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## Reviews

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## Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

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### Abstract

*The International Relations of Middle-earth: Learning from The Lord of the Rings.* Abigail E. Ruane and Patrick James. Reviewed by Robert T. Tally Jr

*Moments of Grace and Spiritual Warfare in The Lord of the Rings.* Anne Marie Gazzolo. Reviewed by Damien Bador.

*The Wizard of Oz as American Myth: A Critical Study of Six Versions of the Story, 1900-2007.* Alissa Burger. Reviewed by Hugh H. Davis.

*Plain to the Inward Eye: Selected Essays on C.S. Lewis.* Don W. King. Reviewed by Holly Ordway.

*Tolkien's Poetry.* Ed. Julian Eilmann and Allan Turner. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

*The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia.* Rowan Williams. Reviewed by Melody Green.

*C. S. Lewis - A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet.* Alister McGrath. Reviewed by Gregory Bassham.

*Seven: An Anglo-American Literary Review.* Ed. Marjorie Lamp Mead. Reviewed by Janet Brennan Croft.

*Supernatural Studies: Official Publication of the Supernatural Studies Association.* Ed. Margo Collins and Deborah Christie. Reviewed by Janet Brennan Croft.

*Fastitocalon: Studies in Fantasticism Ancient to Modern.* Ed. Thomas Honegger and Fanfan Chen. Reviewed by Janet Brennan Croft.

*Wormwood: Literature of the Fantastic, Supernatural and Decadent.* Edited by Mark Valentine. Reviewed by Janet Brennan Croft.

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## REVIEWS

**THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF MIDDLE-EARTH: LEARNING FROM *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*.** Abigail E. Ruane and Patrick James. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012. 256 pp. \$19.95 (pbk). 978-0-472-05182-3.

IF ONE DOES NOT OBJECT TO THE OBVIOUS ANACHRONISM of the project, the geopolitical landscape of Middle-earth during the final years of the Third Age offers fertile ground for thinking about international relations. Distinctive cultures, if not modern nation-states, abound in J.R.R. Tolkien's world, and the commerce, conflict, and alliances among them provide the background for and add color to the adventures depicted in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. One might argue that, with *The Hobbit* in particular, the clash of these cultures animates the narrative. Whereas the quiet, discernibly Edwardian, English countryside of the Shire is home to a good-natured, if somewhat xenophobic population, an exiled company of Dwarves pines for its lost homeland, and the adventures along the way to the Lonely Mountain are marked by the encounters with various foreign civilizations, as Bilbo Baggins discovers. These unique "nations" include two different Elven cultures, the hidden kingdom of Elrond's Rivendell and the sylvan city-state of Elvenking (Thranduil) in Mirkwood, along with perhaps two distinct Goblin tribes (one in the lair of the Great Goblin in the Misty Mountains, the other in the armies of "Bolg of the North" which appear in the Battle of the Five Armies), the mercantile Men of Lake-town, and the assorted races of Trolls, Wolves, Spiders, and Eagles, not to mention the odd loners, Gollum, Beorn, and Smaug the Dragon. Further in the background, the more cosmopolitan heirs of Númenor established a network of cities and holdfasts ranging from the mouth of the Anduin in the south to the northern kingdom of Arnor, including great citadels such as Minas Ithil and Isengard, and the deep history of their sorrows lays the foundations for the events that culminate in the War of the Ring. As the more limited geography and history of *The Hobbit's* Middle-earth gives way to that of *The Lord of the Rings*, many more cultures and kingdoms come into view: Galadhrim, Rohirrim, Drúedain, and Haradrim, to

name but a few. Much has been made of the various races in Arda, and each has its own recognizable set of characteristics, but even among Elves, Men, Dwarfs, and Orcs, cultural differences distinguish, and sometimes cause tension between, various “nations” of the same race. Hence, for Tolkien scholars and fans, a study of the international relations of Middle-earth would likely prove of great interest.

Unfortunately, *The International Relations of Middle-earth: Learning from The Lord of the Rings* by Abigail E. Ruane and Patrick James does not deliver the goods. In fairness to its authors, the main project of this study is less an examination of the international relations of Tolkien’s imaginary world than an introductory course in the disciplinary field of “International Relations” (or “IR”) which merely uses examples from *The Lord of the Rings* to make this or that point. As such, it is a book aimed at exposing students to IR scholarship and theory, but it offers little of value for students of Tolkien’s work. Ruane and James take care to note that their use of *The Lord of the Rings* deviates sharply from Tolkien’s own views. They duly note Tolkien’s cordial dislike for allegory (or, in their phrasing, his adamant rejection of it), but they nevertheless “believe that Middle-earth can help teach lessons about world politics that Tolkien himself did not intend, and that it is useful in understanding events that occurred both during his time (e.g., World War I) and afterward (e.g., the War in Iraq)” (10). Thus, Ruane and James announce at the outset of their study that Tolkien’s Middle-earth is to be understood as a reservoir of examples that can be profitably taken out of context, rather than a place to be explored in its own right.

*The International Relations of Middle-earth* proceeds as an introductory textbook. It focuses on the broad themes of Order and Justice (capitalized, for whatever reason, by the authors), and it is motivated by two guiding questions: *How can the world be made a more stable place?* and *How can the world be made a more fair place?* (I will here resist the urge to mention that the Valar rued their own attempts to find answers to such questions in Arda, as such an observation might inadvertently impugn the field of international relations *tout court*.) Ruane and Patrick begin by assessing the state of Order and Justice in Middle-earth at the time of Frodo’s quest, looking particularly at three societies—Mordor, The Shire, and Rivendell—as exemplary points along the orderly and just spectrum. Then in Chapters 2 through 6, which occupy the bulk of the study, Ruane and James explore the “Great Debates” of twentieth-century IR theory, as these may be illustrated by characters, societies, scenes, and events in Middle-earth. Thus the various ideologies or schools of thought, such as classical liberalism, rational-choice theory, realism, Marxism, or feminism, find their models in *The Lord of the Rings*. Who knew that the Huorns of Fangorn Forest were Marxists, for example? Or that Gimli the Dwarf is a Neoliberal? (Terry Pratchett, who noted in his 1985 Novacon 15 speech that in the “consensus fantasy universe” dwarves are “small and dark and vote Labour,” would probably be surprised to hear that.) The

authors pay special attention to the causes of war, using World War I, the (ongoing) War in Iraq, and the War of the Ring as their touchstones, before turning to an analysis of feminist IR theory and looking at the ways that matters of war might be viewed through a “gender-sensitive lens” (140ff.). Finally, Ruane and James conclude by looking at Middle-earth as “a source of inspiration and enrichment,” in which Tolkien’s fantastic world becomes a “mirror,” then a “prism,” which enables us “to challenge assumptions and stimulate creative thinking” (190). In a typically vague, tortuous sentence, Ruane and James assert that “[t]his highlights how the stories IR scholars tell about our world highlight just one array of colors in a broader rainbow and suggests that richer and more complete understanding of global politics requires drawing on a broad set of colorful experiences and a variety of different kinds of stories” (190). Nuance, apparently, has little place in this rainbow, for the authors assert definitely that “we have enriched our understanding of the discipline and practice of international relations” (193). Readers may be grateful for that, at least.

However, while Middle-earth perhaps provides a useful “mirror” in which to view various matters of interest to IR scholarship, *The International Relations of Middle-earth* offers no real contribution to Tolkien scholarship, though neither does it claim to do so. In this study, characters and scenes from a capsule version of Tolkien’s novel, or of Peter Jackson’s film adaptation, are employed as illustrations that may illuminate certain aspects of IR theory. The authors’ basic *modus operandi* involves summarizing a given concept or debate, then using examples from Tolkien to show what the more abstract ideas might look like in the world of Middle-earth. Ironically, notwithstanding the authors’ probably unnecessary apologia for employing popular culture as a means of teaching IR theory (6–11), this method is consistent with introductory political science textbooks, which provide “real-world” examples to illustrate a theory, but here the examples come from Tolkien’s exemplary “otherworld.” One has the nagging suspicion that the reason for this must be that the authors do not trust that university students in the United States know much about the real world, but presumably they know a good deal about Tolkien’s Middle-earth, so the fantasy world, from a pedagogical perspective, is more “real” to the students. Whatever the reason, Ruane and James find Tolkien’s story particularly useful as an aid to students of international relations. Addressing their intended readers directly, Ruane and James sum up their project: “We hope that by using *LOTR* as a light and a mirror, we have provided some tools that will help you understand and critically engage with efforts by IR scholarship and beyond to create greater Order and Justice in the worlds of which you are a part” (203).

Although much is made of the different ways that stories may be told, particularly with respect to ideological metanarratives like classical realism, liberalism, Marxism, or feminism, *The International Relations of Middle-earth* is

really less about storytelling than it is about image and perception. Here, one might say, the authors again deviate from Tolkien's own perspective. Aside from a love for maps—including Thrór's Map, which in *The Hobbit* played a crucial role in the plot, in addition to aiding the reading in grasping the literary geography of Middle-earth—Tolkien's own research as well as his imaginative fiction was principally devoted to narrative, to language and philology, and less attention was paid to the visual image. In Tolkien's *legendarium*, images are often treacherous, as can be seen in the pernicious effects of the *palantíri* on several characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. With so much emphasis given to the metaphors of lenses, mirrors, and prisms in their study, Ruane and James perhaps unwittingly demonstrate that IR theory is concerned with appearances far more than realities. International relations are just that, *relations*, and they are not easily fixed or frozen in order to better study them. But appearances, as always, can be deceiving. These authors would do well to heed Galadriel's warning about her own mirror: "The Mirror is dangerous as a guide to deeds" (*The Lord of the Rings* [LotR] II.7.363). By using *The Lord of the Rings* as a mirror, that is, as a device which can distort as well as reflect, I fear that these Ruane and James have undermined their own pedagogical and intellectual project in some ways.

One problem is that they do not really consider *The Lord of the Rings* itself. As evocative as Tolkien's world might be for students of international relations, Tolkien's actual texts are deemed unnecessary to *The International Relations of Middle-earth*. Undoubtedly, Ruane and James themselves are thoroughly familiar with *The Lord of the Rings* and related materials, but they do not expect their readers to know much at all about Tolkien's writings. The authors unaccountably assume that students are unlikely to read the wildly popular, bestselling books on which this study relies. (Admittedly, part of the problem is that, if *The International Relations of Middle-earth* is to be used as an introductory textbook, the instructor probably does not want to rely on a student's prior knowledge of Tolkien, although from a marketing perspective, the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* is presumably the *raison d'être* for such a textbook.) Ruane and James provide appendices in which they summarize the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* in about ten pages, providing "[e]verything essential" to their employment of the novel; Appendix A stops off just before the "climax" (with Aragorn and Gandalf just outside the Black Gate, and Frodo and Sam on the threshold of the Crack of Doom), apparently to allay "spoilers," before a one-page Appendix B finishes the tale. Obviously, a ten-page *précis* of Tolkien's masterpiece can only be of use for the most superficial of readings, and Ruane and James acknowledge their limitation by encouraging students to watch the Peter Jackson film versions. Almost as an afterthought, they mention how reading Tolkien's actual words, while "a greater investment of time," might

nevertheless be “very worthwhile.” As they put it self-deprecatingly, “[m]any interesting characters and story lines are not even mentioned in the brief summary provided in the appendixes” (11). Thus, by allowing their own plot summary to delimit the entire field of everything “essential” to their study, the authors make clear that they have little to no interest in Tolkien’s actual novel, *The Lord of the Rings*, although they are happy to mine it for examples. As such, *The International Relations of Middle-earth*, whatever its value in introductory IR courses, has nothing much to contribute to Tolkien Studies.

I am not really qualified to pass judgment on whether such a study would be pedagogically effective in international relations courses. Presumably, the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings*, on screen and in print, would at the very least garner the attention of less enthusiastic students. However, I do wonder whether the frequently dubious analogies and painfully reductive examples could actually serve the authors’ stated purpose. I very much doubt that the social relations of Middle-earth translate easily into the geopolitical framework of the modern world system of the twenty-first century, and the distortions needed to make these anachronistic comparisons seem feasible occasionally render the underlying argument risible. For example, while the authors claim that advocates of a particular theory should not be “associated with the vices or virtues of related characters from *LOTR*,” they insist that “certain characters may be *explained* most effectively by one theory or another” (7, emphasis in the original). Surely, Tolkien’s millions of readers do not require any character to be “explained,” but even so, “explaining” a character by virtue of his or her putative representativeness of a given concept or ideology would seem to muddy the waters all the more, both for Tolkien studies and for IR scholarship. Does Elrond need to be “explained” to readers as an avatar of “classical liberalism,” and does that label actually help anyone understand this complex and fascinating character any better? Or take the Dwarf princess, Dís, mentioned but once and then only in an appendix to *The Lord of the Rings*, who is made to stand as the representative of “postcolonial feminism” (131–133). Lobelia Sackville-Baggins corners the market on “socialist feminism” (128–129), as fans of the stubborn old Hobbit will delight to learn. Who knew that Old Man Willow, as a Huorn, was a Marxist (53), or that both Boromir and the Ringwraith leader (a.k.a. the Lord of the Nazgûl or Witch King of Angmar) are clearly “neorealists” (58–60)? I especially liked learning that Ents are critical theorists of the Frankfurt School variety (72–73), which gave me a whole new appreciation of the Black Forest. This sort of simplistic misuse of Tolkien’s novel actually makes the IR theory less clear, not only for those who have actually read Tolkien, but especially for those who have a passing familiarity with the other political theorists whose ideas are being forced into a framework not well suited for them. In the attempt to make such a philosophical system more “relatable” by riding the coattails of a popular

fantasy novel or film franchise, Ruane and James risk eliding important distinctions and overlooking necessary particulars.

Even forgiving the anachronism and potential for abuse implicit in the book's stated mission, I find the persistent misreading of Tolkien to be unhelpful, and in the end I believe this undermines Ruane and James's overall aims. Take, for example, the famous "Voice of Saruman" scene in *The Two Towers*. As the chapter title indicates and as Gandalf warns, Saruman's *voice* carries tremendous power. Whether Tolkien intended it to be enchanting in a purely magical sense or, more likely, he wished to illustrate the subtle dangers of artful rhetoric, elegantly delivered, Saruman's voice—and not necessarily the words used or the stories told in that voice—holds the real peril. Before any words are even mentioned, in fact, Tolkien emphasizes Saruman's vocal gift:

Suddenly another voice spoke, low and melodious, its very sound an enchantment. Those who listened unwarily to that voice could seldom report the words that they heard; and if they did, they wondered, for little power remained in them. Mostly they remembered only that it was a delight to hear the voice speaking, all that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and a desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves. When others spoke they seemed harsh and uncouth by contrast; and if they gainsaid the voice, anger was kindled in the hearts of those under the spell. (*LofR* III.10.578)

During the scene of their interview, Saruman's voice enchants nearly all of his auditors, and only with some effort do Gimli, then Théoden, and Gandalf (who was likely never in danger) manage to rebuke the wizard and resist the charms of his speech. Gandalf later concedes that "the power of his voice was waning. He cannot be both tyrant and counsellor" (584). It is a crucial moment in the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*, revealing much about "magic" and political power in Tolkien's world.

Ruane and James interpret this famous scene as exemplary of the discourse of postmodernism. (Yes, Saruman is a postmodernist, a Jean-François Lyotard to Elrond's Immanuel Kant or Treebeard's Theodor Adorno, perhaps.) "Just as Saruman tells a particular story at Isengard, so, too, postmodernism sees the world as being interpreted by stories or narratives, such as the modernist metanarrative that human progress occurs through human reason" (73). Leaving aside this radically attenuated shorthand of Lyotard's discussion of "master narratives" (*grand récits*) in *The Postmodern Condition*, the authors utterly ignore Tolkien's explicit references to the voice of Saruman, willfully misreading the chapter as a presentation of dueling metanarratives, in which "dissenting voices (those of Gimli, Théoden of Rohan, and Gandalf) provide alternative interpretations of the situation. So, too, postmodernism argues that being



skeptical of the dominant narratives (e.g., particular IR paradigms), just as Gimli, Théoden, and Gandalf are skeptical of Saruman, is important to analyzing global politics accurately" (74). For Ruane and James, the scene illustrates the markedly postmodernist positions of the various interlocutors, each with his own interpretation but none having access to any foundational truth. Moreover, since here Saruman is credited with producing the "dominant" narrative, Gimli becomes the exemplary Nietzschean critic, or perhaps Derridean deconstructionist, by simply questioning the meaning of Saruman's discourse: "'The words of this wizard stand on their heads,' he growled, gripping the handle of his axe" (*LotR* III.10.579). It seems rather unlikely that this "reading" of "The Voice of Saruman" chapter sheds light on postmodernist theories of international relations, but it is clear that such a reading does violence both to postmodern theory and to Tolkien's own literary text.

Ultimately, I believe, these failures in reading are too pronounced, and render Ruane and James's study inadequate to the task of IR pedagogy, since the oversimplifications may harm those wishing to understand the complexity and detail of international relations. Furthermore, except insofar as they demonstrate an interesting application of Tolkien's literary productions to a completely different disciplinary field, *The International Relations of Middle-earth* provides little to interest Tolkien scholars. If this book does help students gain insight into IR scholarship and theory, then that is all to the good, but I suspect that their time devoted to exploring Middle-earth will be better spent in rereading Tolkien's own narratives, in which "quite a little fellow in a wide world" (*The Hobbit* XIX.305), like most of us, finds himself in the midst of a complex web of social, political, intercultural, historical, and geographical relations. And like the initially skeptical Bilbo, who went on to become an influential scholar and poet, such students might come to understand, and perhaps change, this dynamic world system.

—Robert T. Tally Jr.

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**MOMENTS OF GRACE AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*.** Anne Marie Gazzolo. Bloomington, Indiana: WestBow Press, 2012. xx + 203 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 978-1-4497-6968-0.

THE AXIOM OF ANNE MARIE GAZZOLO'S *Moments of Grace and Spiritual Warfare* in *The Lord of the Rings* is stated on the book's back cover: "*The Lord of the Rings* is a catechism of spiritual warfare cleverly disguised as a fantasy." The reader should not expect this sentence to be demonstrated. Rather, it is the starting point of the book, which is intended to be less an analysis of religious themes used by Tolkien in his novels than a spiritual guide for Catholics, based on the plot of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. As Gazzolo explains in her Preface:

J.R.R. Tolkien mentioned more than once that he felt he was not so much inventing *The Lord of the Rings* as he was discovering it. [...] To align with this recurring sense, my book speaks from inside the tales as those in it perceive God, the Writer of the Story [...] guiding events, rather than from outside as an Oxford professor penned them.

In her Introduction, Gazzolo describes her project and how she feels the presence of God in *The Lord of the Rings*. She explains that this story of the struggle against evil is paralleled by the daily struggle of each soul against temptation and weakness. As such, she intends to show how the behavior of Tolkien's heroes can inspire the reader and set examples of moral excellence. The main part of the book follows a simple chronological plan. The first chapter introduces Tolkien's story with a summary of the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, the overthrow of Sauron, the death of Isildur and the One Ring being found again by Sméagol and hidden at the roots of the Misty Mountains for several centuries. The next chapter presents in detail the story of *The Hobbit*, insisting on divine Providence and on the importance of doing what God intends for us. The remaining twenty-five chapters dwell on the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*: chapters 2–9 focus on *The Fellowship of the Ring*, chapters 10–19 on *The Two Towers*, and chapters 20–26 on *The Return of the King*. There is no conclusion as such. This somewhat reinforces the feeling that the book only aims to show as many examples of moral behavior as can be found in Tolkien's writings, without having a well-defined argument to present.

A strong point of this book, when compared with similar attempts, such as *Finding God in The Lord of the Rings* or *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues*, is that it is quite well researched, both in terms of Tolkien studies and of theology. Gazzolo demonstrates a deep interest in Tolkien's writings, including *The History of Middle-earth* series. She also makes good use of Tolkien scholarship, including

arguments from authors who do not exclusively focus on the Christian aspects of Tolkien's fiction, like Tom Shippey, Verlyn Flieger or Brian Rosebury. She also quotes from a large variety of Catholic writers, from Theophan the Recluse to Joseph Pearce and Benedict XVI.

Of course pity, given and received, is discussed, as pity is what enables the providential destruction of the Ring in Tolkien's story, from Bilbo sparing Gollum's life just before escaping from Goblin-town to Sam Gamgee refusing to kill Gollum after being attacked one last time on the flanks of Mount Doom. Indeed Gazzolo points out that pain and affliction sometimes seem to be the only way to bring pity into one's heart. At the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo asks Gandalf why his uncle did not kill Gollum when he had the opportunity. But seeing that Bilbo still longs for the Ring in Rivendell seventeen years after renouncing it helps Frodo understand how deep is the torment of Gollum when he finally meets him. Similarly, Gazzolo underscores that Sam could not be brought to pity Gollum until after he wore the Ring himself, felt its malevolent influence, and saw this influence grow over Frodo during the last steps of their journey. Gazzolo does not focus on Frodo only and shows that pity, even given to an unworthy person such as Wormtongue, who immediately takes advantage of it to betray Théoden again, can bring unexpected good results: had not Wormtongue taken refuge in Orthanc, he could not have thrown the *palantír* at Gandalf. This would have prevented Aragorn from recovering it and revealing himself to Sauron. As a consequence, Sauron's attack would have been delayed, the guard on the borders of Mordor would not have been disturbed by the imminence of war, and the Ring-bearer would have walked into worse danger than what he had to face.

Another theme in the book is the interplay of hope and faith. Gazzolo opposes the despair of Denethor, who only yearns for the past, with the faith of most of Tolkien's heroes, who do not renounce it even when faced by seemingly impossible odds. Tolkien shows many times that the future is never certain, never mind how bleak it may seem, and that only losing hope will make the doom of the heroes inevitable. If Sam never displayed much hope in the eventual success of the quest to destroy the Ring, he always kept faith in Frodo. Conversely, when Frodo lost hope in Mordor, he still kept faith in Sam to go on, as Gazzolo points out in chapter 23.

The downside of such an approach is that Gazzolo considers every event in the book as subject to Providence and bringing the destruction of the Ring closer. For instance, she claims that the treason of Gollum in Torech Ungol was the only way for Frodo and Sam to enter Mordor, whereas Tolkien saw it as a disaster and imagines an alternate story where Gollum did not betray Frodo and ends up helping him voluntarily (Tolkien, *Letters* 79, 82, 329–330). This point of view leads Gazzolo to make some unsustainable claims. In the second chapter,

for instance, she considers that the haste of evil defeats itself when the spiders capture the Dwarves. Yet, had the spiders been really hasty, they would have killed the Dwarves before Bilbo had the chance to rescue them, rather than keeping them alive for later enjoyment (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* VIII.152–154). In fact, Gazzolo often tends to consider as a certainty what can only be stated as hypotheses. In chapter 5, she states that Frodo putting the Ring on his left forefinger at Weathertop is symbolic of the constraint exerted on his will. While Frodo's will is undoubtedly under assault from the Nazgûl at this time, there is no definite proof that Tolkien intended to add symbolism to the scene. After all, when Bilbo flees from the enraged Gollum in the tunnels under the mountain, the Ring also slips on his left forefinger, and this ends up saving his life (*Hobbit* V.87).

Despite Gazzolo's knowledge of Tolkien, the attentive reader will also notice a few mistakes in her description of the events: contrary to her description of events in *The Hobbit*, Gandalf never reveals to Thorin that his father Thráin had a Ring of Power and that he was captured by the Necromancer for this very reason. Indeed, when Glóin comes to the Council of Elrond many years later, it is clear that neither he nor Balin knew what had happened to the Ring of Thrór (*The Lord of the Rings* [LotR] II.2.268). Similarly, she assumes in chapter 21 that Rohan is entirely selfless in deciding to go and help Minas Tirith. However, Théoden makes clear he understands that only the alliance of all Free Men can hope to stave off the victory of Sauron. Having the responsibility to defend his people, he is in fact far from being selfless and explains to Hirgon, the messenger of Denethor, that he will only bring 6,000 men instead of 10,000, as he does not intend to leave Rohan undefended in case Sauron launches a direct attack against his people—which is indeed the case, as we discover later (*LotR* V.3.799, VI.6.979). A few of these mistakes seem to arise from Gazzolo trying to push her moral analysis too far; for instance when she claims in chapter 6 that the fall of Melkor, Sauron and Saruman confirm Lord Acton's maxim on the corruptive aspect of power. This does not correspond to Tolkien's view on power as demonstrated in his *Legendarium*: neither Manwë, nor Gandalf, nor Aragorn are corrupted by the power they wield. For Tolkien, only the desire for *more* power than we are intended to have is inherently corruptive.

In spite of these limitations, Gazzolo's book will undoubtedly appeal to all those looking for a spiritual reading of Tolkien's masterpiece. Due to its lack of organization, it may be better to read it over a long period of time, in order to avoid any feeling of repetitiveness. This book will not be as interesting for readers looking for an in-depth analysis of religious themes in Tolkien's fiction, who should rather go to the books quoted in Gazzolo's bibliography. Indeed, some of the most enjoyable parts of *Moments of Grace* come from the astute use of quotations from other books, like Birzer's comments on the appearance of

Faramir. Birzer claims that the appearance of this character shows the hand of Providence not only because he helps Frodo in an otherwise hostile country, but also because he makes one of the very few allusions to religion contained in *The Lord of the Rings*. And indeed, Tolkien recognized that he had not planned for this character, and felt that he did not invent him (*Letters* 79). Such comments show that *The Lord of the Rings* has indeed something to teach to everyone, including the man who wrote it.

—Damien Bador

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**THE WIZARD OF OZ AS AMERICAN MYTH: A CRITICAL STUDY OF SIX VERSIONS OF THE STORY, 1900-2007.** Alissa Burger. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. 230 p. \$35.00. ISBN 9780786466436.

THIS PAST JULY, THE Syfy CHANNEL ANNOUNCED that director Timur Bekmambetov was developing the mini-series *The Warriors of Oz* for the cable network, creating a post-apocalyptic reimagining of L. Frank Baum's classic *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Andreeva). In February, Warner Horizon announced that it was developing *Red Brick Road*, a televised fantasy series billed as "*Game of Thrones* meets *Wizard of Oz*" (Kits). In between the announcements for these two re-envisionings of Baum's world as the milieu for action television (whether high fantasy or post-apocalyptic landscape), filmgoers saw Disney's *Oz the Great and Powerful* (2013; dir. Sam Raimi), a prequel to Baum's novel (and, in many ways, the 1939 classic film), succeed as a blockbuster (as of this writing, the film had grossed \$491 million worldwide, ranking seventh for the year ["2013 Worldwide"]), with audiences anticipating an IMAX release of MGM's *Wizard of*

*Oz* (1939) this fall and the release of *Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return* (2014), a film based on the novel *Dorothy of Oz* by Roger Staunton Baum, great-grandson of Oz creator L. Frank Baum. Clearly, the magical Land of Oz and journeys to it are highly popular (perhaps even more today than when Baum first wrote his novel). And with this year marking thirty-five years since the cinematic release of *The Wiz* (1978; dir. Sidney Lumet) and a decade of *Wicked* on Broadway, and next year marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939; dir. Victor Fleming), the Oz-world, creatively, is clearly quite vibrant. A recent study from McFarland shows that that vibrancy extends to the critical world as well. Joining this exploration of the colorful landscape of Oz one finds Alissa Burger's *The Wizard of Oz as American Myth*, an engaging and intelligent analysis of specific iterations of the story.

Burger's volume analyzes six variations on this "first uniquely American fairy tale" (1): Baum's original novel from 1900, Fleming's film, Lumet's film, Gregory Maguire's parallel novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995), Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman's still-running Broadway musical adapting Maguire's novel, and the RHI Entertainment/SyFy Channel miniseries *Tin Man* (2007; dir. Nick Willing), a continuation and extension of Baum's vision through a post-apocalyptic world, heightening the science-fiction elements of the story. These six incarnations are discussed—and discussed very well—through a consideration of four constant and recurring themes: gender, race, home, and magic. Within each thematic approach and with each (re)telling of the Oz story, Burger discusses how each tells the quintessentially American story of Dorothy's journey and contributes to an understanding of American identity. Burger's approach is an effective one. By discussing each theme within the respective incarnations, she reinforces the interconnectedness for these works. While the various permutations of the original should be considered on their own and for and by their own merits, there is no single generative text from which each successive version springs forth (34). *The Wiz* is as much a reaction to the 1939 film as it is to Baum's novel (if not more so), just as both versions of *Wicked* are informed by years of fandom and variations on the MGM musical and its spinoffs as well as the novel series and the works directly inspired by Baum's prose. The mythic nature of Oz-tales makes any number of adaptations popular, and interest in them seems to stem from multiple sources, so the audience enters the world a variety of ways, each seeming to stand on its own while also standing upon the shoulders of those adapters who paved the yellow brick road before. When the title *The Wizard of Oz* is uttered, for many the initial vision is of Judy Garland and not the heroine of the book, as each informs the other. (This reviewer has found that his high school students today often first know the magic of Oz through the Broadway play *Wicked*—or at least its cast recording album—before seeing any of the film

treatments or reading even one of the books; this comes in an instant-media world in which they could watch any number of adaptations with relative ease, thus diluting the enchantment earlier generations enjoyed by watching a network broadcast of the MGM film on an annual basis.) Burger's essays address this issue directly and eruditely point out the times the works draw upon and enhance these connections as well as the points (thematic and theoretical) at which they diverge.

By discussing each version within each chapter, Burger's book creates stand-alone essays, which can serve as effective "capsule discussions" of each theme. There is a sense of overlap in terms of her introduction and discussion of each work, as a small degree of repetition creeps into the exposition for the different incarnations as they are touched upon in each individual chapter, but this is minor, and, given the overlapping nature of the adaptations, and the familiarity of the Oz landscape, this is understandable. The more impressive feat is that Burger's discussion of the American myths at hand and on display is fresh and original, providing an articulate and thoughtful discussion of both the myths' effects on the story and the stories' effects on our ongoing engagement with and understanding of these myths. *The Wizard of Oz as American Myth* is able to contextualize each version without being pedantic or repetitive, and it even reviews some well-travelled paths (such as the notion of the Campbellian archetypes found in Dorothy's quest) without seeming too worn or familiar. The "Home Sweet Home" chapter, in particular, takes the familiar concept of the desire for home (thoroughly espoused by Dorothy as she clicks her heels together) and discusses it through considerations of both literal and metaphoric quests for home. She begins her examination of Baum's novel with an effective and impressive discussion of the frontier and its role in American culture and folklore. This argument is novel and insightful, and it crafts a lens through which American fantasy, and not just Oz-stories, can be viewed.

Besides its success as a discussion of these particular interpretations of *Wizard of Oz*, this critical volume also serves as a sort of casebook for analyzing myth and adaptations. Along with its thematic approach illustrating effective ways to discuss texts through their presentations of gender, race, home, and magic, and its overview of the creation and reinvention of myth (particularly American mythology), this book is a springboard for further discussion and offers an intelligent apparatus for that discussion. The prevalence and popularity of the Oz myths, of course, means there are many reiterations of Dorothy's saga beyond these six texts (not to mention the many sequels and spinoffs created in the last century), and part of the joy in this study comes with recognizing how Burger's approaches can be applied to other Oz productions. The reader, for example, might start to consider the use of magic in *Oz the Great and Powerful* or even *Tom and Jerry and the Wizard of Oz* (2011; dirs. Spike Brandt & Tony

Cervone), the depiction of home in Disney's *Return to Oz* (1985; dir. Walter Murch), or a reading of gender in *Zardoz* (1974; dir. John Boorman) or Alan Moore's *Lost Girls* graphic novel. The chapter "Race, History, & Representation" immediately brought to mind for this reviewer *The Muppets' Wizard of Oz* (2005; dir. Kirk Thatcher), with Ashanti starring as an African-American Dorothy. Such is the success of Burger's inviting analysis that she inspires further explorations using her critical framework. Alissa Burger also provides a thorough explanation of her methodology for studying and discussing *Wicked* as a Broadway show. Both for considerations of further *Oz* productions (since multiple theatrical productions have populated its pop culture landscape since as early as 1902) and for writers attempting to discuss any number of theatrical productions, Burger provides exemplary means through which those writers can succeed. Her thorough approach is a commendable model for writers to consult and follow.

A cinematic version of *Wicked* has been announced, and Eric Shanower's comic adaptations of L. Frank Baum's novels continue to be released to great acclaim. The potential for *Oz* tales remains strong and fertile, and the mythic study of those tales has possibly an even-greater potential. Alissa Burger's *The Wizard of Oz as American Myth* taps and meets that potential.

—Hugh H. Davis

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**PLAIN TO THE INWARD EYE: SELECTED ESSAYS ON C.S. LEWIS.** Don W. King. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2013. 383 p. \$25.99. ISBN: 9780891123903.

THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF C.S. LEWIS'S DEATH is an opportune moment to step back and assess the significance of Lewis's work. Don King has been involved in the academic world of Lewis studies for forty years, and has observed the increase in popularity of Lewis's writings and the maturation of academic study of his work. In *Plain to the Inward Eye: Selected Essays on C.S. Lewis* he brings together a selection of essays and reviews written throughout his career and published in journals such as *Mythlore* and *SEVEN: An Anglo-American Literary Review*. King offers these essays with the hope that they "illustrate the principles of literary criticism advocated by Sayers, Lewis, and other like-minded scholars who have shaped and inspired my journey" (14).

Despite the Lewis-specific subtitle, much of the merit of this volume is in King's contextualizing of figures related to, but not often directly considered within, Lewis studies. Several essays consider Lewis in relation to George MacDonald, Ruth Pitter, and Joy Davidman; and three essays are focused exclusively on other authors: Pitter, Davidman, Dorothy L. Sayers, and T.S. Eliot.

Unfortunately, the chronological ordering does not present the essays at their best. The opening piece, "Narnia and the Seven Deadly Sins," is the weakest in the collection, and displays the datedness that affects other parts of the book as well. King argues that "Lewis consciously or unconsciously emphasized one particular deadly sin in each of the seven Chronicles of Narnia" (26); "Lewis [...] has taken the seven deadly sins into Narnia, shown their destructive power, and set before us examples to avoid" (27). King's reading is forced and his argument unconvincing; while this essay might have been a useful contribution to the study of the Narnia books in 1984, it does not hold its own in 2013. Indeed, in a footnote, King acknowledges that "Since this essay first appeared, much excellent scholarship on the Chronicles of Narnia has been published. Of particular note is Michael Ward's magisterial *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*" (27n5). In another footnote, he retreats from the assertive language of the essay: "At the same time I am not arguing that the entire series is framed around the seven deadly sins, nor am I claiming that Lewis intended the seven deadly sins as the organizing principle of chronicles [sic]. Instead, I am simply pointing out that Lewis may have used each book to explore the ramifications of the seven deadly sins" (27n4). Especially for the essay that opens the collection, it would have been better if King had thoroughly revised the piece to take into account newer scholarship and his own later, more nuanced position, rather than merely adding a footnote that goes against the rhetoric of the essay as it stands.

The next essay, "The Childlike in George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis," is useful in showing some of the resonance between MacDonald and Lewis. "The Door as Christian Metaphor in the Chronicles of Narnia" seems unfocused and would have benefited from a revision. King begins by stating that "One outstanding characteristic of C.S. Lewis's *non-fiction* prose is his use of metaphor [...]. Lewis uses word pictures to clarify his *arguments and ideas*" (43, emphasis mine), but goes on to examine the use of the door metaphor in Lewis's fictional Narnia books. King's conclusion that "Aslan functions as a two-way door" (50) does not offer much of value to the reader's appreciation of the Chronicles.

Given King's expertise in the poetry of C.S. Lewis, it's no surprise that the essays on Lewis's poetry are more solid. In "The Distant Voice in C.S. Lewis's Poems," one of the best pieces in the collection, King examines a range of Lewis's poetry to reveal a recurring "distant voice—uncertain, unsure, and ambivalent toward matters of life and meaning" (64). Lewis's use of this "distant voice" has more than literary significance: as King notes, "to realize that he did struggle with matters of faith makes his apologetics all that more effective and compelling" (71). "Making the Poor Best of Dull Things: C.S. Lewis as Poet" examines Lewis's own understanding of the poet's art, concluding that Lewis's "pragmatic view of poetry's value" and "workmanlike efforts to write poetry" (82) may have contributed to his lack of success as a poet. "C.S. Lewis's *The Quest of Bleheris* as Poetic Prose" offers an intriguing glimpse of Lewis's early writing. In "The Poetry of Prose: C.S. Lewis, Ruth Pitter, and *Perelandra*," King draws on previously unpublished materials to show how Pitter, with Lewis's permission, responded imaginatively to his novel by creating "poetic transcriptions" (109) of passages from *Perelandra*.

"The Rhetorical Similarities of Bertrand Russell and C.S. Lewis" and "Devil to Devil: John Milton, C.S. Lewis, and Screwtape" fall between categories and, as minor pieces, could easily have been omitted. "Quorum Porum: The Literary Cats of T.S. Eliot, Ruth Pitter, and Dorothy L. Sayers" is an entertaining excursion into cat poems by these authors, but an odd choice for the volume, especially as King makes a point of saying that he does not particularly like cats.

In the third section of essays, King considers the writings of Ruth Pitter and Joy Davidman: the woman Lewis might have married, and the woman he did marry. "The Nature Poetry of Ruth Pitter" helps fill out the literary context of contemporary writing in Lewis's day; readers may wish to follow up with King's book on Pitter, *Hunting the Unicorn*. "Joy Davidman and the *New Masses*: Communist Poet and Reviewer" offers a glimpse of Davidman's life and writing career before she became a Christian.

Probably the strongest essay in the volume is "Fire and Ice: C.S. Lewis and the Love Poetry of Joy Davidman and Ruth Pitter." Here, King provides an insightful analysis of the poetry of Pitter and Davidman, with an eye toward

explaining how “Davidman ‘won’ Lewis [...] while Pitter ‘lost’ Lewis” (207). This essay is particularly relevant now that Alister McGrath’s recent *C.S. Lewis: A Life* provides additional context for Lewis’s relationship with these women. In a footnote, King comments that “Pitter, motivated by an understandable but uncharitable bitterness, convinced herself that Joy used her illness (bone cancer) to manipulate Lewis into marrying her and caring for her two sons” (230n10). In light of the evidence McGrath provides of Davidman’s assertive behavior with Lewis, it seems possible that Pitter was merely being realistic. King is appropriately restrained in his conclusions, using the poetry to provide insight into the personality and relational style of the two women: “Davidman was bold, aggressive, and determined while Pitter was shy, passive, and reticent” (227). However, considering that King notes that Pitter herself “often insisted that she avoided romantic entanglements and was extremely guarded about affairs of the heart” (216), it seems that King ought to have provided evidence to support his repeated assertion that she was probably sexually active (212, 216, 227).

The final quarter of the book comprises a selection of reviews and review essays, intended to show the shape of Lewis scholarship over the past forty years (12). Unfortunately, the retrospective approach makes the reviews of little practical use for either the Lewis scholar or general reader. It is unclear whether some of the titles reviewed have stood the test of time or been superseded; others are obviously of negligible import. Where reviews show evidence of being updated, the revision work is uneven, perhaps due to the effort to get the volume to press in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For example, King’s review essay on the *Collected Letters* is a disjointed combination of separate reviews of Volumes I, II, and III. The review begins by considering Volume I as if it were the only one available, referring to it as “the first of a planned three-volume set” (250) and commenting “That the entire set will not be the complete letters is regrettable” (250). Later in the review, King notes that Volume III “contains a supplemental section that includes many letters that were missed by the first two volumes” (270), but it is unclear whether King’s objection was adequately dealt with by the inclusion of these letters.

Other reviews cry out for a reconsideration in light of later Lewis scholarship—for good or for bad. An example of the latter is King’s 1990 review of A.N. Wilson’s biography of Lewis, which he praises with only faint reservations; in the 2005 review of Alan Jacobs’s *The Narnian*, King writes that “some eyebrows will be raised by any use of the Wilson biography, but Jacobs rightly discerns when Wilson is worth citing and when he is patently ill-informed” (275). The Wilson review would have benefited from revision in light of King’s later awareness of the book’s shortcomings. As an example of the former, in his review of Michael Ward’s *Planet Narnia*, King says that “it is the starting point from now forward for all serious scholarly discussions of the

Chronicles of Narnia" (302). However, he does not take the opportunity to consider how Ward's thesis has been received and used as the basis for further work since 2007, even though such an assessment would have both made the review more useful and corroborated King's words of praise for the book.

*Plain to the Inward Eye* is, in the end, an uneven collection. The earlier essays and the reviews would have benefited from a thorough revision in light of later Lewis scholarship. However, King's careful research and attention to less-studied aspects of Lewis's work means that readers who are particularly interested in Lewis's poetry, or his relationship with women, will likely find it worth adding to their shelves.

—Holly Ordway



**TOLKIEN'S POETRY.** Ed. Julian Eilmann and Allan Turner. Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2013. Cormarë Series, No. 28. xvi + 221 pp. US\$24.30. ISBN 978-3-905703-28-3.

THE EDITORS ANNOUNCE, QUITE CORRECTLY, that this is the first collection of Essays on Tolkien's poetry. Indeed, Michael D.C. Drout, writing the introduction, mentions that only fourteen essays on Tolkien's poetry are on the Tolkien Bibliography database at Wheaton College (Massachusetts)—although this reviewer has since drawn his attention to one omitted essay and certainly there are several more. This collection adds ten more to the total. (Two of these are revised versions of earlier essays, but the originals are not listed in the Tolkien Bibliography either, so the full ten will be new to it.) Whatever the full number of essays on Tolkien's poetry, this volume is certainly a substantial contribution to this area of study.

Two of the essays are primarily on Tolkien's use of alliterative verse. Tom Shippey's "Tolkien's Development as a Writer of Alliterative Poetry in Modern English" (an updated version of a 2009 essay) shows that Tolkien, through the years, developed a greater ability in using the variety of types of half-lines basic to Anglo-Saxon poetry. Shippey uses several specific works or passages for his evidence and provides counts of the five Sievers types in them. For example, in Shippey's analysis of the three lines pronounced by Éomer over Théodón's body, he covers the six half-lines and a "pararhyme" (or consonance) of *might-* and *meet* in the second part of the first line and the first part of the second. This reviewer wonders if the near rhyme on the last stresses of the first

and third lines—"fallen" and "calls us"—does not give an epigrammatic completeness to the passage; but Shippey's stress is appropriate to his focus. In its technical way, Shippey's essay is excellent. The other essay on the alliterative meter is Carl Phelpstead's "'For W.H.A.'—Tolkien's Poem in Praise of Auden." In this case, Tolkien wrote two versions of the poem, one in Anglo-Saxon and one in modern English. Phelpstead finds the Anglo-Saxon version has the five types of half-lines in the same proportion to their appearance in Old English poetry except that C types are used about twice as often as B, but the modern English has more B types than A (nine times more) and more E than D. This review's discussion is simplified, obviously, but, without going into the precise patterns of the types of half-lines, they suggest that the language has changed enough that the possibilities for certain patterns have shifted. Other matters are mentioned in passing, such as Tolkien's Anglo-Saxon version of his name signed to the Old English poem—Rægnold Hraedmóding—or, very generally, Auden's modification of alliterative meter in *The Age of Anxiety*. But this essay is basically a study of the meter in Tolkien's poems; given its limited subject of one poem in two versions, not a large study but valuable (as Phelpstead says) for what it suggests. (Phelpstead's essay has the most impressive *erratum* discovered in the book: in a description of the iambic pentameter line, it is said to have five feet, "each consisting of a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable"—iambics have become trochees (48). But this is just a slip: in a later passage, Phelpstead compares the B half-line, basically, to two iambic feet, which shows he knows quite well what an iamb is.)

Two essays are on the topic of poetry in *The Lord of the Rings*. Petra Zimmermann's "'The glimmer of limitless extensions in time and space': The Function of Poems in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" is concerned with the imbedded poems—particularly "Song of Beren and Lúthien," "Old Walking Song," and "Sam's Song in the Orc-tower"—and the prose text immediately surrounding them. This context contains some of this information about the poem: its (fictional) authorship, its topic, its traditions, its presentation, its relationship to (fictional) reality, and its effect. These things, writes Zimmermann, aid the poem in "breaking the linear flow of time and giving an impression of other layers of time and space" (60). The main title of the essay, from one of Tolkien's draft letters, indicates the goal of including these poems: to suggest the ancient times before the fictional present and also (through the artistry of the poems) to stop the movement of time as long as the poem lasts. The "Old Walking Song," at least upon its second use in *The Lord of the Rings*, becomes more of a forecast of the future than a capturing of the past. Zimmermann's analyses often involve the development of the poems in Tolkien's writing processes and sometimes the applications of J.W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*. The other paper on this general topic is Lynn Forest-Hill's

“Poetic Form and Spiritual Function: Praise, Invocation and Prayer in *The Lord of the Rings*.” This essay splits into two parts. The first is a survey of the religious poems in the book, consisting of the eagle’s song (“Sing now, ye people of the Tower of Anor”) and the Elvish song of praise to Elbereth (“Snow-white! Snow-white! O Lady clear!”). “A Elbereth Gilthoniel” is mentioned but becomes important in the second part of the essay. The eagle’s song is said (correctly) to be “composed in the style of the psalms in the Authorised Version of the Bible” (93). (Probably Tolkien would have been influenced by the Challoner revision of the Douay Translation, not the King James directly—nor, for that matter, the Coverdale translation used in *The Book of Common Prayer*; however the revised Douay and the King James are close enough that the imitation of either style would sound much the same.) “Snow-white! Snow-white! O Lady clear!” is written in the long measure, like a hymn (8888, in the hymn books’ syllable counting). Forest-Hill assumes the hymn resemblance is deliberate. The second part of the essay is about the spiritual development of Sam, some of it reflected in his invocation of Elbereth when facing Shelob and the emphasis on Elbereth’s stars in “In western lands” during his search for Frodo in the Tower of Cirith Ungol. The thesis of Sam’s spiritual development is important, but it is argued beyond the use of poetry. Every star seen in the sky is not a poem, although it may be a reminder of Elbereth.

Only one essay is related to *The Silmarillion*—not surprisingly, since no poems are quoted in that book. Michael A. Joosten’s “Poetry in the Transmission Conceit of *The Silmarillion*” discusses the four cases in which material is said to be a prose summary of something told more fully in verse: two in which Tolkien had written a poem (more accurately, a part of a poem)—in the chapter “Of Túrin Turambar,” the reference to “Narn i Hîn Húrin, the Tale of the Children of Húrin,” and in the chapter “Of Beren and Lúthien,” the reference to “the Lay of Leithian, Release from Bondage”—and two in which Tolkien had not written a “source”—in the chapter “Of the Darkening of Valinor,” the “Aldundénië,” and in the chapter “Of the Flight of the Noldor,” “that lament which is named Noldolantë, the Fall of the Noldor.” Joosten treats these references as part of the “verisimilitude of Middle-earth’s background history.”

Three essays discuss poems in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*. John R. Holmes’ “‘A Metre I Invented’: Tolkien’s Clues to Tempo in ‘Errantry’” describes the verse form used in the poem, a version of comic rhymes which appear in operas and which, as Tolkien’s inspiration, Holmes points to a nursery rhyme. (The basic rhythm, although Holmes does not have the classical term, is that of a first-class paeon. He is correct that dactyl does not properly describe it.) But Holmes emphasizes Tolkien’s description of the poem starting each “stanza” quickly and then slowing down (given to Donald Swann when he was composing music for its setting); presumably the slowed recitation approaches

an iambic rhythm, with the secondary stresses becoming obvious. Holmes points to seven factors in controlling speed, the first being the obvious recitation speed of the speaker. Others include such things as mosaic rhymes and enjambment. These are interesting, but Holmes does not show that those which make for speed (such as enjambment) show up predominately in the first part of the stanzas and those that make for slowness (such as mosaic rhymes) show up predominantly in the second part; without this statistical evidence, one is simply left with the recitation speed of the reader. Holmes's last few paragraphs sum up the meaning of the poem (quite correctly) as "a parody of the medieval romance about knights errant" (42). Sue Bridgwater's "What is it but a dream?: Tolkien's 'The Sea-Bell' and Yeats's 'The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland'" compares the themes and other aspects of the two poems. She gives some background on Faerie, journeys there, related works by the two authors, and the relation of such journeys to dreams. Some examples of contrasts and comparisons: both poems had earlier versions ("The Sea-bell" as "Looney"), and the final versions of both were more despairing than the earlier; Tolkien's poem is told in the first person, but Yeats, in the third; "[t]he vocabulary of margins, of liminality, forges a strong point of similarity between the two poems"; Yeats' protagonist does not attempt to reach faerie and loses contentment because of the suggestions of faerie's existence, but Tolkien's does seek—however, through hubris fails his time there, suffering traditional punishments (128). "[T]he chief thing these poems have in common is the ambiguity of their typological status, or to state the same idea more positively, the rich mix of traditions blended into each work" (140). Nancy Martsch's "Tolkien's Poetic Use of the Old English and Latinate Vocabulary: A Study of Three Poems from *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*" discusses "The Hoard," "The Man in the Moon Came Down Too Soon," and "Errantry." Martsch's essay is clear and factual in its approach, with statistics based on appropriate passages. (Hers is the second essay that was published previously—in her case, the editors wanted her to focus on a major aspect of her earlier work.) "The Hoard" uses predominately words derived from Old English, along with a variation on the Anglo-Saxon verse form, to depict the early English culture. "The Man in the Moon Came Down Too Soon" alternates between a high number of polysyllabic words, about one-third of the words used and most from Latin, when the topic is the moon; and a predominant number of monosyllabic words from Anglo-Saxon when the topic of the Earth and its people. "Errantry" has a high number of polysyllabic words—the trisyllabic words, in particular, derive from Latinate words. Since it is a nonsense poem, intended for humor, "the Latinate vocabulary [...] adds to the sparkling, exotic ambience[...]" (175).

The two editors of this volume also contribute essays. Julian Eilmann's "Cinematic Poetry: J.R.R. Tolkien's Poetry in *The Lord of the Rings* Films" discusses the uses Peter Jackson made of Tolkien's poems (a full list of the songs

sung “on screen” appears in a chart at the end of the essay, with the distinction between the theater release and the extended version and other details indicated). In his essay proper, Eilmann covers examples of such things as poems shifted from their original speaker and/or from their original position in the work (only two are used for their original purpose in the original context), the poem translated into Sindarin for its movie appearance, and the difference in purpose between the poems in the theatrical releases and in the extended versions. He has an excellent analysis of Jackson’s treatment of the Lament for the Rohirrim, with three lines spoken by Théodon in a montage (not by Aragorn). Allan Turner’s “Early Influences on Tolkien’s Poetry” is more a discussion of *possible* influences than certain ones. A few borrowings have been suggested with some support from Francis Thompson’s poems, although overall Tolkien and Thompson are quite different poets in style. William Morris seems to have more influence in Tolkien’s prose than his poetry, but the placing of poems in “The [incomplete] Story of Kullervo” seems based on *The House of the Wulfings*—although Tolkien’s poems in that case are inspired by William F. Kirby’s translation of the *Kalevala*. Morris’s *The Life and Death of Jason*, a narrative poem with inserted songs in different meters, may have influenced the *structure* of “The Children of Húrin” (the second version of the poem) with its insertion of Halog’s song of Beren and Lúthien. Morris’s goal of “a seemingly artless verbal art” (211; perhaps developed from his understanding of Chaucer’s style) may have influenced Tolkien’s development, as in “The Town of Dreams and the City of Present Sorrow”; Morris’s *Jason* may also have influenced Tolkien in the creation of narrative poems and more lyrical poems based on ancient myth—but Tolkien’s own created myth, not the Graeco-Roman. G.B. Smith, one of the TCBS, urged Tolkien to read Rupert Brooke and the *Georgian Poetry* anthology-series; a few suggestions have been made of some influence of these contemporaries on Tolkien. Turner mentions the possible influence of the general English poetry that Tolkien met in school as works to be put into Latin, and he ends with the influence of poems in his professional area of medieval English and related languages (perhaps at that point getting out of “early influences”).

Drout, in his introduction, indicates that many of the students in his Tolkien class confess to having skipped the poems in their previous readings of *The Lord of the Rings*. For those interested in Tolkien’s poetry *per se*, this volume is valuable, although the essays are inevitably uneven. On how the verse actually works in meter and style, Shippey, Phelpstead, and Marsch are very good. Zimmermann’s essay is valuable on the use of poems in the context of *The Lord of the Rings*. Forest-Hill’s essay says some good things, although its conclusion wanders off the poetry. Joosten’s essay is correct, but the topic is a minor one. Eilmann is quite correct about the filmed snippets of poems in Peter Jackson’s films, but the topic is a specialized one within an already specialized area—



significant until the films get remade, perhaps. Turner's work is part of a topic in development—it is fine as a progress report. Bridgwater's comparison was more interesting to this reviewer for the isolation of folk motifs in Tolkien's poem (not detailed in this review) than for the Yeatsian comparison. Holmes's essay had some good details, but he did not prove his major contention.

—Joe R. Christopher



**THE LION'S WORLD: A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF NARNIA.** Rowan Williams. New York: Oxford UP, 2012. 152 p. \$16.95. 9780199975730.

FIRST PRESENTED AS THREE LECTURES GIVEN AT Canterbury Cathedral during Holy Week 2011, this book by the former archbishop of Canterbury examines one specific aspect of the Narnia books: the character Aslan and why he matters. While there have been many books that focus on various aspects of Christianity as it is presented in the Narnia series, Rowan Williams brings a fresh perspective by skipping many of the things that have been said, and focusing instead on a few specific themes that he finds threaded throughout the various volumes. At times the explanations of religious concepts cause the book to appear almost devotional rather than academic, but these exist to help the reader better understand the themes Williams sees running throughout the series.

Before outlining these themes, however, Williams spends the first chapter, "The Point of Narnia," explaining what he sees as the general purpose of the Narnia books, and then the second chapter is spent defending the books against their would-be detractors. The purpose of the series, he argues, is not to avoid adulthood and its complications as some have suggested, but to tell a good story while helping its readers face three concepts: humans tend to self-deceive, humans need to recognize the strangeness of God as compared to themselves, and humans need to understand how that strangeness can bring us to a place where we face the truth about ourselves. In the second chapter, Williams addresses various charges against the Narnia books, beginning by pointing out that it is true that Lewis was a man born at a specific time in a specific place, and he does indeed reflect some of the stereotypes one might expect from someone of that time and place. At the same time, though, Williams deftly responds to some of the charges regarding gender, sex, and violence in Narnia, suggesting that some of these are simply misunderstandings of the text itself.

From there the book goes into a detailed explanation of the primary themes that Williams traces through the books, explaining why they matter. In the third chapter, "Not a Tame Lion," Williams discusses how, as a Christ-figure, Aslan upsets the typical Sunday-school, stained-glass images of Jesus, and presents instead someone disturbing, riotous, and warmly physical. This Lion is a force to be reckoned with as his very presence requires those around him to face the hurt they have given others and find forgiveness. This happens throughout the series when the characters not only face the terrible beauty of Aslan himself, but in that, also see the reality of who they are.

The next chapter, "No Story But your Own," gets its name from *The Horse and His Boy* in which two different characters, at different times, ask Aslan about how he is dealing with another character. Both times the lion responds that he does not tell people any story but their own: facing one's own story is difficult enough. Encountering Aslan is not easy. Those who encounter him are required to claim ownership of the choices they have made in their past that have made them who they are now. Intriguingly, Williams points out, once a character admits responsibility for his or her own actions, that character does not face punishment. Instead, this acceptance moves that character towards self-awareness, an openness toward Aslan, and finally, into a place where that dragon, donkey, or child can experience the joy Aslan intends. As Williams explains, this requirement to face oneself is vital because in Narnia, one cannot gain happiness from an act of betrayal, but humans (and donkeys, apes, dwarves, and others) consistently deceive themselves about not only what they have done, but about the long-term effect of those actions on others.

Chapter 5, "The Silent Gaze of Truth," explains that even though an encounter with Aslan compels individuals to face the problems within themselves, not everyone does so. Uncle Andrew and the dwarfs in the stable are two examples of people who deliberately make themselves incapable of hearing what Aslan has to say, while deluding themselves into believing that the world is a very different place than it is. In both cases, they are made more miserable by the delusion that they *think* they want than by the reality they refuse to see. Williams also takes the opportunity to here explain that while Lewis expressed a distrust of introspection in various texts, what Lewis meant was that there is a serious problem in focusing entirely on yourself when there are hungry people who need to be fed, poor people who need to be clothed, and neighbors who need to be loved. The more time a person spends doing things like keeping diaries, the less time that person has to enact the Christian life. Aslan's "gaze of truth" helps Narnians, and through them, readers, to see what is needed to enter into the joy Aslan intends for them.

"Bigger Inside than Outside," the sixth chapter, brings together an image from the beginning of the series and one from the end: the wardrobe that

appeared to have a whole country inside it, and the stable that holds not only the platonic idea of the real Narnia, but the whole of reality. In this chapter, Williams addresses two concepts as they play out in the Narnia series: the first, size: not only do small places contain entire worlds, but Aslan himself grows as Lucy gets to know him better. Williams talks about this as a signifier of the importance of personal, spiritual growth. The second theme addressed here is death. While some people have disliked the almost-cavalier attitude they feel that these books present regarding the fate we all must eventually face, Williams argues that by showing two sides of death, Lewis is attempting to demystify it. In Narnia, there is a fate worse than death: not torture or sorrow, but breaking faith; being untrue to your word. Death, on the other hand, is part of the moral landscape of Narnia, and in itself, when viewed from the other side of the stable door, becomes a cause for joy.

In the conclusion, the argument wraps up by explaining that the Narnia books teach the reader that we live in occupied territory, but we are both the occupiers and the occupied. We have the chance to join Aslan's side and be rebels against what has enslaved us: ourselves. In order to be freed, we must trust a stranger who is more wild than we know. Once we trust and join the revolution, then we will have more joy than we can imagine.

Ultimately Williams's interpretation of the Narnia books provides new insight on what might appear to be an old, worn out topic. In doing this, Williams provides his readers with not only a fresh vision of Narnia, but with a new model for understanding themselves.

—Melody Green



**C. S. LEWIS – A LIFE: ECCENTRIC GENIUS, RELUCTANT PROPHET.** Alister McGrath. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2013. 431 p. \$24.99. 978-1-4143-3935-1 (hc).

THERE ARE SEVERAL GOOD BIOGRAPHIES OF C. S. LEWIS.<sup>1</sup> McGrath's book is a welcome addition to the genre and is likely to supplant most of the older ones. This is regrettable in one respect because, as McGrath make clear, his is not

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<sup>1</sup> Most notably Green and Hooper (1974; rev. ed. 1992), Sayer (1988; rev. ed., 1997), and Hooper's often-overlooked 117-page mini-biography in his invaluable *C.S. Lewis: Companion and Guide* (1996).

a full-scale life of Lewis. It is intended not as “another rehearsal of the vast army of facts and figures concerning [Lewis’s] life, but [as] an attempt to identify its deeper themes and concerns, and assess its significance. [This is] not a work of synopsis, but of analysis” (xiii). Those readers who miss this advisory will grumble at its major omissions and otherwise puzzling emphases.

McGrath is highly qualified to write such an analytical biography (timed for the fiftieth anniversary of Lewis’s death). Like Lewis, he is from the north of Ireland and can situate Lewis in its cultural and topographical landscapes. Moreover, McGrath is a leading Christian apologist and a distinguished theologian, and was for many years an Oxford professor. Given this background and his extensive archival research, McGrath is often able to comment insightfully on aspects of Lewis’s life and thought that other biographers have missed. His discussions of Lewis’s Irish roots, his Oxford education, his wartime experiences, and Oxford politics are particularly illuminating. So, too, are his analyses of Lewis’s theology, his critique of modern scientific naturalism, and Christian themes in Lewis’s fiction.

McGrath’s book is, for the most part, balanced and judicious. Lewis’s oddities and moral failings are discussed candidly, as are his dated cultural assumptions and his limitations as a theologian and apologist. But happily, McGrath chooses to highlight Lewis’s remarkable successes and achievements—as a scholar, teacher, bestselling children’s writer, popular theologian, “midwife” (x) to Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, and as a human being. His touching concluding epitaph for Lewis (360) is singularly apt.<sup>2</sup>

One rare lapse from this judicious balance occurs in McGrath’s discussion of Lewis’s famous encounter with the young Catholic philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe at a meeting of the Socratic Club on February 2, 1948. Wielding Wittgensteinian distinctions with which Lewis was unfamiliar, Anscombe roundly criticized Lewis’s argument in the third chapter of *Miracles* (1947) that naturalism is self-refuting. McGrath seriously understates Lewis’s reaction to the encounter by saying that Lewis “expressed unease about the incident to some of his closer friends” (255).

This muted description does not square with the facts. Shortly after the debate, a “deeply disturbed” Lewis described the encounter to his pupil Derek Brewer “with real horror.” “His imagery,” Brewer reported, “was all of the fog of war, the retreat of infantry thrown back under heavy attack” (Brewer 59). At the

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<sup>2</sup> McGrath quotes these lines from a letter Lewis wrote to Mary Willis Shelburne, written six months before Lewis’s own death: We are, Lewis suggested, like “a seed patiently waiting in the earth: waiting to come up a flower in the Gardener’s good time, up into the *real* world, the real waking. I suppose that our whole present life, looked back on from there, will seem only a drowsy half-waking. We are here in the land of dreams. But cock-crow is coming.”

same meeting, Hugo Dyson remarked “with great sympathy” that Lewis “had lost everything and was come to the foot of the Cross” (Brewer 59). Later, Lewis told George Sayer that “his argument for the existence of God had been demolished” (Sayer 307) and said to Stella Aldwinckle, Chairman of the Socratic Society, that Anscombe had “obliterated me as an Apologist” (Lewis *Letters* 3:35). It was, Sayer says, “a humiliating experience” for Lewis (Sayer 308).

Like many Lewis defenders, McGrath seeks to downplay the importance of the Lewis-Anscombe debate by noting that Lewis continued to publish major works (such as *Mere Christianity* in 1952 and a revised edition of *Miracles* in 1960) that utilized straight rational apologetics. True, but each of these books was a repackaging of earlier material. Aside from a few short essays, Lewis never published a sustained work of rational apologetics after his encounter with Anscombe. Although he continued to participate in the Socratic Club, Lewis gave only one more paper (a talk on “Faith and Evidence” at a meeting on April 30, 1953 [Como 184]). Moreover, with very few exceptions, Lewis consistently refused invitations to speak or write again in that vein, pleading that he had largely lost his “dialectical power” (*Letters* 3: 129). Because, as he saw it, his “thought and talent (such as they are) now flow[ed] in different, though I think not less Christian, channels,” he was not “at all likely to write more *directly* theological pieces” (*Letters* 3: 651; italics in original). All of this strongly suggests (though of course it does not prove) that Lewis’s reaction to the encounter with Anscombe was much stronger than short-lived “unease.”

McGrath’s book created something of a media stir when it was first published, due largely to its re-dating of Lewis’s conversion to theism (137-146). McGrath argues convincingly that Lewis’s conversion occurred in 1930, not in early 1929, as Lewis himself stated in his 1955 spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy* (for a similar claim, see Lazo). A close reading of Lewis’s letters, together with other contemporaneous sources, shows no evidence of any major religious change prior to early 1930. McGrath also argues, less convincingly, that Lewis may have misreported the date of his conversion to Christianity. Ultimately, however, he concludes that the balance of evidence favors the generally accepted date and place (September 28, 1931, while traveling in the sidecar of Warnie’s motorcycle to Whipsnade Zoo).

How significant is this re-dating? Outside the slightly hyperventilated world of Lewis scholarship, perhaps not very great. Lewis was notoriously bad at remembering dates, and given other documented inaccuracies in Lewis’s autobiography it should not come as a surprise that he got the date wrong by a year. Certainly within the guild of Lewis scholarship McGrath’s (and Lazo’s) discovery set off major reverberations.

The fact that McGrath’s focal aim is to identify the “deeper themes and concerns” of Lewis’s life and work, and to assess their significance, explains why

there is relatively little discussion in the book of Lewis's friends (other than Tolkien), scant treatment of Lewis's achievements as a literary scholar, and (more seriously) no real attempt to bring out the warmth, charm, and goodness of Lewis as a person. Delightful, revealing anecdotes of the sort that sprinkle the pages of (say) George Sayer's *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis* or James Como's edited volume, *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences* (rev. ed. 1992), are almost wholly lacking from McGrath's book. The approach, instead, is more scholarly and workmanlike. McGrath's goal, it seems, is less to tell a story or to re-recreate a personality, than it is to weigh in on important episodes in Lewis's life and to assess his enduring legacy. Thus one finds a whole chapter on religious themes in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and a long discussion (Part V, Chapter 15) of Lewis's posthumous reputation, while very little is said, for instance, about Lewis as a friend, conversationalist, "bonny fighter" for Christian belief, tutor, practicing Christian, or remarkably generous and faithful letter-writer. Lewis as a personality never quite comes alive in McGrath's biography.

All of this makes one wonder who McGrath supposed his readers would be. This becomes clear only in the last chapter, when McGrath speculates at length on why Lewis (a heavy drinking, heavy smoking, confession-going Anglican with a decidedly shocking love life) ever achieved rock-star status with generations of American evangelicals. McGrath finds this all the more puzzling because he clearly does not think particularly highly of Lewis as either a theologian or an apologist. He rejects, for example, Lewis's famous "trilemma" argument for Christ's divinity (227) finds "weaknesses" and "logical shortcuts" (253) in Lewis's "argument from reason" (though he believes the argument is sound if properly restated), and denies (in a spin-off book to this one) that Lewis's "argument from desire" is truly an "argument" at all (McGrath, *Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis* 105-28). How then can one explain the astonishing appeal of Lewis to American evangelicals?

A small part of the explanation, he thinks, is the prestige of Oxford University among Americans (369). Another, much more important reason is the enormous readability and accessibility of Lewis's writings (371). Lewis's lucid style and simple, everyday examples appealed to religiously conservative Americans who were turned off by densely written theological texts and appreciated having unfamiliar "biblical passages explained to them" (373). Also, Lewis's writings were rediscovered just at a time when American evangelicals were seeking to move beyond their anti-intellectual, anti-science fundamentalist roots and engage the mind and the larger culture (372-73). In Lewis, evangelicals encountered a sophisticated, deeply learned Christian thinker whom they found to be "intellectually robust" and "ethically fertile" (373). Most importantly, McGrath thinks, Lewis didn't make the mistake of simply giving evidence or

reasoned arguments for Christian belief. Instead, he offered “a vision” that appealed “to the human longing for truth, beauty, and goodness” (222). Like Pascal, Lewis understood that the important thing in Christian apologetics is to make people *wish* that Christianity “were true, having caught sight of the rich and satisfying vision of reality it offered” (134). It is this vision, McGrath thinks, “that carries conviction” to most religious believers (222, quoting Austin Farrer). In this respect, Lewis’s reputation was bolstered by the prevailing postmodernist view that “[i]ntuitive modes of reflection, shaped by images and stories, have trumped logical argument, based solely on reason” (374). In short, Lewis became an icon to contemporary American evangelicals because they have come to see him as a “catalyst, who opens up a deeper vision of the Christian faith, engaging the mind, the feelings, and the imagination, without challenging fundamental distinctives” (375). Whether all this works out to a compliment to American evangelicals, I leave readers to judge. It is surprising, to say the least, to find Lewis praised for his deep Pascalian insight into the *limits of rational argumentation* in religious persuasion. I confess I see less of this in Lewis’s apologetics than in McGrath’s.

One disappointing feature of the book is McGrath’s too-frequent factual errors. A brief sampling:

- (1) McGrath says that Tolkien counted Lewis as his closest friend from 1925-1940 (194). However, Lewis and Tolkien didn’t meet until May 1926 (Hooper 731).
- (2) According to McGrath, only one person, Lewis himself, seemed interested in Tolkien’s tales of Middle-earth as they were being written (199). In fact, Warnie Lewis, Robert (“the Useless Quack”) Havard, Charles Williams, and several other Inklings greatly enjoyed and praised Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* (W. Lewis 196-97; Como 217; Tolkien 105-06).
- (3) McGrath says that Tolkien cut down on his own drinking for Lent at the same time that Lewis quickly downed three pints of beer in a short Wednesday morning meeting with Tolkien and said he was “going short for Lent” (240). In fact, Tolkien was referring only to Lewis’s Lenten “sacrifices” and said nothing about his own (Tolkien 68).
- (4) McGrath reports that in October 1955, Lewis reluctantly agreed to allow Joy Davidman (a gold digger, in McGrath’s severe judgment [330-31]), and her two sons to move into the Kilns, after she insisted on Lewis respecting her marital rights (332). In point of fact, Lewis and Davidman were not married until the following year, and Joy didn’t move into the Kilns until April 1957 (Hooper 125).

Although McGrath informs readers that his book “is not concerned with documenting every aspect of Lewis’s life” (xi), mistakes of this kind are unfortunate in a biography that will undoubtedly be widely read and consulted.

But to conclude, in all fairness and bonhomie, on a positive note: McGrath’s biography is a notable contribution to Lewis studies. Based on extensive scholarship and archival research, McGrath’s book offers unique insights into Lewis’s upbringing, his life as an Oxford student and don, and as a popular Christian writer and theologian. Finally, the book’s convincingly demonstrated re-dating of Lewis’s conversion to theism will ensure it an enduring place in Lewis scholarship.

—Gregory Bassham

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**SEVEN: AN ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERARY REVIEW.** Ed. Marjorie Lamp Mead. Volume 29, 2012. \$16.50. ISSN 0271-3012.

**SUPERNATURAL STUDIES: OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION.** Ed. Margo Collins and Deborah Christie. 1:1, Summer 2013. Free with membership or \$10.00 per issue. ISSN 2325-4866.

**FASTITOCALON: STUDIES IN FANTASTICISM ANCIENT TO MODERN.** Ed. Thomas Honegger and Fanfan Chen. 3.1/2: 2013. €20,00. ISSN 1869-960X.

**WORMWOOD: LITERATURE OF THE FANTASTIC, SUPERNATURAL, AND DECADENT.** Edited by Mark Valentine. Whole number 20: Spring 2013. £9.99. ISSN 1744-2834.

The 2012 issue of *SEVEN* is a particularly good one, with several important articles. The lead essay, by Ben Murname, draws comparisons between Stephen E. Ambrose's classic World War II history *Band of Brothers* and *The Lord of the Rings*, noting their "classic war narrative plot structure" (12) of initiation and training, trial by fire, and return, their depictions of male companionship in time of war, and even their titles.

*Mythlore* board member and Mythcon 35 Scholar Guest of Honor Charles A. Huttar, in "Let Grill be Grill: The Metamorphoses of Rabadash and Others," shows how C.S. Lewis's deep knowledge of classical sources is particularly evident in his handling of the theme of metamorphosis. Huttar investigates three incidents in particular: Rabadash's transformation into a donkey and back in *The Horse and His Boy*; Eustace's period as a dragon in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; and the transformation of the unruly schoolboys into pigs in *Prince Caspian*. Each is examined in light of both its classical roots and differing interpretations of these source stories by later authors. (Unfortunately the illustration of Rabadash described in the essay is not the one that was used to illustrate it.)

Much recent criticism on Dorothy L. Sayers has focused on the medieval vices in her work. Carolie Barta, in "'That Precarious Balance': Harmonizing Temperance in Dorothy L. Sayers's *Gaudy Night*," suggests that the virtues also deserve attention, and that the underlying theme and structure of *Gaudy Night* reflect the virtue of temperance in the interpretation Aquinas gives it: the proper and moderate enjoyment of God-given pleasures as opposed to abstinence from them. Harriet's acceptance of Wimsey's proposal thus strikes a temperate balance between Annie Wilson's life of total devotion to her family and Miss de Vine's dedication to scholarship. This would be interesting to read in conjunction with

two classic articles on Sayers in *Mythlore*, both from 1979: W.R. Epperson's "The Repose of a Very Delicate Balance: Postulants and Celebrants of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Detective Fiction of Dorothy L. Sayers" in *Mythlore* #22, and M.P. Hannay's "Head Versus Heart in Dorothy L. Sayers' *Gaudy Night*" in *Mythlore* #21.

In "Correcting the Chronology: Some Implications of 'Early Prose Joy,'" Andrew Lazo discovers a possible error in Lewis's dating of his conversion in *Surprised By Joy*—a conclusion he reached separately from Alister McGrath in his recent *C.S. Lewis—A Life*, reviewed above, and using different evidence. An early autobiographical manuscript written in 1930, bolstered by additional evidence from letters, diaries, and poems, suggests that the actual date was in early or middle June 1930, shortly before a visit to Owen Barfield, rather than in Trinity term 1929. Lewis having been mistaken about at least one other date in *Joy*, Lazo's conclusion is entirely plausible and an important contribution to Lewis biography.

John Patrick Pazdziora and Joshua Richards, in their "The Dantean Tradition in George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*," point out that MacDonald was deeply familiar with Dante's works, and reading this work with the *Commedia* in mind demonstrates how MacDonald used elements of the setting in his depiction of the country at the North Wind's back and of the Dante-character's experiences and reactions in Diamond.

When Joy Davidman first met and fell in love with C.S. Lewis, she began writing a series of forty-four sonnets of great technical skill and astounding emotional honesty and depth. Since I first heard Don W. King speak about these recently discovered sonnets at Mythcon 42 in 2011, I've been eagerly awaiting their publication. While copyright prevents King from reprinting all of them in "A Naked Tree: Joy Davidman's Love Sonnets to C.S. Lewis," he was able to summarize them and include selected quotes. King suggests that John Donne's "Holy Sonnets" were a possible influence, and speculates that Davidman probably showed this sonnet cycle to Lewis either shortly before their civil marriage or shortly after her cancer diagnosis. Reading these poems in their entirety alongside Lewis's *A Grief Observed* would be an illuminating and emotionally compelling experience.

**S**UPERNATURAL STUDIES IS A NEW SEMI-ANNUAL JOURNAL from the Supernatural Studies Association. It has some obvious growing to do in that several articles seem to be only minimally edited and it lacks critical apparatus like an introduction, a statement of purpose, and contributor affiliations and biographies. The website offers little additional information about either the journal or the society. But this is a promising start, and most of the articles, though relatively short, are quite good. The journal includes a review section.

Jeremy Tirrell's "The Bloodsucking Brady Bunch: *The Lost Boys* and the Single-Parent Family," examines family structures in the 1987 teen vampire film *The Lost Boys* and how they relate to sources in *Dracula* and *Peter Pan* as well as more contemporary cultural products like *The Brady Bunch* and conservative political rhetoric and anxieties about single-parent families.

In "The Witch, the Cauldron, and the Inverted Cooking Ritual," Allene Nichols shows how the rituals and equipment of cooking can serve to symbolize and enforce gender norms. The cauldron is a case in point; used indoors, in the kitchen, during daylight hours, by a young woman of childbearing years, and to feed a family, it reinforces societal norms. But turn these qualities into their opposites and the cauldron stands for the witch. Nichols examines cauldrons and witches in *Macbeth*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *Bewitched*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and the *Harry Potter* series. She might profitably expand her research to include the black cauldron of the *Chronicles of Prydain* series, used, like that of *Harry Potter*, to both create potions and reanimate the dead.

Daniel Compora, in "Undead America: The Emergence of the Modern Zombie in American Culture," dates the modern zombie to the movie *Night of the Living Dead*, in which cannibalism was added to its classic characteristics. Expanding on standard interpretations of the popularity of the zombie as reflecting social anxieties about dehumanization, war, and terrorism, Compora proposes that the added trait of cannibalism reflects a rejection of religious beliefs in salvation, transubstantiation, and bodily resurrection.

In one of the stronger essays in this issue, Janine Hatter examines three texts dealing with revenants: Richard Matheson's 1964 novel *I Am Legend*, the 2007 film of the same name starring Will Smith, and the 2002 zombie epidemic movie *28 Days Later*. Hatter finds that these texts collapse the self/other dichotomy in a disturbing way, demonstrating the kinship of humans and revenants and their adherence to troubling human values of patriarchal oppression and majority rule.

Sara Cleto also explores the collapse of binaries in "'Darkness has too much to offer': Revising the Gothic Vampire," by examining how intimacy between vampire and human is achieved in two modern fantasies, *Sabella* by Tanith Lee and *Sunshine* by Robin McKinley (winner of the Mythopoeic Award for adult fantasy in 2004).

I found James Keller's "A Structure Without a Center: Is 'Monster TV' a Heart of Darkness?" particularly thought-provoking. It exposes the theory behind the genre of TV series that capitalize on "unsolved mysteries" and the delicate balance they must maintain: "The studio has a vested interest in maintaining the enigma [...] as any conclusive evidence would preclude any further discussion of the matter in the television mystery format" (74). Simply

put, “[d]iscovery would kill the monstrosity” (75); as long as it refuses to commit to any conclusion, the series is kept profitable.

Marko Lukić and Ljubica Matek, in the final article in this issue, argue that Stephanie Meyers’s *Twilight* series “rejects the [vampire] genre’s very postulates” (83) as it de-otherizes the vampire, making him an idealized role model, no longer transgressive or subversive but “humanized, socialized and secularized” (82), a pale shadow of his far more troubling progenitors.

THE THEME OF THE CURRENT ISSUE OF *FASCITOCALON* is humor; the introductory essay explains that the articles will discuss the relation of humor to the fantastic—both turning as they do on the unexpected and incongruous—and humor in fantasy.

While not focusing exclusively on juvenile fantasy, “‘But Animals can’t talk’: Young Children, the Fantastic, and Humour” is valuable for its thoughtful examination of how children construct reality and learn to differentiate it from fiction. This study of author Virginia Lowe’s own children describes how their sense of what is funny grew in sophistication and mastery through their response to stories and poetry.

Rosaie Sinopoulou’s “Humour versus Fear: The Bright Side of the Unknown from Cazotte to Borges” examines how farce, irony, and humor have frequently been paired with the fantastic to “[relieve] the tension created by the presence of the unknown in the triteness of everyday reality” (34). Jacques Cazotte’s *Le diable amoureux* (1772) is the primary text examined, but Sinopoulou also touches on such works as Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, and Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*.

The subtitle of H.G. Wells’s 1897 novella *The Invisible Man* is “A Grotesque Romance,” and Françoise Duperyron-Lafay demonstrates how Wells’s comic touches, particularly incongruous dialogue and narration and ludicrous descriptions of actions and characters, both undermine and place in sharp relief the uncanniness of the tale. The author sees *The Invisible Man* as a reconciliation of two forms of the grotesque, Bakhtin’s “Rabelasian, carnivalesque” and W. Kayser’s “darkly fantastic,” respectively exuberant and tragic, in a dynamic whole.

As Valéry Rion’s opening statements in “Théophile Gautier’s fantastical smile: humour, incongruity and reflexivity” make clear, this article is primarily a series of observations on Gautier’s different techniques for creating humor through incongruity, word play, and parody. As such, there is no particular argument being made other than the stylistic connection between humor and the uncanny. The primary stories discussed are “Le pied de momie” and “Omphale.”

Isabelle Percebois examines Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's short story "Claire Lenoir," first written in 1867 and revised in 1887. Irony, black humor, and laughter are at the same time indicators of the main character's hubris and a species of demonic possession; the laughter of Dr Tribulat Bonhomet and our laughter at him as readers emphasize the disquieting aspects of the tale.

In "Comedy, Realism and the Fantastic in *Everything is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer," Mail Marques de Azevedo shows how Foer's postmodern novel, by turns comic, grotesque, fantastic, realistic, and parodic, is shown to "frustrate the readers' perception by making them see the world from new perspectives" (98). Reversals and estrangement underline the author's key point: humor is, counter-intuitively, "a way of shrinking from [the] wonderful and terrible world" (90).

I found particularly interesting Alma Haltof's article on Czech and Polish translations of the first few pages of Terry Pratchett's *Reaper Man*. Humor traditions and translation strategies are influenced by the target language's structure and history; in the case of translating Pratchett's verbal gymnastics, Czech has the advantage of "colloquial and regional variations" (101) which lend themselves well to the author's diverse registers, whereas Polish, which has less regional variety and tends not to translate proper names, loses some of Pratchett's nuances and allusions. Haltof finds that the Czech translation tends to communicate his "jovial undertones" well, while the "Polish Discworld seems one-dimensional and less developed" (111).

Ewekina Nowacka applies Durkheim's and Eliade's classical theories of the sacred and profane to a study of Rick Riordan's popular children's series *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, in which the modernized gods dress, act, and have accoutrements that are familiar to contemporary humans. The sacred, according to these theorists, needs to have some elements of the profane and familiar in it in order to be relatable.

**W**ORDWOOD MAY BE OF INTEREST TO *MYTHLORE* READERS as there is a certain amount of overlap between mythopoeic fantasy and "literature of the fantastic, supernatural, and decadent." Additionally, Douglas A. Anderson, 2013 Mythcon Scholar Guest of Honor, writes a regular review column on old, rare, and neglected items that fall into the journal's areas of interest. Articles tend to be surveys and appreciations of particular authors rather than scholarly essays in the strictest sense. There are also two review columns for new and recent books.

Joel Lane leads off the issue with "Forever Always Ends: Robert Aickman's Visions of Afterlife (part one)," covering Aickman's output from the early 1950s through late 1960s. Lane compares Aickman primarily to Fritz Leiber and Walter de la Mare, principally for his concerns with modernism and "the

psychology of haunted characters" (4). This article briefly summarizes his stories and begins to identify key themes in his work.

Robert Musil's never-completed multi-volume novel *The Man Without Qualities*, published in Germany in the early nineteen thirties, is the topic of "The Baroque of the Void: A Fantastic Fiction of the Austrian Idea" by John Howard. The novel centers around plans for the seventieth anniversary celebration of Emperor Franz Josef's ascension; a futile plan, as not only was the Emperor doomed to die a few weeks short of the date, but the whole novel takes place during a few months in 1913, on the verge of the chaos of World War I. Central to the theme of futility and loss is the question of Austrian identity itself.

Adam Daly's "John Cowper Powys: Celtic Colossus and *Eminence Grise*" presents the author as mystical, eccentric, and individualistic, dedicatedly opposed to materialism and modernism; this personal philosophy is highly evident in his books, of which *Weymouth Sands* is the most thoroughly covered in this article.

The next article, "A Somber and Unique Beauty: The Stories of Helen Simpson" by James Doig, may be of particular interest to *Mythlore* readers because Simpson was a friend of Dorothy L. Sayers and helped get *Papers Relating to the Family of Wimsey* published, as well as writing her own spoof "Commonplace Book of Mary Wimsey." Simpson wrote for a wide range of genres, from mysteries to cookbooks, but this review focuses on her fantastic and horror. She died quite young, at 42.

Finally, Thos. Kent Miller's "Fate as a Character: H. Rider Haggard's Secret Currents" postulates that the character of Hans the Hottentot (both critically and pictorially neglected) in the later Alan Quartermain novels developed in response to several tragedies in Haggard's personal life, most notably the death of his first love.

*Tolkien Studies* X (2013) will be reviewed in the Spring 2014 issue.

—Janet Brennan Croft



## ABOUT THE REVIEWERS

**DAMIEN BADOR** (elendil@tolkiendil.com) is an engineer working in aeronautics manufacturing. He is also an independent scholar passionately interested by mythology and linguistics, and a lover of J.R.R. Tolkien's writings. He is currently Secretary of Tolkiendil, the French Tolkien Society. He has written several papers on Tolkien's invented languages. The first book he co-edited, *L'Encyclopédie du Hobbit*, will be published by Le Pré aux Clercs in the fall of 2013.

**GREGORY BASSHAM** is Professor of Philosophy at King's College (Pennsylvania). He has written widely on Lewis and the Inklings, including, most recently, *The Hobbit and Philosophy* (Wiley 2012).

**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, and been an assistant editor of *Truths Breathed Through Silver: The Inklings' Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy* (ed. Jonathan B. Himes, Cambridge Scholars, 2008). Besides other editorial work, he has published essays on Lewis, Tolkien, Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers, and some related authors, as well as such popular writers as Anthony Boucher, Ellery Queen, John Dickson Carr, Poul Anderson, Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, and Gene Wolfe, and such standard authors as the Pearl Poet, Shakespeare, Coleridge, Hawthorne, Tennyson, and John Heath-Stubbs. He has published well over 150 poems. He has had one play—a farce about a vampire—produced at his university. His book of poems about poetry—*The Variety of Poetic Genres: Ars Poetica*—was published by Mellen Poetry Press in 2012.

**JANET BRENNAN CROFT** is Head of Access Services at the University of Oklahoma libraries. She is the author of *War in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Praeger, 2004; winner of the Mythopoeic Society Award for Inklings Studies), has published articles on Tolkien and other topics in *Mythlore*, *Mallorn*, *Tolkien Studies*, and *Seven*, and is editor of three collections of essays: *Tolkien on Film: Essays on Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings* (Mythopoeic Press, 2004), *Tolkien and Shakespeare: Essays on Shared Themes and Language* (McFarland, 2006), and *Lois McMaster Bujold: Essays on a Modern Master of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (McFarland, 2013). She also writes on library issues, particularly concerning copyright. She is currently the editor of *Mythlore* and book review editor of *Oklahoma Librarian*, and serves on the board of the Mythopoeic Press.

**HUGH H. DAVIS** is a lifelong lover of fantasy and literature, having started early with fairy tales and progressed naturally through a variety of works and authors, finding especial joy with *The Chronicles of Narnia*. A student of pop culture, he often seeks the intersections of literature and film for his high school students. The former president of the Popular Culture Association in the South, he has published on several topics, including *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, Shakespeare on film (especially variations on the *Henriad* and *The Tempest*), Edgar Allan Poe in the comics, the fantasy series *Hex*, Pirandello and the SF series *Dollhouse*, and films of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (in *Past Watchful Dragons*).

**MELODY GREEN** earned her Ph.D. in English Studies with a specialization in literature for children and adolescents in 2008. Since then she has published several articles on fantasy and the Inklings, the most recent being "Collective Violence and Scapegoating in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*," published in *C.S. Lewis: The Chronicles of Narnia (New Casebooks)*. While she has taught at quite a few different institutions of higher education, most recently she has been at Lincoln College, Lincoln Christian University, Richland Community College, and Urbana Theological Seminary.

**HOLLY ORDWAY** directs the M.A. in Apologetics at Houston Baptist University. She holds a PhD in English from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, an MA in English Literature from UNC Chapel Hill, and an MA in Christian Apologetics from Biola University. She writes on the role of imagination and literature in apologetics, with special attention to the work of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams.

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