes that though Covenant writes his first book from within the embrace of transcendence, Covenant’s poems after diagnosis express futility. At this point Covenant enters the Land and his renounced authorial passions are transmuted into the inhabitants’ own myth-making. Barkley connects the Land’s Creator-image with Covenant or Donaldson himself in an irresistible sentence: “The Creator ‘formed and reformed, trialed and tested and rejected and trialed and tested again’ *as a writer might revise a manuscript* [italics added]” (61). Since Donaldson in the Chronicles is rewriting futility toward meaning and Covenant in the Land is experiencing dream therapy, then Land beings—refractions of Covenant, and ultimately of Donaldson—also need Story to make sense of their world and to anneal their inadequacy and guilt into effective concern.

Barkley traces the evolution of Land-told creation stories to illuminate their tellers’ evolving world views. Lord Tamarantha’s creation myth in the First Chronicles is the vision of inhabitants of a declining world who seek to rise again; the vast responsibility for resisting Despite belongs to sentient beings without direct divine aid. Thus, even before Covenant’s arrival, the Lords’ world view is heroic in reach but not in grasp; only their pure intent preserves their humility from modern despair. Covenant retells Tamarantha’s myth to Linden in the Second Chronicles, making subtle but telling revisions. His conscious evolution of the story in a direction of greater hope contrasts with the Clave’s consciously propagandized myth asserting that the Land deserves the Sunbane. Throughout the Second Chronicles, Covenant’s work in the Land is strikingly similar to Donaldson’s work in our world: to tell stories that reassert truth against distortions and call people back from futility to effectiveness.

Barkley’s discussion of the Last Chronicles, exploring Donaldson’s fantasy appropriation of the normally science-fictional themes of time and space travel, features more of the unusual and effective geometric diagramming that is introduced in the first chapter. Perhaps because the Last Chronicles are still in progress, their commentary feels more fragmented than the chapters on the completed portions of the mythos. This chapter could potentially have been further enriched by including themes from Donaldson’s own science fiction in the comparison, especially since the Last Chronicles, as late-career work, are likely to integrate strands from much else Donaldson has written.

Barkley’s analysis through some central concerns of modern literature (creativity, memory, identity, power, and evil) provides a much clearer view of the Chronicles’ distinctive charismata than would the Donaldson-Tolkien

comparison in isolation. Her occasional value judgments, e.g., “Donaldson takes a different perspective on fantasy than Tolkien did and provides a better answer” (29), become explicable—if still arguably excessive—in the context of her defending Donaldson’s heirship to Tolkien. The book as a whole occasionally evinces the tendency of Donaldsonian commentators (including this reviewer) to gravitate toward Donaldsonian cadences. Probably because spell-checking software is not designed for mythopathic use, there is a distracting frequency of typos, some of which are repeated (Hollinscrave for Honninscrave, Wayward for Warward). But these are minor quibbles. No course on Donaldson, epic fantasy, or modern fantasy should be without this book.

—Kim Coleman Healy

### WORKS CITED

- Barkley, Christine. “Donaldson as Heir to Tolkien.” *Mythlore* 10.4 (1984): 50-57.  
 Donaldson, Stephen R[eeder]. *Epic Fantasy in the Modern World: A Few Observations*. Occasional Papers, Series 2. Series editor Alex Gildzen. Kent, OH: Kent State University Libraries, 1986.  
 —. *White Gold Wielder*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1983.



**THE FANTASTIC HORIZON: ESSAYS AND REVIEWS.** Darrell Schweitzer. [Rockville, Md.]: Borgo Press, 2009. 238 pp. \$19.99. 978-1-4344-0320-9.

THE FANTASY LITERATURE FIELD HAS MANY DILIGENT BOOK REVIEWERS and learned scholars. What it needs is a polemicist: someone who can deploy wide reading and deep understanding in the confident assertion of patterns, trends, and evaluations beyond strict scholarly demonstration. Tom Shippey has some of the features of that polemicist, in his depth of understanding and the robustness of his arguments. Lin Carter had the breadth of reading and the breeziness of style, but not the depth or the critical acumen: he was an enthusiast, not a scholar. The best polemicist in the field today may well be Darrell Schweitzer. Fiction author and editor of magazines and books, he is also a critic and reviewer with both a broad perspective and a mastery of critical judgment, and also with passionately held and clearly expressed views on the nature and state of fantasy literature.

Schweitzer previously collected some of his non-fiction into *Windows of the Imagination* in 1998. This new collection consists of pieces postdating that, and the selection of topics happens to be of even greater interest for the mythopoetic

reader. Schweitzer brings a welcome perspective to mythopoeic literature. Unlike Shippey, whose central interests are Tolkien and the medieval tradition, or Carter, who most loved colorful barbarian adventures, Schweitzer makes his intellectual base in what used to be called “weird tales” (the title of a magazine he formerly edited), especially—as *Windows of the Imagination* makes clear—the works of H.P. Lovecraft. Weird tales exist on the borderline between fantasy and horror, often with an overlay of science-fiction rationalism. Ranging from this base, Schweitzer is well-equipped to pronounce on all three of the fields that form fantastic literature, and he treats all three in this book.

Unfortunately the topics he’s chosen to write on offer no more than brief mentions of Lewis and Williams, though he clearly knows their work. But the essays on *The Lord of the Rings* that begin this volume are invaluable, specifically for their perspective. Most people who write on Tolkien’s literary qualities are either themselves Tolkienists or from other literary universes altogether. Schweitzer is neither, and considers *LotR* as it appears from the perspective of a professional writer and editor from the pulp dark-fantasy tradition, at which it holds up fairly well. So on the one hand he finds the opening chapter of *The Lord of the Rings* a bit “twee” and has practical criticisms to make of some aspects of the plot, but on the other he doesn’t waffle around in ignorance. He has a keen appreciation of Tolkien’s mastery of the creepy and spooky, devoting an entire brief essay to “J.R.R. Tolkien as a Horror Writer”; he understands Tolkien’s heroic code, citing *The Battle of Maldon* for that purpose as assuredly as any Tolkienist would; and he grasps the imminence of the divine and the absence of formal religion, in contrast to Lin Carter, who stared at this in incomprehension. He knows, also, that *The Lord of the Rings* isn’t a trilogy (62).

Other essays have a little more to say on Tolkien, because you can’t discuss fantasy without his name coming up. Schweitzer uses *The Lord of the Rings* to ridicule critical over-interpretations (40-41), and zeroes in on an important point by using it to demonstrate that epic fantasy cannot be reduced to the politics of the plot (73). But this essay, on “Epic and Fantasy in Epic Fantasy,” makes this vital argument in a broader context, citing Lewis, Le Guin, and David Lindsay among others. Similarly, he quickly fixes on Tolkien’s feelings on war by comparing the ends of *The Lord of the Rings* and Eddison’s *Worm Ouroboros*, and gets at the heart of the meaning of fantasy in his explanation of what myth and legend are for, in an essay on Neil Gaiman’s *American Gods*, and on the horror of an over-dependence on technology in one on Lord Dunsany’s *The Pleasures of a Futuroscope*.

Overall, the book’s greatest value is Schweitzer’s keen perception of the larger generic field of fantasy. Peripheral as much of such work is to the specifically mythopoeic perspective, it’s a large and active neighboring kingdom, and Schweitzer makes an entertaining and affable guide to some of its byways.

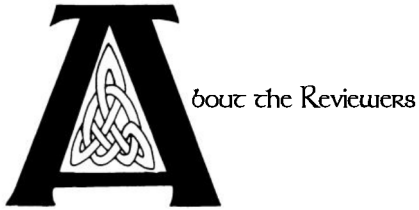
His discussion of "Who Killed Horror?" has a lot to say about fantasy as a marketing category. He is a keenly appreciative critic, notably here of two early-to-mid 20th-century authors of more than passing interest: Robert Nathan, whose *Portrait of Jennie*, as Schweitzer observes, is not only a work of elegant style but an illustration of what fantasy can do if it doesn't fall into formulaic ruts; and Francis Stevens, an obscure author of remarkably fey stories.

Schweitzer makes another contribution to fantasy criticism even more valuable because of its rarity, in a section of the book devoted to pulp fiction. Cheerfully admitting that they're not very good, Schweitzer analyzes a series of pulp science-fiction stories from the 1920s and 30s. Even the plot summaries – necessary because you haven't read these stories, and as they've not been reprinted you won't find them—are fun to read. ("What this story needs," he muses of one unmemorable South Seas adventure tale, "is a giant gorilla," 94.) Schweitzer does not dismiss these stories as mere formulas intended to entertain, but asks specifically how they choose to entertain in terms of what the formula was trying to accomplish and whether it achieved this in these specific cases. Literary analysis is always best when it respects the integrity of its subject, even when the subject is trash.

Schweitzer carries his practice of bold pronouncements on into literary theory and history. Because this is not a work of formal scholarship, he can make the kind of sweeping assertions that you always suspected were the case, without having to prove them in potentially dull scholastic manner. Cheer as he brushes aside allegorical analysis of Tolkien (41) and literally responds "phooey" to critics of the so-called "intentional fallacy" (57). Thrill as he reveals, in detail, how Hugo Gernsback and Lester del Rey, the founding editors of genre science-fiction and genre fantasy, respectively, actually turned once-thriving fields into barren wastelands for decades to come (157-67, 65-66). And what work of demotic fantasy polemics would be complete without a few hearty digs at that hapless mainstream critic, Edmund Wilson, for his thoughtless dismissals of not just Tolkien ("[Wilson's] head belongs on that spike," 29), but Lovecraft ("Take *that*, Edmund Wilson!," 148) too.

So there is a great deal worth reading in this book, starting with that vigorous analysis of Tolkien, and continuing on through much else, including a couple of elegies to used-book hunting. Unfortunately there are also a lot of typographical errors. A reference to a 1929 pulp story blurbed with "Sea Seas Treasure"? (94). Probably "South Seas Treasure" was correct. And Edgar Poe did not move to Philadelphia in 1938 (122), though it would have been interesting if he had.

– David Bratman



**DAVID BRATMAN** writes the annual “Year’s Work in Tolkien Studies” for *Tolkien Studies*. He has written on the history of the Inklings, and the lives and works of their individual members, in *C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy* edited by Bruce L. Edwards (Praeger, 2007), *The Company They Keep: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien as Writers in Community* by Diana Pavlac Glyer (Kent State, 2007), and the pages of *Mythlore*.

**JOE R. CHRISTOPHER** is Professor *emeritus* of English at Tarleton State University, Stephenville TX. He has published two books (one in collaboration) on C.S. Lewis, published one chapbook of Tolkienian verse, been an assistant editor of *Truths Breathed Through Silver: The Inklings’ Moral and Mythopoetic Legacy* (ed. Jonathan B. Himes, Cambridge Scholars, 2008), and edited three books and one issue of a journal. He also has published essays on Lewis, Tolkien, Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers, Anthony Boucher, Ellery Queen, John Dickson Carr, various fantasy and science fiction writers—as well as such standard authors as the Pearl Poet, Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Tennyson, and John Heath-Stubbs—and over 100 poems. He had one play—a farce about a vampire—produced at his university.

**EDITH L. CROWE** is a happily-retired academic librarian whose lengthy career includes numerous articles, book reviews, papers, panels and presentations on fantasy. She also published art work in *Mythlore* and was Art Editor 1981-1984. Since 1998 she has served as Corresponding Secretary of the Mythopoetic Society. She recently co-authored *An Index to Mythlore* with Janet Brennan Croft and is working (very slowly) on an art index to *Mythlore*.

**KIM COLEMAN HEALY** is an independent scholar in Hamden, CT. A longtime reader of Stephen R. Donaldson, she has previously published papers on the Covenant series in *Mythlore* and the *New York Review of Science Fiction*. She is also the author of *From Beholding to Becoming* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004).

**DAVID D. OBERHELMAN** is an Associate Professor in the Humanities-Social Sciences Division of the Oklahoma State University Library. He holds a Ph.D. in English with an Emphasis in Critical Theory from the University of California, Irvine and a Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh. He has authored a book as well as book chapters and articles on the nineteenth-century British novel and on fantasy

literature, particularly the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. For the Mythopoeic Society he serves as the Secretary of the Mythopoeic Press and Administrator of the Mythopoeic Fantasy and Scholarship Awards. He is also the North American Editor of *Reference Reviews* and has widely presented and published on topics ranging from emerging technologies in libraries and scholarly communication to the history of the book.

**RICHARD TUERK** received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1967. He taught at East Texas State University, now Texas A&M University-Commerce, from 1972 until 2009, when he became a professor emeritus of literature and languages. He is the author of *Oz in Perspective: Magic and Myth in the L. Frank Baum Books* (McFarland 2007).



### BOOKS RECEIVED

Please contact the editor if you are interested in reviewing any of these titles:

**THE ROSE ON THE ASH-HEAP. FROM THE NOVEL *ENGLISH PEOPLE*.** Owen Barfield. Oxford: Barfield Press, 2009.

**MILLENNIAL MYTHMAKING: ESSAYS ON THE POWER OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY LITERATURE, FILMS AND GAMES.** Edited by John Perlich and David Whitt. Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2010.

**MARVELLOUS FANTASY.** Edited by Jørgen Riber Christensen. Aalborg, Denmark: Aalborg University Press, 2009.

**A SWORD BETWEEN THE SEXES? C.S. LEWIS AND THE GENDER DEBATES.** Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010.

**MIDDLE-EARTH MINSTREL: ESSAYS ON MUSIC IN TOLKIEN.** Edited by Bradford Lee Eden. Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2010.

**TOLKIEN 2005: THE RING GOES EVER ON. PROCEEDINGS.** 2 vol. Edited by Sarah Wells. Tolkien Society, 2008.