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## Reviews

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### Abstract

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### **Authors**

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## REVIEWS

**CHARLES WILLIAMS: THE THIRD INKLING.** Grevel Lindop. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015. 493 p. ISBN 978-0-19-928415-3. \$34.95.

**THE CHAPEL OF THE THORN: A DRAMATIC POEM.** Charles Williams. Edited and Introduced by Sørina Higgins. Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2014. 147 p. ISBN 978-1940671536. \$16.95

CHARLES WILLIAMS HAD THIS MUCH IN COMMON with the poststructuralists whose theories came to dominate literary criticism in the late middle decades of the twentieth century: he did not believe that the biographical details of a poet's life could elucidate the poetry she or he wrote. Criticism must, he argued, "explain poetry by poetry [...] because poetry is a thing *sui generis*" (Lindop 193). Whatever heights of brilliance Williams achieved in his own literary criticism, in this at least he was almost certainly wrong. This outstanding and meticulously researched biography by Grevel Lindop sheds not only new but astonishing light on Charles Williams as poet, novelist, and literary critic; as occultist and Christian; and as editor and publisher. Most extraordinary, however, are the revelations brought to light—and these for the first time since Williams's untimely death in the spring of 1945—about his life as a husband, a father, and especially a lover.

Under Lindop's skillful pen, Williams's development as a literary figure seems to flow naturally and engagingly from the details of his everyday life. On the very first page, for example, Lindop draws a line between Williams's poor eyesight in early childhood and his later bookishness. Because Williams could never see as well as most, he turned naturally to the kinds of texts and abstractions that he could draw nearer to himself. Consequently, Lindop writes, "The physical world would always be, for him, a little unreal" (5). For the reader, however, Williams's childhood comes into sharp focus. St. Albans, where Williams grew up, comes as much to life on the pages of this biography as it does in Williams's own novels. Lindop also underscores the importance of Williams's adolescent friendships as he unfolds the ways in which a shared exposure to Coventry Patmore's "literary brew of religion,

poetry, and sex" (31) came to exert a lifelong influence on his prolific imagination. Indeed, one might even say that the entire narrative arc of Lindop's book points persuasively to the fact that Williams spent the whole of his life working out in one context or another the mysterious connection between sexual love, theology, and literature. These ideas, at the very core of Williams's identity as a writer and as a man, were present from the beginning.

Unlike virtually every other scholar before him, Lindop does not shy away from describing in great detail Williams's formative involvement in A.E. Waite's Fellowship of the Rosy Cross or his decidedly unusual relationships with women. By the time Williams met his future wife Florence Conway, he was already intellectually committed to the idea that a mysterious spiritual relationship existed between sexual and creative energy. Indeed, Lindop provides ample evidence that Williams experimented and came to rely on his frustrated sexual desire for Florence—what Williams termed "renunciation"—in order to write his first substantial poetic work: *The Silver Stair*. After Williams married Florence, however, it soon became obvious that she could no longer serve in the role of unattainable muse. "Why the devil," Williams wrote in a letter in 1925, "does anyone ever get married? What does marriage, and its consequences do for any human but cause disappointment, misery, disillusion, unhappiness, strife, tumult, weariness, boredom, sickness, malevolence, hatred, cruelty, stubbornness, anger, torment?" (87). Without a muse, Williams was miserable. What Florence was for him during their courtship, she could never be in their marriage. The fact that he had a young son and needed money to pay the bills only made things worse. Williams needed a new muse.

Lindop's descriptive analysis of Williams's confusing, intense, chaste, and remarkably protracted relationship with Phyllis Jones, the librarian at Oxford University Press where Williams worked as an editor, is a major highlight of the book. When Phyllis met Williams she was, in Lindop's words, "blonde, pretty, lively and twenty-two years old" (123). Williams, on the other hand, was greying and almost forty. To escape the cacophony of his home, he spent countless hours at work and became steadily more involved in Waite's Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. Waite's order, meanwhile, fed Williams's imagination and sharpened his ideas about the relationship between religion, sex, and poetry. Around this time he also finished a draft of a book on what he called romantic theology. Phyllis—or Celia as she became known in the elaborate mythology Williams constructed around her—became the centerpiece of his creative universe, appeared in his novels, informed his poetry, and eventually broke his heart when she slept with one of his colleagues at the Press. Williams was shattered. But he insisted on believing that what he had seen in her before, what was now ruined, somehow remained utterly inviolable. It was she, and it was not she: a paradox that came to inhabit

the very core of Williams's theology. And yet, however special Phyllis may have been, he nevertheless went on to develop similar relationships with other young women as well.

Readers of this review might wonder why there has been no mention of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Although Lindop begins the book with a dramatic retelling of Williams's famous 1940 lecture on Milton's *Comus* at Oxford University in the company of Lewis and Tolkien, these men in fact played no real part in Williams's life until his ideas were all but set. And though Lindop is able to show in several places how Williams influenced them, the influence Lewis and Tolkien exerted on him was far less consequential. After all, Williams knew nothing of Lewis until 1936 when he read a manuscript draft of *The Allegory of Love* (a title Williams came up with in place of Lewis's more awkward and obscure *The House of Busirane*). Lewis and Williams liked and admired each other. Tolkien, by contrast, had reservations about Williams—not least because he resented Lewis's affection for him. Here, then, is the one problem with this otherwise outstanding book: just as Williams retitled Lewis's manuscript and thereby helped ensure its commercial success, it is not difficult to imagine Oxford retitling Lindop's book in the hope of broadening its appeal. But Charles Williams was so very much more than the "third" Inklings. Anyone who picks up this book expecting only that will be either disappointed, or, one can only hope, pleasantly surprised when this biography does what all good biographies of literary figures must do: plant in the reader a desire to turn to the literary works themselves.

SØRINA HIGGINS'S EDITION OF WILLIAMS'S "DRAMATIC POEM" or play *The Chapel of the Thorn* might be just the place to begin. In this beautifully produced quarto-style volume, the reader will find the play itself, a lengthy and informative introduction by Higgins, as well as a preface by Lindop and an essay by David Llewellyn Dodds. One of Williams's earliest works, *The Chapel of the Thorn* was completed around the time he published *The Silver Stair* in 1912. Set in the Middle Ages, the play anticipates in some remarkable ways Williams's novels *War in Heaven*, *Many Dimensions*, and *The Greater Trumps*. Like these later works, the poem is constructed around a struggle for a sacred relic imbued with mysterious and sacramental power. Guarded by a mystical priest and his acolyte in a humble chapel, the relic is also claimed on behalf of the institutional Church by a local abbot who wishes to use it to draw pilgrims to his abbey. In the shadow of so powerful an antagonist, the priest manages to enlist the help of the local villagers who promise to hinder the abbot—not because they revere the relic as a sacred object in its own right, but because the chapel itself is constructed over the tomb of a pagan hero. The play is mostly made up of a series of debates that take place between those who represent

variously the mystical, ecclesiastical, and pagan perspectives. In the end, Williams refuses to resolve these differences for the reader perhaps because, as Lindop argues in his biography, Williams found ways to sympathize with all three. Anyone familiar with Williams's novels will doubtless find great pleasure in poring over this play and seeing how the major themes that dominate those narratives are already active in this fascinating work.

Although it has become commonplace for reviewers routinely to declare that the book or books they are reviewing are indispensable, in this case it is really true. No one working on Williams in any serious way will be able to make much progress without reading Lindop's biography. Similarly, *The Chapel of the Thorn* demonstrates just how important a poet's early works can be to our overall understanding of her or his development. Scholars and enthusiastic readers of Williams should be grateful to both Lindop and Higgins for these outstanding publications.

—Scott McLaren



**WOMEN AND C.S. LEWIS: WHAT HIS LIFE AND LITERATURE REVEAL FOR TODAY'S CULTURE.** Carolyn Curtis and Mary Pomroy Key, eds. Lion Hudson, 2015. 287 p. ISBN 978-0-7459-5694-7. \$17.95.

**M**ORE THAN FIFTY YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, THE WRITINGS OF C.S. Lewis continue to instruct and inspire readers ranging from children to accomplished scholars. The accusation that Lewis was sexist, or even misogynistic, also remains in circulation after all this time. The issue has been addressed before, but primarily **by** academics in books **for** academics.

Editors Carolyn Curtis and Mary Pomroy Key seek to present a more accessible evaluation of Lewis's attitude toward women in both his personal life and his literary works, and to examine his continuing relevance in light of current "women's issues." To that end, they have collected essays from educators, poets, authors of fiction, popular speakers, a journalist, and a childhood correspondent of C.S. Lewis, as well as some of the most highly respected living Lewis scholars.

The book is divided into five sections, in which contributors offer insight into the women in Lewis's life, the portrayal of girls and women in his novels, the treatment of the feminine in his poetry, the effect of Lewis's life and

literature on twenty-first century understanding of women's roles and rights, and the impact his views of women have had on current-generation thinkers.

"Section One: Lewis, the man—and the women in his life" is made up of seven chapters. In the first of these, Crystal Hurd does an admirable job of fleshing out Flora Lewis, previously known to many only as the mother Lewis lost in childhood. This brief biographical sketch does much to inform the reader of the foundation she laid for her sons' intellectual and spiritual development. It is, in my opinion, the most informative essay in this opening section. It is followed by Paul McCusker's exploration of the relationship between Lewis and Mrs. Janie Moore. The chapter discloses no new information to those familiar with Lewis's life story, but does tease out connections between the young man's home life and his living arrangement with the older woman, and highlights Lewis's strong sense of duty and service, both in his relationship with Mrs. Moore and in his writings. In the third chapter, Lyle W. Dorsett presents a concise, well-developed biography of Joy Davidman, examining the impact of Lewis's published works and personal letters on her conversion, and culminating in their friendship and eventual marriage. Don W. King's essay presents a scant biographical sketch of Ruth Pitter but adequately outlines her relationship with Lewis and then contrasts her personality with Joy Davidman's. In Chapter Five, Crystal A. Downing offers a well-written examination of Lewis's friendship with Dorothy L. Sayers and their influence on each other's work. Disappointingly, Chapter Six, by Alister McGrath, titled "On Tolkien, the Inklings—and Lewis' blindness to gender," focuses primarily on the Inklings, mentioning the writer's female friends and his gender-blindness in only one short paragraph near the end of the piece. Section One closes with the posterously titled "C.S. Lewis and the friends who apparently couldn't really have been his friends, but actually were," an index-like listing compiled by Colin Duriez of nine women—four of whom were dealt with individually in previous chapters—with whom Lewis had some connection.

"Section Two: Lewis, the fiction author—how girls and women are portrayed in his novels" is, I believe, the meatiest part of the book. In the first chapter, Devin Brown neatly defends *The Chronicles of Narnia* against popular accusations of sexism. Next, Steven Elmore provides us with a close look at the characterization of females in *The Space Trilogy*, noting the strength and intelligence of *Perelandra's* queen, Tinidril, and Jane Studdock's inclusion and growth in the Fellowship of St. Anne's in *That Hideous Strength*. Joy Jordan Lake's chapter contrasts the self-absorption of the female "ghosts" who visit heaven in *The Great Divorce* with the magnificent humility and selflessness of Sarah Smith, who is identified as "one of the great ones" (125). In Chapter Four, David C. Downing explores the positive influence of Lewis's mother,



Flora, on his portrayal of Mother Kirk and Reason in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. The section ends on a high note with Andrew Lazo's insightful chapter detailing ways in which Lewis guides us and examining Joy Davidman's impact on *Till We Have Faces* and *The Four Loves*.

"Section Three: Lewis, the poet—surprises from his poetry" opens with Brad Davis's view of Lewis's early ambition to be a great poet and the evolution of his views of women as expressed in his verse. In the second chapter, Kelly Belmonte offers a working poet's insights into the high expectations shown in Lewis's poetry for women no less than men to achieve "great and glorious and terrible things" (156). She also draws attention to Lewis's declaration in "As the Ruin Falls" that it was a woman who taught him what he lacked and helped him "get back / From exile, and grow man" (156). Chapter Three is Malcolm Guite's masterful essay dealing with Lewis's "awareness of the feminine powers within the masculine" (162) as shown in his poem "Reason," in which Athene and Demeter help the speaker to reach a "concord of the depth and height" and finally "wholly say that I BELIEVE" (164).

"Section Four: Lewis, the influencer—how his life and literature impact the twenty-first century discussion about women" begins with Monika Hilder's interview-structured piece deftly answering questions further investigating the charge of sexism commonly brought against Lewis. In the second chapter, Brett McCracken discusses the hunger of his generation (twenty-somethings) for public intellectual Christianity as modeled by Lewis, but fails to address how this is connected to women's issues. In Chapter Three, Mary Poplin shares the story of her journey "from feminist to mere Christian" (191), noting her common experience with Lewis and Davidman as an adult convert and the impact of Lewis's writings on her understanding of gender roles. Jeannette Sears looks at "Lewis as teacher and servant" and delves into his position against the ordination of women as priests in Chapter Four. Chapter Five is unique in that Kathy Keller is the only contributor to have had direct contact with Lewis (as a correspondent during her childhood). She shares how his letters and other writings impacted her views on the roles of women in the church. While Holly Ordway and Michael Ward present solid arguments for chastity and the understanding of matrimony as "mother-making" in Chapters Six and Seven, I was a bit bemused at the choice of two conservative Catholic singles to address love and sex and contraception. The section closes with Kasey Macsenti's engaging discussion of the camaraderie between Jack Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers, their common goal of making "Christianity accessible and relevant" (235), and their united defense not against science as such, but against its deification.

Randy Alcorn leads off "Section Five: Lewis, the mentor—how his views on women impact mine" with an account of how Lewis's respect and tenderness toward girls and women, both in his writing and in his personal dealings, has inspired Alcorn himself to speak out for women. Chapter Two, "On being the father of immortals: lessons from 'The Weight of Glory,'" by John Stonestreet, is a fairly good study of this sermon, but is tied to women's concerns only by virtue of his identification as the father of daughters. In the final chapter, Christin Ditchfield draws on the stories of the girls of Narnia to reinforce Lewis's high view of women by noting the strengths (while not ignoring the flaws) they demonstrate.

On the whole, *Women and C.S. Lewis* offers something of value in each of these areas of interest. In some particulars, however, I believe that the book could have been a good deal better. The section introductions do not truly add value, and there is some disparity in the quality of the essays and especially in their relevance to the topic at hand. While all the pieces are somewhat informative and reasonably well-written, some decisively outshine others. A few are truly engaging and winsomely persuasive; another few feel rather detached; most fall comfortably in the middle of the spectrum. Most problematic in my opinion are two articles which, while not bad essays, have only the most tenuous connection to *women* and Lewis.

All in all, however, I believe that Curtis and Key have met their objective in *Women and C.S. Lewis*, bringing together the perceptions of a wide range of contributors in a volume profitable to both the casual reader and the serious devotee. The strengths of the book outweigh its weaknesses sufficiently for me to recommend it as a worthwhile addition to a well-rounded C.S. Lewis collection.

—Rebekah Choat



**TOLKIEN AMONG THE MODERNS.** Edited by Ralph C. Wood. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015. 312 p. ISBN 9780268019730. \$32.00.

THE CHAPTERS IN THIS VOLUME, EDITED BY RALPH C. WOOD of Baylor University, were originally presented as part of a conference held at Baylor entitled "Reading Tolkien and Living the Virtues." In book form, the emphasis has shifted from the pragmatic focus of the conference to the more theoretical question of Tolkien's place in modern literature. Accordingly, the

book compares Tolkien's works with those of modernist writers Miguel de Cervantes, James Joyce, and Iris Murdoch. The implicit philosophical and theological perspectives of Tolkien's stories are held up against those of modern thinkers like Nietzsche and Emmanuel Levinas. Wood and the other authors attempt to show that *The Lord of the Rings* is neither escapist nor reactionarily premodern. Rather, they "place modern writers and modern quandaries in lively engagement with the textual particularities of Tolkien's masterpiece, in the conviction that [they] can thus illumine *Lord of the Rings* in provocative and constructive ways" (2).

There is a chronological progression within the book. It starts with considerations of Tolkien's contribution to ancient debates on the nature of poetry and providence, moves to a comparison of Tolkien's fiction with the early modernism of Cervantes, and then compares and contrasts Tolkien with more quintessentially modern writers and thinkers. In the final chapter, Wood neatly draws together many of the themes of the previous chapters to demonstrate how Tolkien's critiques of modernism coincide with those of postmodernism. I suppose it is debatable whether the first two chapters by Germaine Paulo Walsh and Helen Lassetter Freeh—which deal respectively with Plato's views on poetry and the contrast of pagan and Christian views of providence in the *Silmarillion*—distract from the main issue of Tolkien's relationship to modernity or provide helpful context. Though both chapters are very helpful on their own terms, they do not fit naturally within the articulated scope of the book.

One of the strongest features of the volume is the combined effort of Peter M. Candler Jr. and Phillip J. Donnelly to reveal the conflicting ontological visions of Tolkien and two of modernity's most important figures. In Chapter 4, "Tolkien or Nietzsche; Philology and Nihilism," Candler approaches Tolkien from a theological perspective. He argues that, for Tolkien, "philology (understood broadly as 'the love of words') returns one to the inescapably linguistic character of all revelation and truth, pointing to a certain conception of the human being as fundamentally sacramental in its created participation in the life of the Trinity" (97). This sacramental or participatory ontology sees human beings, including human language and stories, as analogically and fundamentally defined by the harmony of trinitarian relationship. Tolkien's ontology of peace is contrasted with Nietzsche's view that "all philological reconstructions are expressions of will to power," and therefore expressions of a chaotic or violent ontological perspective (109). These competing approaches to philology reveal the broader antagonism between Tolkien's English myth, which embodies strength through humility, and Nietzsche's German myth of Zarathustra, which embodies the "will to power."

Donnelly contrasts what he calls the "aesthetic ontologies" of Tolkien

and James Joyce in Chapter 5, "A Portrait of the Poet as an Old Hobbit." While initially noting some concerns shared by Tolkien's and Joyce's fiction, Donnelly goes on to show how "Tolkien's writing suggests that the root problem of both cultural modernity and aesthetic modernism is the 'view of reality' that they share: the belief that reality consists of strife between violent chaos and coerced order" (132). He goes on to examine the specific literary technique of inset verse narratives used in *The Lord of the Rings* to show how Tolkien's understanding of the artist's role responds to the challenges of modernity. Joyce's protagonist in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* sees the artist as standing in radical opposition to his community to find unfettered freedom of expression. Tolkien, on the other hand, sees the work of the artist as a matter of long apprenticeship to a particular tradition in a particular time and place. Connelly's careful reading of the development of Bilbo's inset narratives is an excellent demonstration of the unity of literary form and perspective.

These two chapters, though they deal carefully with Tolkien's literary techniques and forms, are fundamentally theological critiques of modernity. As such, both rely on the work of the theologian John Milbank, citing him at important parts of each chapter's respective argument. Milbank argues that secular modernity is a heretical offshoot of Christianity in *Theology and Social Theory* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006) and extends the argument in his recent *Beyond Secular Order* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). In this respect, the violence or conflict that so much modern thought sees as inherent in the world is, on Milbank's view, simply a partial recognition of the truth. Yes, in a fallen world there is much conflict and chaos. However, the foundational, primary reality of the created order is the peace and reciprocity of the trinitarian Creator. This is the theological infrastructure that underlies Tolkien's fiction.

When it comes to the issue of Tolkien and modernity, we cannot escape this question of competing visions of the world and its deepest origins. Tolkien's differences with modern writers are not simply matters of style or sources. As the authors of this volume understand, the question of real interest regarding Tolkien's place within modern literature has to do with conflicting assumptions about the nature of the world; is it a good, created order, or is our existence ultimately directionless and chaotic? Even in Scott H. Moore's Chapter 7, "The Consolations of Fantasy: J.R.R. Tolkien and Iris Murdoch," the surprising parallels that Moore finds between Tolkien's *eucaastrophe* and Murdoch's modern concept of *austere consolation* are based mainly on Murdoch's nostalgia for the coherence of the premodern and Christian world that has been lost to modernity.

This volume effectively examines the conflicting aesthetic and ethical assumptions that are revealed when Tolkien's work is held up against modern

literature. It succeeds in this respect—illuminating and enriching the reader’s engagement with *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Simarillion* through contrast with modern writers. However, readers should not approach the book with an expectation that Tolkien will be presented in any significant way as a modern writer. Tolkien was surely shaped by the modern world in which he lived, and some of the authors point out common issues and concerns addressed by both Tolkien and modernist writers. That being said, Tolkien cannot be called a modernist in the literary sense, and the book does not make that argument. In this respect, the book’s perspective is similar to Theresa Fred Nicolay’s recent *Tolkien and the Modernists: Literary Responses to the Dark New Days of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (McFarland, 2014).

*Tolkien Among the Moderns* functions primarily as a series of comparison and contrasts. The contributions are well executed, and they are certainly helpful in enhancing appreciation for Tolkien’s work. They are especially helpful in drawing out Tolkien’s implicit theological perspective. They do not, however, constitute a particularly innovative or constructive contribution to scholarship on modern literature. By setting him alongside modernist contemporaries, Tolkien is vindicated from charges of simple escapism or nostalgia for a pagan or Christian past—but his perspective remains resolutely and relevantly premodern.

— Andrew C. Stout



**TOLKIEN.** Raymond Edwards. London, Great Britain: Robert Hale Limited, 2014. 336 p. 9780719809866. £25.

THE PRACTICE OF LITERARY BIOGRAPHY, IN WHICH THE STUDY of the subject’s life is intertwined with the study of their work, is notoriously difficult: Documented fact must be balanced with the urge to gossip, the impulse to create a neat and tidy narrative quelled. A literary, *academic* biography goes a step further yet, balancing the contemporary appraisal of one’s scholarship with one’s life and other work, and it is a study such as this that Raymond Edwards has provided with *Tolkien*. Edwards, a scholar and philologist in his own right who has worked on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, contextualizes Tolkien’s life and scholarship as well as his creative writings, and rewards the reader by giving equal consideration to Tolkien’s academic writing as well as his legendarium. This is an important choice given that popular surveys of

Tolkien often overlook his scholarship, and the scholarly works often focus on close readings of his novels and their various adaptations.

While at times the prose can turn rather dry, the pacing of the book proceeds quickly: Tolkien is sent to school, to war, to work, and to fame in short order. The book is divided into five main parts, titled "The Making of a Philologist," "Philology in Practice," "Achievement," "Last Years," and "Niggle's Parish," plus an epilogue and an appendix on Tolkien's Catholicism. These headings indicate the main thrust of the work; the emphasis is always on Tolkien's studies and how they framed his work, rather than reading backwards from his fiction. In many ways this is a secular counterpoint to the Zaleskis' *The Fellowship*, which read Tolkien and the Inklings' writings through the lens of their various religious faiths, though it should be noted that the Edwards book appeared in print first. His book also keeps a tight focus on Tolkien, though of course Lewis and the other Inklings make brief appearances here and there. Serious readers who want still more close analysis of Tolkien's academic work may want to peruse several of the essays in Stuart D. Lee's edited collection *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*; these are more densely academic pieces, but do provide very useful overviews in comparative miniature. Sixteen color plates inserted in the middle of the book illustrate various locations such as schools and churches that Tolkien attended; the lack of photos of Tolkien and his intimates is notable, and indeed, the only images of people are a portrait of Jacob Grimm and the bust of Tolkien in the Exeter College chapel. This is likely because of the expense of photo permissions, but it is an unfortunate omission.

"The Making of a Philologist" encompasses Tolkien's early years, his time in World War I, his marriage to Edith, and concludes with his move to and the start of his tenure at Oxford. When possible Edwards references works Tolkien is known to have read, and otherwise situates relevant books published or commonly read in the period to indicate his intellectual antecedents. "Philology in Practice" discusses his teaching and academic projects as well as the start of the composition of *The Hobbit*, while "Achievement" follows the writing and publication of his other works, up through the passing of his good friend Lewis. "Last Years" describes Tolkien's retirement and then the deaths of both himself and Edith, while "Niggle's Parish" provides an overview of some of his posthumous publications and critical appraisal, including Edwards' own response to the Peter Jackson films (he did not care for *The Lord of the Rings*, but did enjoy the first two installments of *The Hobbit*). The appendix "Tolkien the Catholic" rather briefly considers his place as a specifically Catholic writer given his own dislike of reading allegorically. Given the breadth of this topic, I wish that Edwards could have given more time and space over to it throughout the book rather

than presenting it as something of an afterthought, especially considering how closely we read C.S. Lewis in terms of his Protestant evangelism.

Ultimately, *Tolkien* is a bit of an odd book, though this is not the fault of the author. Given the Tolkien Estate's fractious protectionism of Tolkien's work, access to and reproduction of his personal writings is difficult if not impossible. Edwards notes in the end that only a fraction of Tolkien's letters have ever been published, and those heavily abridged, and a great deal of other material is yet in the family's possession, unavailable for access and with no plans to publish, at least for now. As such, despite the best attempts of Edwards and others, a real "life" of Tolkien can barely scratch the surface. Given the focus on Tolkien's academic efforts, I would recommend *Tolkien* for scholars and serious readers; the average undergraduate or casual fan would likely find the material sadly uninteresting. For academic libraries it is, however, a necessity.

—Cait Coker

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**CHILDREN INTO SWANS: FAIRY TALES AND THE PAGAN IMAGINATION.** Jan Beveridge. McGill-Queen's University Press. 2014. 300 p. ISBN: 9780773543942. \$29.95.

FAIRY TALES ARE FULL OF COMMON ELEMENTS AND THEMES: fairies and elves, dwarfs and giants, people turning into animals, magic of various kinds, journeys to secret worlds hidden just out of view. But where did these ideas come from? And how far back can they be traced? That's the question Jan Beveridge seeks to answer in her book *Children into Swans: Fairy Tales and the Pagan Imagination*. The main thesis of the work is that these themes "reflect an ancient imagination" (3). The lingering influence of the pagan imagination, its fears and hopes and rituals, is found everywhere in the fairy tale tradition.

The book is divided into four sections: History, Characters, Stories from the Pagan Year, Storytellers' Themes. In the first section, Beveridge traces the history of fairy tales, starting with the early Celtic and Norse storytelling traditions. These ancient stories, says Beveridge, "introduce us to one predominant idea, a fairy tale idea, that was central to Celtic and Norse pre-Christian tradition—there is an unseen otherworld existing alongside the visible realm we know" (12). Of particular interest in this section is a chapter on the oldest fairy tale—that is, the oldest story that features a fairy: "Ectra Concla." In this story, a beautiful and mysterious woman appears to a prince, and tries to entice him to follow her back to her world, back to the Plain of Pleasure, called Moy Mell. The prince resists for a time but is so seized by longing for the fairy maiden that he eventually relents and leaves with her on a silver canoe. This story is preserved in the *Book of the Dun Cow*, a manuscript written around 1100 AD. The precarious life of this manuscript is given an entire chapter of its own—an interesting (if perhaps unneeded) digression by Beveridge. The historical section concludes with a brief overview of the modern development of fairy tales. The rise of Romanticism in the late eighteenth century, with its appreciation for rural life and language, led to the rise of folklore scholarship, and this, in turn, to a resurgence of interest in fairy tales. Unfortunately, this later history of fairy tales isn't examined in any depth by Beveridge, and is only given a few pages.

In the second part of the book, Beveridge examines the origins of the most familiar types of characters found in fairy tales, devoting a chapter to each: fairies, elves, dwarfs, household spirits, water dwellers, giants, souls and spirits. A reader shouldn't come to these chapters expecting literary analysis. What Beveridge gives here is a historical survey, and the chapters consist almost entirely of summaries of the different ways in which these characters have appeared throughout the history of fairy tales. Expect to find many paragraphs starting along the lines of, "Most stories depict the characters in this way . . . Other stories depict the characters like this . . . A few stories, however, show these characters doing this." Some readers might consider this approach to be helpfully objective, whereas others might find it tedious and a chore to slog through. Either way, the chapters can serve as a good reference for scholars of fairy tales, and it is hard to think of a better resource to consult if one wanted a brief history on the origins of fairy tales about, for instance, brownies or mermaids.

Ritual days were an important part of the pagan world, and the traditions centered around these days continued into Christian times. How these days influenced fairy tales is taken up in "Stories from the Pagan Year," the third section of the book. "In the ancient legends and stories that are connected with these days," says Beveridge, "there is a mythic and folkloric



strain, and in fairy tales centered on these days we find a distinctly otherworld magic. There seemed to be a small crack in the world as we know it—and anything could happen!” (117). Among the days examined are May Day, Halloween, Midwinter and Midsummer. Beveridge stresses the lasting influence of these days on fairy tales, and, consequently, the lasting influence of the pagan imagination which was so closely tied to their celebration.

The fourth section of the book contains a survey of various ancient themes found in fairy tales. Some of these themes are hardly surprising—omens or spells, for example—but other chapters take up themes one might not initially have expected, as in “The Triple Form.” This chapter examines the prevalence of threes or triplets throughout the history of fairy tales. There are often three riddles to answer, three giants to slay, three suitors competing for a maiden, three tasks to perform. “We come upon ‘threes’ so often in stories,” says Beveridge, “that the number three may be the most frequently occurring and fundamental element in fairy tales and in all of European folk literature” (158). The representative fairy tale in this chapter involves a young maiden who encounters three heads floating in a well. They entreat her to pick them up, one by one, comb their hair and wash them. She obliges them this request and is rewarded for her kindness. These chapters, like all the rest in the book, are survey in nature, and most of the fairy tales included are given very little commentary or analysis. Again, these chapters would be an invaluable reference for someone wishing to explore the origins of various themes found in fairy tales—themes as disparate as shape-shifting, trees, and dreams coming true.

Ultimately, *Children into Swans* is a finely researched work on the history of fairy tales, and, in particular, on the lingering pagan imagination that one finds within a dozen or so common fairy tale themes and elements. One should come to the book, however, expecting to find an abundance of summary and an ever-increasing accumulation of example upon example. As such, Beveridge’s work will be most useful as a reference book.

— Brian Roberts



**TRILBY / THE CRUMB FAIRY.** Charles Nodier. Translated and adapted by Ruth Berman. Black Coat Press. 2015. 412 pp. 978-1612274553. \$10.30.

**THE PRINCE OF THE AQUAMARINES.** Louise Cavalier Levesque. Trans. and with an afterword by Ruth Berman. Aqueduct Press. 2015. 94 pp. 978-1619760790. \$12.00.

THIS NEW TRANSLATION OF EARLY 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY FRENCH WRITER Charles Nodier is an elegant and compelling volume of his collected fairy tales. As a scholar, lover of literature, and a long-time librarian, Nodier spent his life reading a myriad of writers and philosophers. But Nodier's work, while perhaps borrowing setting and tone from his fellow writers, remains remarkably unique. His tales are not only fun and interesting, but they also study the deeper meaning of writing and reading fantasy. His larger examination of madness and wisdom, believability and happiness, truth and lies, make this volume especially poignant and fresh.

The finest tale in the collection is easily *The Crumb Fairy*. Here, an insane asylum inmate named Michael tells the story of his life and love with the magical Crumb Fairy. As a young man, Michael befriended the aging hag, who claimed to once be Belkiss, Queen of Saba. He later agreed to marry her and soon lived with two versions of his wife: during the day, he was with the short, decrepit, and fanged Crumb Fairy. But during the night, the beautiful Belkiss—the Crumb Fairy in her all glorious youth—lovingly visited him in his dreams. Now, separated from both and trapped in the asylum, Michael searches for the magical signing Mandrake that will help reunite them all. This tale, in addition to being an entertaining read, is a fascinating reflection on madness, reason, and the magic of fairy tales. As Michael narrates his story of love, obsession, and happiness, the reader will question their own relationship to fantasy and fairy tales: must we be able to rationally explain something in order to believe in it—or even find happiness in it? At its heart, *The Crumb Fairy* is an exploration of not only what we know and believe, but what we aim to understand through storytelling.

The compilation as a whole is very worth reading. While some tales have moments that fall flat, others soar. Of notable distinction are *Trilby*, *The Man and the Ant*, and *Smarra*. In the titular *Trilby*, a brownie falls in love with a young and newly married lady who lives in the house he serves. He is shortly banned from the family's home but when the lady Jeannie learns that she loves him too, she leaves everything in order to seek out his pardon. Along the way she becomes haunted by the memory of Trilby and obsessed with finding him once again. The tale's ethereal, supernatural moments are upheld by Berman's

excellent translation and its dark Scottish setting and gothic elements make this a very interesting work of early horror.

Running throughout Nodier's tales is an engaging study of juxtaposition: young and old, innocence and guilt, purity and darkness, madness and reason. His proclivity for writing about tiny creatures, from termite ants to his own invented fairies (the Bean Treasure and the Crumb Fairy are so named for their diminutive size), demonstrates how small creatures can affect their larger world. Nodier's fairies, little though they are, remain sharp in their philosophies and wit and often act as a guide for the protagonist to a more moral and thoughtful life. Similarly, Nodier's *The Man and the Ant* is one of the shortest tales in the volume, but packs a powerful message from one of the smallest creatures on earth.

The significance of dreams and nightmares is also prevalent throughout Nodier's work. His fairies and their magic hover between the waking world and the land of dreams. And his tales, always acutely aware of themselves as a story, do the same as they explore the worlds of the marvelous and the mundane. The waking world within his stories often act as metaphor for the reader's own reality, with the dreaming, fairy world becoming his own literal fairy story. Which world do we want to live in? Why does it matter? Ultimately, this collection not only brings you into the world of fairy story, but makes you re-examine the fairy story itself. And it is all the greater for it.

A **QUEBUCT'S** LATEST VOLUME PRESENTS A NEW TRANSLATION of two fairy tales by 18<sup>th</sup> century French writer Louise Cavelier Levesque. In *The Prince of the Aquamarines*—appearing in English for the first time with Berman's translation—a young prince is cursed to bring instant death on anyone who looks upon him. He falls in love with a princess who is likewise condemned to live in a tower of perpetual darkness until freed by a monster whose sight brings death. Together, they must conquer giants, thieves, and fairies in order to be free of their curse. In Levesque's second tale, *The Invisible Prince*, a prince is given a magical stone that turns him invisible at the cost of being unable to speak. When Princess Rosalie is captured, the Invisible Prince must win her heart and rescue her without being heard nor seen. Both tales are delightful ventures into the fairy tale genre and readers will rejoice and mourn for the pair of young lovers who must find a way to overcome their circumstances with help (and hindrance) from magical fairies.

Though slim, this collection packs a mighty punch, providing an excellent translation and stunning woodcut illustrations throughout. Levesque herself has a spectacular imagination to her writing. Though certainly, influences from her contemporary fairy tale writers are clear: both the Invisible Prince's and the Prince of the Aquamarine's curses, for example, resemble the

fairy's curse over the royal newborn in Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*. Likewise, the storyline of *The Prince of the Aquamarine* echoes more traditional and popular stories like *Cupid and Psyche* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Levesque's genies are also most likely borrowed from *Thousand and One Nights* which was newly translated in French during the time she was writing. But these fairy tale motifs found are far from trite. In fact, they are welcomed all more so in Levesque's work because they never threaten to dominate the tale itself. Levesque's stories are brimming with her unique style and dark imagination. Here, Love and Despair are lands separated only by a single step, trees are portals to new worlds, and betrayed lovers wander hopelessly in a Labyrinth, doomed to be lost until the day they die. These are exceedingly enjoyable tales that you'll want to read more than once. Levesque's fascinating and beautiful depictions of love and melancholy, set in a world of fairies, dragons, and magic wands, make this collection essential fairy tale reading.

—Kelly Orazi



**THE LESSONS OF NATURE IN MYTHOLOGY.** Rachel S. McCoppin. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015. 224 p. 978-1476662008. \$35.00.

AS SOMEONE WHO HAS ALSO LONG LOVED AND TAUGHT the power of myth (and its relevance to both modern myth—a.k.a. science fiction and fantasy media—and the evolution of science as a discipline), I came to my reading of this book with great interest and enthusiasm. While the latter slightly waned (in direct proportion to the emergence of a certain level of frustration) as the pages were turned, my interest in the overall content of this work did not. McCoppin, Professor of Literature and Humanities in the Department of Liberal Arts and Education at the University of Minnesota Crookston, is the recipient of several teaching awards at her home institution. Some of her previous scholarly works have focused on mythological threads and metaphors in such disparate corners of popular culture as the television series *Spartacus*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and the works of Tim Burton. In the introduction to her book she explains that she has been a student of mythology for over two decades and a teacher of it for half that time. Her self-admitted mantra—and the driving argument behind the work—appears to be that “nature will always be at the forefront of every myth” (2). These facts situate McCoppin as someone who is obviously passionate about sharing the beauty, power, and relevance of myth with both scholarly and pedagogical audiences.

The question to be asked is whether or not this work represents a successful attempt to do just that.

Normally the back cover “blurb” of any book summarizes the contents in a captivating manner meant to get the potential reader to peer inside and peruse the contents. In this instance the “back blurb” is rather choppy, appearing to be nothing more than several obvious statements cobbled together. Ironically, this seemingly half-hearted endorsement is a rather honest description of some of the sections of the book itself. It is also noteworthy that the back cover does not claim that this work is a fresh or visionary analysis of the subject at hand, using lower level words from Bloom’s taxonomy such as “identifies” and “discussed.” Again, this is also true of certain segments of the text. In this case, judging a book by its cover does not lead the reader astray.

The main body of the work is divided into six chapters, each of which is, in turn, divided into several sections. While the main chapters work as related themes, within each chapter some of the sections are more clearly related to the overall theme of the chapter, and constitute more clearly defined subunits, than some others. The first chapter, “Emerging from the Earth,” discusses creation myths beginning with Paleolithic evidence. As creation myths deal with not only the birth of the cosmos but of humans as a species, one might be tempted to try and draw connections between ancient myth and modern evolutionary theory. As this slippery slope can quickly (and unfortunately) descend into pseudoscience, it should be avoided at all cost. McCoppin ignores this warning, and as a result overreaches in her analysis of both creation myths and evolutionary biology. For example, when describing a Zuni myth wherein all life derives from green algae on the surface of the ocean, she makes the assertion that the “accuracy of this evolutionary explanation for the beginnings of life is astounding” (15). However, a simple perusal of the phylogenetic “tree of life” found in any biology textbook or scientifically correct educational website (e.g. <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/exhibits/darwin/treeoflife.html>) clearly demonstrates this assertion to be false. Green algae is not the common ancestor of all extant (or even extinct) life forms on our planet. As a whole, this chapter contains an excellent diversity of creation myths, and most of the examples follow a sequential order that enhances her argument that nature is at the root of mythology. However, there are some abrupt transitions between certain topics, an issue that becomes more apparent in successive chapters.

As Chapter 2, “The Earth Goddess, the Male Seed and the Harvest,” unfolds we witness the introduction of another intermittent weakness with this book, awkward and unclear sentences that, in places, obscure the argument or otherwise run the risk of confusing the reader. Despite this fact, the sections on

the Neolithic Age, Goddess and her consort, and "Wrestling with Nature" are particularly well done in terms of content, although in parts this reader would have liked to have seen some assertions more clearly cited and referenced in terms of evidence.

One of my main issues of contention with McCoppin's analysis first rears its head in Chapter 3, "Divine Nature." Although she offers on the first page of her preface that she has "no intention on assuming a connection between philosophical and religious belief systems in all world cultures" (1) it appears that she, in fact, does so when the spirit moves her. In this particular case she lists "African and American Indian religion" (79) as if an entire continent, made up of myriad cultural units, has one monolithic religion. In a section on ancient Egyptian gods she uses uncommon spellings of several names, yet does not acknowledge this, and later in the book she deviates from these spellings herself. In this chapter it also becomes apparent that the writing style has begun to slide from a more academic tone to one that includes more frequent (and distracting) colloquialisms, typos, and repetition, as if the second half of the book was less finely reworked or edited. In terms of topics covered, Chapter 3 is more of a potpourri than a coherent argument, although the examples are interesting ones.

Similarly, Chapter 4, "Untamed Nature and Unfettered Human," does not flow particularly well as a chapter, with an uneven quality in the contained subsections. On the one hand, "Animal Teachers" contains particularly insightful analysis, despite the fact that it suffers from the writing issues endemic in the second half of the text. Juxtaposed with this are "Mythic Creatures," which appears rushed and superficial in its analysis, and a separate section on the Trickster as a teacher that seems out of place and artificially separated from the previous argument about animals as teachers.

Much of Chapter 5, "Trees of Knowledge and Botanical Metamorphosis," is quite well done, although it is marred by several jarring exceptions. For example, in a discussion of Buddha and his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, as well as a later comparison between the Celtic Underworld and the Buddhist concept of samsara, McCoppin demonstrates a lack of understanding of the subtleties of Buddhist philosophy. In her defense, Buddhist philosophy is difficult enough to parse for long-time practitioners; Western scholars who are not immersed in either the culture or religion of different forms of Buddhism (the philosophy famous for defying attempts to paint it with a monolithic brush) are perhaps doomed to make assumptions and draw incorrect conclusions when trying to take Buddhist myths at face value. In the case of McCoppin, much of her problem appears to be (based on her bibliography) that she is largely taking her knowledge of Buddhism from secondary sources. But not all the fault lies with her references; as noted above,

McCoppin falls into overreaching in her analysis from the first chapter of the text, although Chapter 5's comparison between Buddha and Narcissus is perhaps the most cringe-worthy. Also troubling is her analysis of the tale of Daphne and Apollo. McCoppin states that Daphne "for elusive reasons, does not wish to couple with divine Apollo," and that her desperate plea to be transformed into something that will be "forever separated" from her would-be rapist is, in actuality, a conscious choice to "remain firmly connected to the tangible earth" (173).

The final chapter, "The Seasonal Life Cycle and Myths of Destruction," likewise contains some high quality insight and analysis in parts, but, as in previous chapters, also suffers from sections that appear rushed and unclear. These include a weak argument for Rhiannon as a tripartite goddess and a discussion of the god Shiva (who is, indeed, part of a tripartite deity, but is hardly a goddess).

My other overall disappointments with the book are missing references that are cited in the body of the text but either do not appear in the bibliography or appear under a different name or title, and an index that is extremely problematic for anyone not intending to simply read the book from cover to cover and annotate the work with their own notes. The index does not list many of the famous authors or works cited by McCoppin (such as Frazier) nor most of the individual cultures referenced. Important topics such as human sacrifice are also omitted from the index. This oversight certainly reduces the usefulness of this work as a reference. Despite this fact, the book could successfully be used as an ancillary text in an undergraduate World Mythology class, however, the severe limitations of the index should be taken into account by faculty. I would also strongly encourage instructors to challenge the author's interpretations as they see fit (and encourage students to do so as well). This could lead to excellent prompts for writing assignments or in-class (or even online) discussions. Such activities will strengthen the skill set of the students and demonstrate one of the most fascinating as well as maddening aspects of myth—that it is not monolithic in meaning.

Madeleine L'Engle wrote "When we lose our myths, we lose our place in the universe." McCoppin does an admirable job in driving home this central point. Humans are an inextricable part of nature, and nature is a significant part of the human experience, although perhaps less obviously so in today's technological society. Myths remind us of where we came from as a species and as civilizations, how our ancestors both pondered the deep questions of the meaning of life and the reason for death, as well as sought explanations for the far more straightforward issues of everyday life, such as the reason for the seasons and their effects on food resources. The short answer is, of course, because that's the way of nature—both human nature, and the

greater natural world. McCoppin offers “I firmly think that when a culture forgets their tie to nature, it places people at an unrealistic place where they feel falsely superior to the elements of the natural world. If we forget our place within nature, as only one part of nature, then we abuse nature, and of course end up abusing ourselves” (Paul). Therefore, despite the shortcomings of this book, it has sufficient interesting content to ultimately recommend it to the reader who is willing to take the time to read it cover to cover and, after careful insight and reflection, take away his or her own personal meanings from the offered examples and analysis.

—Kristine Larsen

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**HITHER SHORE: JAHRBUCH DER DEUTSCHEN TOLKIEN GESELLSCHAFT.** Special issue: Nature and Landscape in Tolkien. Ed. Thomas Fornet-Ponse et al. v. 11 (2014). 9782981061291. €22,00.

**SEVEN: AN ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERARY REVIEW.** Ed. Marjorie Lamp Mead. v.31 (2014). ISSN 0271-3012. \$18.00 U.S.; \$ 29.00 international.

**TOLKIEN STUDIES: AN ANNUAL SCHOLARLY REVIEW.** Ed. Michael D.C. Drout, Verlyn Flieger, and David Bratman. v. XII (2015). ISBN 978-1-940425-33-7. \$60.00 U.S.; \$70.00 international.

*Hither Shore*, the yearbook of the German Tolkien Society, is a reminder that American students of Tolkien should not neglect continental scholarship—but also demonstrates that too much scholarship published in the United States seems to be unknown or hard to come by in Europe. This issue, on “the deep significance of nature and landscape in Tolkien’s works” (6), is the result of the 11<sup>th</sup> Seminar of the German Tolkien Society, held in May 2014



in Jena. The articles are primarily in English, with English summaries of the German articles (and vice-versa) helpfully provided. Contributors are primarily but not exclusively graduate students.

Allan Turner's opening article builds on Nils Ivor Agøy's concept of Tolkien's open-ended landscape descriptions inviting the reader to share "the pleasure of collaborating in its realisation" (8) by examining a pattern of cognitive metaphors relating the landscape to living bodies (the shoulders of hills, marching mountains, etc.). Owen Barfield's influence on Tolkien may be evident in his use of a metaphorical landscape "suffused with mythology" (13). Turner closes with a look at hostile landscapes as well, which would be a fruitful subject for textual and stylistic analysis of the Tolkien corpus.

The Tom Bombadil chapters are often poorly understood, considered to be digressions or self-indulgent intrusions of material important to Tolkien personally but not to the story as a whole. But Jonathan Nauman in "Old Forest and Barrow-downs: A Natural Prelude to *The Lord of the Rings*" points to this section as an essential precursor to the later "steady and dynamic presence" (26) of nature throughout the tale. Goldberry and Bombadil lay the groundwork for both Caradhras and Fangorn Forest as active forces, and Nauman uses the examples of the cock crowing in Minas Tirith and the crown of flowers on the fallen head of the king's statue at the crossroads to show the "independent persistence of the natural world" (29); he might well have looked up to the star Sam sees from the stairs of Cirith Ungol for another example.

Guglielmo Spirito's piece on "Melian's Girdle: Boundaries and Hidden Thresholds in Arda" is far more a meditation than a scholarly paper, unfortunately poorly edited and consisting mostly of quotations. But there are a few intriguing nuggets about "places that refuse to behave in the way that Euclidean space behaves" (34) and the wildness of places without names (42), and "Leaf by Niggle" is aptly pulled in to illustrate a point about leaflessness in Middle-earth. "Sympathetic Background in Tolkien's Prose" by Annie Birks is another of the weaker contributions to this volume, lacking reference to Dickerson and Evans's *Ents, Elves, and Eriador*, which reaches many of the same conclusions. But her observation that "In Middle-earth [...] being disconnected from nature rimes with being disconnected from certain aspects of the Great Music" is well-put (59).

Julian Tim Morton Eilmann feels that the influence of the Romantic Movement on Tolkien has not been adequately explored, and attempts in his essay to show how Tolkien's imaginative impulse and the role of nature in his works align him with romantic poetry, using in particular the literary theory of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. This combination of "longing and imagination" (163) is particularly evident in *The Book of Lost Tales*, which gives the impression of "a

Romantic novel with a mortal protagonist who strays through fairyland" (164). Eilmann cites no scholarship in English; the topic of Romanticism in Tolkien has been addressed by Sandner and Seeman, to name only two essays that have appeared in *Mythlore* as examples.

In "Landscape as Metaphor in *The Lord of the Rings*," Thomas Kullmann traces Tolkien's use of nature description to reflect, anticipate, and otherwise communicate plot and character to Gothic and realistic writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. He offers a framework for classifying the functions of nature description that serve as metaphors, and shows that Tolkien adapts this technique "to a context informed by fantasy" (89), particularly in the way it is used to signal the advent of new experiences.

Tatjana Silec notes that in medieval lays and other oral literature, landscape descriptions tend to function as symbols or indicators of plot; in *Sir Gawain*, for example, when a landscape is described as old, deep, thick, or wild, "it serves as a signal that Gawain is going to have an adventure" (95). Tolkien's use of the landscape is more nuanced; while the wilderness is often "a testing ground for heroes, knights and rangers and hobbits alike" (95-96), it may also serve as a refuge, or be used to make a point supporting Tolkien's ecological vision. His landscapes are not just metaphors of the conflict between "chaos and order" (98), but an integral part of the story. Silec particularly notes the probable influence of *Sir Degaré* on Tolkien.

Natalia González de la Llana compares the way in which the treatment of nature "allows the reader to distinguish between good and bad characters" (104) in *The Lord of the Rings* and *La saga de los Confines*, a fantasy trilogy by Argentinian author Liliana Bodoc with allegorical parallels to the Spanish conquest of the pre-Columbian Americas. Both works include characters who strike Faustian bargains for knowledge and power, as opposed to wisdom; in Bodoc's case, the character Bor realizes his mistake in time where Saruman does not.

In "The Dead Marshes and οίκουμένη: the Limits of a Landscape in Middle-earth," Michaël Devaux asks two central questions: Is Middle-earth the same thing as Arda, and if not what is the difference? And where do the Dead Marshes fit in? The Greek term *oikoumene*, which Tolkien used several times, helps to define Middle-earth-within-Arda as the inhabited world, in opposition to *ereme*, or uninhabited desert. The Dead Marshes, inhabited only by corpses, are a buffer between the familiar *oikoumene* and the *ereme* of the Noman-Lands and Mordor. Yet is not Mordor inhabited, if by orcs rather than Men? While the author's English is sometimes difficult to follow and Mordor-as-*ereme* needs further nuance, this is one of the more intriguing papers in this issue.

Martin G.E. Sternberg, in "Approach and Sojourn: Structures of Arriving and Staying in *The Lord of the Rings*," contrasts places in Middle-earth that are approached by "a sudden crossing of a sharply defined border" (140), such as the The Old Forest or Lothlórien, and how they are typically disorienting in time and space for our viewpoint characters, with locations that are approached more gradually, that are "embedded in the landscape" (141) and "mediated" by memory, history, and transitional spaces. The author draws on Foucault and Eliade to explain the significance of these differences, but finds that Tolkien's treatment does not entirely fit these theoretical frameworks.

The final paper is another in German, and the title is translated as "The Dark Side of the Forest? Concrete and 'Felt' Intimidation through Natural Spaces." Patrick Peters considers forests indispensable to the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*; they are part of the plot, and one way in which they drive plot is through the attitudes and actions of characters to whom they are real threats, or who perceive them as threats through their reputation. Éomer and Boromir in particular are examined as to how their cultural background influences their interaction with different woods and forests.

This issue closes with a selection of reviews in German and English. *Hither Shore* does suffer, at least in this volume, from inconsistency in proofreading and style, though that may be unavoidable in an issue that is in effect a conference proceedings with contributions from speakers of multiple languages.

THE THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL ISSUE OF *SEVEN* starts with Andrew C. Stout's "'It Can Be Done, You Know': The Shape, Sources, and Seriousness of Charles Williams's Doctrine of Substituted Love." Stout asks if readers are supposed to take Williams's doctrine of substituted love in *Descent into Hell* seriously as a guide to spiritual practice. The "ritualistic and ceremonial nature of Williams's imagination" (10), his interest in the "mystical elements of orthodox Christianity" (11), and his "medieval mindset" (13) all argue in favor of doing so. For Williams, "[r]ecognizing one's dependence on others is a requirement for living properly in a world that is designed around the principle of co-inherence" (21), and as such, to refuse an offer of, or to refuse to offer, substituted love is to "cut oneself off from reality" (22). Stout points out that Williams first explored these ideas in *Descent into Hell*, but then explicated them further in a work of popular theology, *He Came Down From Heaven*, which details the necessary steps to be taken in an act of substitutional love and the practical dangers to avoid.

*Seven* has again been able to shepherd some previously unpublished C.S. Lewis manuscript material into print. The manuscript notebook in which Lewis composed the essay "On Moral Good" contains drafts of two other essays, which Charlie W. Starr has transcribed and commented upon. The first, "On Bolshevism," sets forth Lewis's thoughts on reading Vladimir Lenin's 1917 manifesto on Bolshevik Communism, *The State and Revolution*, in 1924. Lewis makes a good faith effort to understand and restate the underlying principles of class antagonism and despotism, and finds it "profoundly interesting" (33). But drawing on his own experiences with "boy-tribe" culture in the public schools (37), Lewis paints a picture of the consequences of rule by the proletariat that remind the modern reader more of *The Lord of the Flies* than any utopian fiction. The essay may also be useful in showing the pre-conversion Lewis's nascent thoughts on hierarchy and democracy, and as Starr points out, "The opening paragraph [...] is oddly predictive of Lewis's concerns in his introduction to *Mere Christianity*" (41). The "Mythonomy" fragments are quite brief, taking up less than two pages when transcribed, but are rich in material for speculation on Lewis's developing thoughts on Myth. Starr dates them to 1928, based on their apparent inspiration by Barfield's *Poetic Diction* and their "Great War," but also on handwriting analysis. I found the fragment on Zeus and Odin particularly interesting, and Starr ties it to the appeal of Northern mythology to Lewis both before and after his conversion. There is also some new material on Lewis's WWI experiences which invites further exploration.

Philip Irving Mitchell, in "Adventurous Types: G.K. Chesterton's *Varied Types* and the Wisdom in Historical Verisimilitude," looks at Chesterton's critically neglected collection of biographical essays that exemplify his call to "enter imaginatively into history" (63). In contrast to modern, dry, factual histories, Chesterton sought to communicate the emotional tone of an age and wrote about his subjects as participants in a narrative, evoking "creative sympathy" (64) and aiming for "historical truth" (77). Chesterton's essay on Tolstoy is considered as the "center of great rhetorical weight" (70) of the collection, emphasizing as it does Chesterton's critique of Tolstoy's philosophy of simplicity as "totalizing and inhuman" (71). Other essays of particular interest in understanding Chesterton are those on Saint Francis, Queen Victoria, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Glenn Davis closely reads the *Hobbit* chapter "Inside Information" for what it reveals about Tolkien's concern with pride and humility. The way in which this plays out in the conversation between Bilbo and Smaug has its roots in the Old English Exeter Book *Riddles*, but our understanding of it can also be informed by Tolkien's latter essay on *The Battle of Maldon*, "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son." Putting "ambition above duty" (80) and

falling prey to the temptations of boasting, poetic language lead both Bilbo and Smaug to reveal too much to each other in their conversation. Bilbo becomes “increasingly enamored of the heroic persona he is in the process of constructing” (84), while Smaug’s boasts sound like he has been rehearsing them for years and is now “reveling in a captive audience” (88). Bard’s speeches provide an important contrast; his words are “fair [...] and true, if proudly and grimly spoken” but not “needlessly noble” as Tídwald says of Beorhnoth (both qtd. 90).

The final essay in this issue, Walter Raubicheck’s “*The Man Who Was Thursday* and *The Nine Tailors*: All the Evidence Points to God,” analyzes what the author considers to be the only two classic detective novels in which “the secret that is exposed by the detectives is the secret of God’s omnipresence in the universe” (95). In Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday*, this takes the form of “the divine presence within and behind nature”; in Sayers’s *The Nine Tailors*, God’s “intention to work through secondary causes” (96). God is the “least likely suspect” in *Thursday* but is revealed to be both the Supreme Anarchist and the Chief of Detectives; in *Tailors*, the church bells are the “tool for divine retribution” (101) against the murderer. The issue closes with the usual selection of book reviews.

A MAJOR CHANGE IS APPARENT FROM THE START with this volume of *Tolkien Studies*: the familiar scarlet hardback binding is no more, and the journal is now a standard paperback with a glossy cover and the illustration bled to the edge. Perhaps it is cheaper to produce, lighter to ship, and takes up less room on the shelf, but alas, any cost savings have not been passed on to the subscriber.

The lead article, Kelley M. Wickham-Crowley’s “‘Mind to Mind’: Tolkien’s Faërian Drama and the Middle English *Sir Orfeo*,” discusses one of the most intriguing passages in Tolkien’s “On Fairy-Stories,” on the Faërian Drama and the “abundant records” thereof, which Tolkien nowhere lists or elaborates. Wickham-Crowley takes *Sir Orfeo* as her entree into explicating this idea which she says is vastly under-studied in Tolkien criticism; it is unfortunate that (I assume) the long lead-time for *Tolkien Studies* did not allow her to enter into a dialogue with my own 2014 paper on Faërian Drama in *Mythlore*, where I used *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl* to similar purpose. Wickham-Crowley’s paper, though, does go in a somewhat different direction from mine, as my goal was to build a definition of Faërian Drama by examining sources and examples. Central to her analysis is the fact that Tolkien was professionally engaged with *Orfeo* at the time he was writing the “On Fairy-Stories” essay, and she notes Tolkien’s “refusal to separate his scholarly and intellectual interests from his urge, as a created being, to create

fiction and fictional settings that command credibility" (2). She counters readings of Queen Heroudis's first encounter with the King of Faery as a dream, instead insisting she "enters into the realm of the fairy king as a physical reality" (7). Wickham-Crowley notes some interesting parallels with the Ents in the appearance of Orfeo after his ten years as a wild man (15), and her reading of Galadriel's temptation of the Company with visions of their deepest desires as "a Faërian drama of possibility" (8) is intriguing. Her conclusion is that Faërian Drama is "True Art [that] heals" and "remakes the world" for the human participant (20).

Kris Swank contributes an outstanding essay on "The Irish Otherworld Journey of *Roverandom*," reading the unjustly neglected *Roverandom* as a modern example of the *immram*, a type of medieval Irish tale concerned with the journey to and return from the Otherworld, thus providing a frame that makes sense of the "picaresque structure" and "abrupt transitions" noted by other critics (qtd. 31). Tolkien's Irish influences and knowledge of Celtic sources have been well-explored by Verlyn Flieger, Marjorie Burns, and Dimitra Fimi in particular, and *Roverandom* was composed during a period in the early and mid-1920s when he was studying Celtic literature and the otherworld sea-voyage theme was regularly appearing in his poetry and legendarium (see Swank's helpful chart, 36-37). *Immram* are also "Christian spiritual quests" (33) that share characteristics with the more pagan-influenced genre of *echthai*, adventures into supernatural territory like Tír na nÓg (34), which one would expect to appeal to Tolkien. The basic structure of the *immram*, as Swank points out, is exile/instructive adventures/return and reconciliation (37), and *Roverandom* not only exhibits this structure but includes adventures similar to those found in other examples of the genre: metamorphosis (39), magical food (39), homesickness (42), extraordinary guides (43), time passing at different rates (44), and so on; two more charts list these parallels (48-51). The voyage is a penitential one in which Rover experiences a change of heart and remorse (47) and the basic *immram* theme of "forgiveness and reconciliation" (46) is fulfilled.

In "The Peace of Frodo: On the Origin of an English Mythology," Simon J. Cook locates a source for the inspiration of parts of Tolkien's legendarium in Hector Munroe Chadwick's *The Origin of the English Nation* (1907), a text which made extensive use of English and Scandinavian poetry and folklore and was widely read by students of Tolkien's generation. Specifically, Cook theorizes that Tolkien drew on the tradition of marriages between mortal men and immortal goddesses, a motif Chadwick traced to Scandinavian origins and their gradual "transfer of divine status from female to male" in the "general patriarchal development of Northern society" (62). From these elements Tolkien may have developed his first "asterisk-story"

marriages of mortal men with female Elves, immortal but not divine—Tuor and Idril being the first pairing of this sort and Eärendel the first offspring of such a match. Cook sees this as in part a “rebuke” to Chadwick for “conflat[ing] immortality with divinity” and “limiting his conception of a pagan cosmology to gods and mortal men” (66), leaving out the elvish element of immortality-without-divinity entirely. Cook goes on to consider Tolkien’s work with the “King Sheaf” motif and his project of linking real-world folklore and history to his growing legendarium, with some observations on Aragorn and Arwen as the culmination of the elf bride motif and on Tolkien’s translation of *Beowulf*.

Carroll Fry feels that the “central theme” of *The Silmarillion* (or more precisely the “Ainulindalë” and “Quenta Silmarillion,” the portions given serious consideration in this article) is “an exploration of the nature and origin of evil” (77). In “Two Musics about the Throne of Ilúvatar’: Gnostic and Manichean Dualism in *The Silmarillion*,” Fry is concerned with theodicy, the question as to why a good God would allow evil to exist, and posits that Tolkien worked elements of both Gnostic and Manichean dualism into his exploration of the problem, describing Tolkien’s cosmology as “an amalgam of monist and dualist interpretations of evil” (80). This is not an entirely new interpretation, as Fry admits; Shippey, for example, saw the cosmology as Tolkien’s attempt to mediate “between Boethian and Manichean opinions [...] between evil as an absence [...] and evil as a force” (qtd. 82), and as Fry concedes, “the dualist and monist views differ in the origin of [the “disharmony in the realm of God”] and mythologies that explain it, but not the result” (88). The article is useful in explaining Gnostic and Manichean beliefs and practices in some detail but I felt lacked engagement with the broader scholarship on the nature of evil in Tolkien’s legendarium and its close connection with the question of free will.

In “From Dejection in Winter to Victory in Spring: Aragorn and Alfred, Parallel Episodes?”, Alban Gautier proposes that the details and iconography surrounding one incident in Aragorn’s path to kingship may be traced to a similar event in the life of King Alfred the Great—specifically, Aragorn’s gathering of allies at the Stone of Erech and subsequent rapid troop movement to take back the harbor at Pelargir. Tolkien would have been familiar with the history and legends of Alfred from his earliest exposure to Henry Sweet’s *Anglo-Saxon Reader* and later work with its original sources, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *Life of King Alfred*, as well as more contemporary handling of his story in Chesterton’s *Ballad of the White Horse*, among other examples. Aragorn’s actions are compared to Alfred’s 878 campaign against the Viking invaders; more intriguingly, the imagery of springtime and renewal or even resurrection accreting to retellings of Alfred’s campaign can also be

found in Aragorn's triumph over the Corsairs and subsequent deliverance of Minas Tirith. Interestingly, the author says he fails to find any other close correspondences between Alfred and Aragorn—but mentions that "Alfred died peacefully and was succeeded by his son" (99), a notable accomplishment in his warlike time, without pointing out that Aragorn did so as well.

Sherrylyn Branchaw takes issue with the widespread and unexamined belief that Boromir "caused" the breakup of the Fellowship at Parth Galen due to his attempt to take the Ring from Frodo. Her close reading of the timeline of events and the actions of each member of the group indeed show that Boromir's actions did not cause the Fellowship to scatter, but more importantly, Branchaw "distinguish[es] the action of the plot from the moral choices of the actors" (125) to provide a far more nuanced reading, pointing out that "[m]aking a choice with one's heart in the right place is often rewarded with the cooperation of the universe" (130; a point I also made in a 2010 paper on disobedience and eucatastrophe in Tolkien's legendarium, using many of the same examples Branchaw does). The Company instead splits because of Frodo's disappearance, as members scatter to search for him and Aragon loses his already light control of the group. Other examples support this reading that "[d]ivorcing the moral from the physical planes in this manner allows Tolkien to communicate an absolute, as opposed to pragmatic, morality, according to which actions are judged not by their effects but by their motives" (131).

*Tolkien Studies* has reprinted another difficult-to-obtain Tolkien publication: his obituary for Henry Bradley (1845-1923), originally published in *Bulletin of the Modern Humanities Research Association*. Bradley was the author of *The Making of English* and one of the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary*; and the obituary includes a short poem in Old English composed in his honor by Tolkien. Tom Shippey and Peter Gilliver provide commentary placing Bradley in context (as Tom Shippey puts it, Bradley was "a figure from the Heroic Age of comparative philology" [144]) and detailing his working relationship and personal friendship with Tolkien.

Among others, this issue includes a major and extensive review of Tolkien's *Beowulf* translation by Michael D.C. Drout. It closes with the usual "Year's Work in Tolkien Studies" for 2012, as always a source for overlooked gems, and bibliography of work in English in 2013.

—Janet Brennan Croft



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**THE SKILL OF A SEEKER: ROWLING, RELIGION AND GEN 9/11.**

Marilyn R. Pukkila. Solon, Maine: Polar Bear & Company, 2015. 301pp. ISBN: 1882190319. \$17.95.

MARILYN PUKKILA'S *The Skill of a Seeker* AIMS TO EXPLAIN the importance of the *Harry Potter* series to millennials as their expression of religion. While Pukkila excellently analyzes religious, mythological, and folkloric elements in the *Potter* corpus, including J.K. Rowling's interviews and official supplementary materials, she fails to deliver a useful analysis of *Harry Potter* and religion. Pukkila makes sweeping statements about the decline of traditional religion due to millennial trauma from the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks and the rise of *Harry Potter's* spirituality, despite showing zero engagement with current scholarship on current American sociology of religion.

Pukkila's best work is in detailing the mythological and folkloric elements in *Harry Potter*. But beyond that, her work is troubled and she seems unaware of work being done in religious studies. She uses few and questionable sources to support claims about English folklore. She makes sweeping statements about "shamanic cultures" (55), conflating Neo-Pagan practices with indigenous Siberian religions. She uses no current data on religious engagement, and instead draws large conclusions from surveys of twenty-five attendees of a 2011 conference on religion and *Harry Potter* (214-

15). This tiny sample size renders the data nearly useless for analysis of 80 million young people in the United States.

Had Pukkila used better scholarship to weave together sociology of religion and folklore studies, *The Skill of a Seeker* could have been a fantastic resource. As it stands, the book is useful for a detailed analysis of themes in Rowling's work and Rowling's own impressions of the meaning of her work, but scholars of religion interested in millennial engagement with *Harry Potter* are best served to look elsewhere.

—Emily Moniz Mirova



**LIGHT: C.S. LEWIS'S FIRST AND FINAL SHORT STORY.** Charlie W. Starr. Hamden, CT: Winged Lion Press, 2012. 173. pp. ISBN: 9781936294213.

**I**N 1977, A SHORT STORY CALLED "THE MAN BORN BLIND" was published in a collection of works by C.S. Lewis. In the mid 1980's, a document which appeared to be another version of this story was suddenly discovered. In spite of support from Douglas Gresham and Owen Barfield who both claimed to have seen it while Lewis was alive, these two manuscripts were accused of being forgeries. In a fascinating book that is part mystery, part literary analysis, Charlie Starr tackles two questions: Did C.S. Lewis write both "The Man Born Blind" and "Light"? If so, what is the relationship between the two stories? And if they are Lewis's, what did he mean by them?

The book is divided into four sections: The text of the manuscript itself including all original punctuation, the story of where it came from and how Starr proved it origins, a section discussing how it has been interpreted and offering a new interpretation, and finally, a side-by-side comparison of "Light" with "The Man Born Blind."

Before all of this, however, a very short introduction by Walter Hooper, the editor of the book in which "The Man Born Blind" was first published, endorses Starr's efforts and gives a few anecdotes about Lewis manuscripts. This is followed by a very short history of the "Light" manuscript, which is fleshed out in more detail later in the book.

The first section presents the short story, which has quite a bit in common with "The Man Born Blind." A man named Robin who once was blind can now see. He talks with his wife about light, but she cannot figure out how to explain it in a way that does not leave him confused. One day while out

on a walk, he strikes up a conversation with an artist who uses similar language as Robin but means something very different. This version of the story ends in the same way as the previously published one.

The second part of the book traces the history and authenticity of the manuscript, beginning with "The Man Born Blind." Starr explains in detail Hooper's connection to Lewis, and the important role he plays in both rescuing and authenticating "The Man Born Blind," of which the original manuscript can be found at the Bodleian library in Oxford. He then introduces Edwin Brown, the collector who bought the "Light" manuscript. These two play an important role in proving the authenticity of "Light," but their word alone was not enough. Starr also talked with Douglas Gresham, who has distinct memories of talking with his stepfather about this story in the 1950's. Unfortunately, this proved to be problematic since Owen Barfield had already claimed that it was written in the 1920's. In a quest to determine the age of the manuscript, the ink with which the "Light" document was analyzed to determine type and if it would have been available to Lewis. From there, Starr dove into a meticulous study of Lewis's handwriting, in order to determine when it was written. After explaining what he found, Starr concludes this section by declaring that Lewis did indeed write both "The Man Born Blind," and "Light," that he did so in the 1940's, and it is highly likely that "Light" is the later version of the story.

At this point, the text takes a sharp turn, moving from determining credibility to exploring what it means. This section begins by explaining that previous interpretations of the text assumed that it had been written in the 1920's, before Lewis's conversion but during his "Great War" with friend and fellow Inkling Owen Barfield. Starr offers a succinct explanation of three different interpretations from this perspective, presenting it as a symbolic story about "realism" vs. "idealism." Since Starr argues for a post-conversion, now-famous date of origin, he presents not only a strongly Christian interpretation, but also suggests using Lewis's own essay "Meditation in a Toolshed" as a guide. Written at roughly the same time, Lewis here discusses the different between looking "at" something and looking "along" it. Starr suggests that this short story gives an example of each in Robin and the artist. Seen from this perspective, the point of the story is that we need both.

This is not, however, where the interpretation stops. Several other thought provoking points are brought forward, including the fact that Lewis's stories often associate light with truth and knowledge. The "looking at" vs. "looking along" dichotomy is also presented as a theme found in other works such as *An Experiment in Criticism*. Starr uses these ideas, as well as a discussion of Lewis's epistemology as presented in the essay "Myth Became

Fact" to skillfully weave together a reading that brings out similarities between this story and *The Great Divorce*.

The final section of this book meticulously lays out the differences between "Light" and "The Man Born Blind," showing how knowing the revisions helps the reader interpret the text. This may be for many readers the slowest part.

Ultimately, this is an important book for what it has to say not only about "Light" and "The Man Born Blind," but also for the way it vindicates (at least partially) a Lewis scholar whose work on "The Man Born Blind" had been cast in doubt. Not only that, but it is a well thought out, well presented book that is at times downright delightful to read. The one weakness that it has is the title, which does not explain the many treasures buried here. It is not, however, a book for beginning Lewis scholars, because it expects a certain level of knowledge from its readers. But for the reader who is quite familiar with not only Lewis's work but also the history of the scholarship about it, this is an intriguing and worthwhile read.

—Melody Green



**THE STORY OF KULLERVO.** J.R.R. Tolkien. Edited and introduced by Verlyn Flieger. London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2015. 191 pages. ISBN 978-0-00-813136-4. Hardcover: \$34.99

OF ALL THE TALES TOLD BY Tolkien, this may be the bleakest and the blackest, the darkest and the deadliest. It makes *The Children of Húrin* seem like *Farmer Giles of Ham* and *Narn I Hin Húrin* evocative of *Roverandom's* tail-wagging puppy. Enriched and enlivened by six pages of Tolkien's holograph and illustrations and Dr. Flieger's colorful and cogent notes, lists, synopses, and commentary, this brief but brilliant book belongs on every Tolkien scholar's shelf. Her transcription of and commentary on Tolkien's work on the Finnish national epic, an early, deep taproot of the story of Túrin Turambar, joins her 2005 extended edition of *Smith of Wootton Major* and the 2008 co-edition of *Tolkien On Fairy-stories* with Douglas A. Anderson on the JRRT required reading list.

When Tolkien discovered *The Kalevala* in 1907, Dr. Flieger notes, he was inspired by its unfettered exuberance, the unspoiled pagan quality, and what he called "'the delicious exaggerations' of what were to him 'wild . . . uncivilized and primitive tales'" (xi-xii). Tolkien's retelling of Kullervo's

compelling story, from the cygnet snatched away by an eagle to the tragic hero's suicide by sword, certainly possesses all of these qualities. Dr. Flieger traces the links between events and names here and those in Túrin's tale.

But Kullervo makes Túrin seem luckier than Bilbo Baggins. Consider the dire straits of his birth:

Steel shimmered there and at their belts were their swords hanging and in their hands their stout axes gleaming and neath their caps their ill faces lowering: for ever did [Kullervo's arch-nemesis uncle] Untamoinen gather to him cruel and worthless carles.

And [his father] Kalervo's men were out and about the farm lands so seizing axe and shield he rushed alone on his foes and was soon slain even in his own yard nigh to the cowbyre in the autumn-sun of his own fair harvest-tide by the weight of the numbers of foemen. Evilly Untamoinen wrought with his brother's body before his wife's eyes and fully entreated his folk and lands. His evil men slew all whom they found both man and beast, sparing only Kalervo's wife and their two children and sparing them thus only to bondage in his gloomy halls of Untola.

Bitterness then ended the heart of that mother, for Kalervo she had dearly loved and dear been to him and she dwelt in the halls of Untamo caring naught for anything in the sunlit world: and in due time amidst her sorrow Kalervo's babes: a man-child and a maid-child at one birth. Of great strength was the one and of great fairness the other even at birth and dear to one another from their first hours: but their mother's heart was dead within, nor did she reck aught of their goodliness nor did it gladden her heart or do better than recall the old days in the homestead of the smooth river and the fish waters among the reeds and the thought of the dead Kalervo their father, and she named the boy Kullervo, or 'wrath', and his daughter Wanōna, or 'weeping'. And Untamo spared the children for he thought they would wax to lusty servants and he could have them do his bidding and tend his body nor pay them the wages he paid the other uncouth carles. But for lack of their mother's care the children were reared in crooked fashion, for ill cradle rocking meted to infants by fosterers in thralldom: and bitterness do they suck from breasts that bore them not.

The strength of Kullervo unsoftened turned to untameable will that would forego naught of his desire and was resentful of all injury. And a wild lone-faring maiden did Wanōna grow, straying in the grim woods of Untola as soon as she could stand—and early was that, for wondrous were these children, and but one generation from the men of magic. And Kullervo was like her: an ill child he ever was to handle till came the day that in wrath he rent in pieces his swaddling clothes and

kicked with his strength his linden cradle to splinters—but men said that it seemed he would prosper and make a man of might and Untamo was glad, for he thought he would have in Kullervo one day a warrior of strength and a henchman of great stoutness. (7-8)

As Beren will be, Kullervo is aided in his adventures by a marvelous canine companion, Musti the Hound, “the wisest of hounds [...] a dog of fell might and strength and of great knowledge [who] knew the secret of the changing of skin and could appear as wolf or bear or as cattle great or small and could [sic] much other magic besides. [...] {and to Kullervo he gave three hairs from his coat, and said, ‘Kullervo Kalervanpoika, if ever you are in danger from Untamo take one of these and cry ‘Musti O! Musti may thy magic aid me now’, then wilt thou find a marvelous aid in thy distress.’}”(10). Promptly is Musti’s magic needed, and it saves Kullervo’s life—not for the last time.

Finally and fatally, Kullervo is reunited with his sister, a reunion that will be the ruination of them both.

But Kullervo was wroth in that she reviled his ungainliness, and put kind thought from him and cried: ‘Lempo seize thy folk and swift would I put them to the sword didst I come upon them, but thou I wilt have, nor shalt dwell in thy father’s house again.’

Whereat she was adread and sped like a wild thing of the woods through the tangle from him and he angry after her: till he lay hands upon her and bore in his arms away in the depths of the woods.

Yet she was fair and he loving with her [...] so that not long did she resist him and they abode together in the wild till on a day as Jumala brought the morning, the damsel resting in his arms spake unto him questioning him and said,

Tell me now of all thy kinfolk  
Of the brave race that thou springst from—  
Yea, a mighty race, it seems to me  
Thine is, and a mighty father.

And Kullervo’s answer was thus:

Nay my race is not a great one  
Not a great one nor a small one:  
I am just of middle station;  
Kalervo’s unhappy offspring  
Uncouth boy and ever foolish  
Worthless child and good for nothing.

Nay but tell me of thy people  
Of the brave race whence thou comest.  
Maybe a mighty race has born thee  
Fairest child of mighty father.

And the girl answered quickly (nor let Kullervo see her face),

Nay my race is not a great one  
Not a great one nor a small one  
I am just of middle station  
Wandering maiden ever foolish  
Worthless child and good for nothing.

Then stood she up and gazing at Kullervo with outstretched hand and  
her hair falling about her cried,

To the woods I went for berries  
And forsook my tender mother.  
Over plains and heath to mountains  
Wandered two days and a third one  
Till the pathway home I found not.  
For the depths led ever deeper  
Deeper deeper into darkness  
Deeper deeper into sorrow  
Into woe and into horror.  
O thou sunlight O thou moonbeam  
O thou dear unfettered breezes  
Never never will I see thee  
Never feel thee on my forehead.  
For I go in dark and terror  
Down to Tuoni to the River.

And before he could leap up and grasp her she sped across the  
glade [...] like a shivering ray of light in the dawn light scarce seeming  
to touch the green dewy grass until she came to the triple fall and cast  
her over it down its silver column to the ugly depths even as Kullervo  
came up with her and her last wail he heard and stood heavy on the  
brink as a lump of rock till the sun rose and thereat the grass grew  
green, birds sang, and the flowers opened and the midday passed and  
all things seemed happy: and Kullervo cursed them, for he loved her.  
(36-39)

And then, as Dr. Flieger notes, “The narrative breaks off at this point, and what follows on the rest of the page is a note-outline of the end of the story, written rapidly with aberrations in syntax attributable to haste. It is here given in full” (39).

In her introduction, Dr. Flieger writes:

Tolkien had first read *Kalevala* in the 1907 English translation of W.F. Kirby while a student at King Edward’s School in Birmingham in 1911 [JRRT was 19]. He thought Kirby’s translation unsatisfactory, but found the material itself to be like ‘an amazing wine’ [...]. These uncivilized and primitive tales so captured his imagination that when he went up to Oxford in the fall [he attempted] to teach himself enough Finnish to read the original. He was largely unsuccessful and ruefully confessed he had been ‘repulsed with heavy losses.’

Tolkien was particularly taken by the character he called ‘Kullervo the hapless.’ (xi-xii)

The story itself takes up only 39 pages of the book’s 168. Like much of Tolkien’s early work, it breaks off unfinished at the point where Wanona, Kullervo’s sister and lover, flees from him and jumps over a waterfall cliff to her doom.

In addition to the 23-page introduction, the remaining sections of this volume include “List of Names,” “Draft Plot Synopses” with notes and commentary, “Introduction to the Essays,” “On ‘The Kalevala’ or Land of Heroes” with commentary and notes, “The Kalevala” with notes and comments, and “Tolkien, *Kalevala*, and ‘The Story of Kullervo’ by Verlyn Flieger.” A four-page bibliography including nineteen scholarly sources concludes the book.

Jewels of insight are scattered everywhere here. Dr. Flieger’s notes point out the definitional similarity between the names of Wanona, which means “weeping,” and Nienor/ Niniel, whose names mean, respectively, “mourning” and “tear-maiden” in *The Silmarillion* saga of Túrin Turambar. (53)

In her last appendix, “Tolkien, *Kalevala*, and ‘The Story of Kullervo’ by Verlyn Flieger,” the author writes:

I do not propose a one-to-one equation between Kullervo and Tolkien; nor do I claim autobiographical intent on Tolkien’s part. Parallels there certainly are, but Father Francis Morgan, Tolkien’s guardian, was no murderous Untamo (although he did separate Tolkien from the girl he loved [Edith Bratt]). Beatrice Suffield, the aunt in whose care Tolkien and his brother [Hillary] were temporarily put after their mother [Mabel Tolkien] died, was not the malicious and sadistic smith’s wife—though



[Humphrey] Carpenter notes that she was 'deficient in affection' (*Biography*, p. 33). Tolkien was neither a cowherd nor a magician, though he did become a writer of fantasy. Nor did he engage in revenge-killing or commit incest. And though unlike Kullervo he was not mistreated and abused, like Kullervo he was not in control of his own life. There was undeniably something in Kullervo's story that touched him deeply and made him want to 'reorganize [it] into a form of [his] own.' And that something stayed viable as his legendarium took shape. (144-145)

Further on, she writes:

The most surprising revelation is that Huan the Hound, the supernatural helper of Beren and Lúthien, did not spring fully formed from Tolkien's brow, but has a clear forerunner in Musti. Musti is perhaps Tolkien's most noteworthy addition to his *Kalevala* source, and Huan is, after Túrin himself, the clearest avatar carried over from the earlier story to the world of the legendarium. Talking (and helping) animals are not unknown in the world of Middle-earth. The fox (though he is an anomaly) in Book One of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the talking thrush and the raven Roäc son of Carc in *The Hobbit*, the eagles in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* and the dog Garm from *Farmer Giles* are the best examples; that is unless you count talking dragons such as Smaug and Glaurung, who have solid precursors. Glaurung is plainly derived from the Fáfínr of the *Poetic Edda*, where Smaug and *Farmer Giles's* Chrysophylax are comic examples, nearer in type to Kenneth Grahame's Reluctant Dragon than to Icelandic mythology, and Garm belongs in that same parodic category.

Musti is a bit different; he is Tolkien's best example of a particular fairy-tale archetype, the animal helper[.] (160-161)

In summary, not only does Killuervo's sad story pre-echo Túrin's tale, but it also evokes the hard lives and hard times of Beren and Tuor in Tolkien's legendarium. But indeed, Kullervo may be the least likeable of them all. In his story, the reek of wrongfully spilled blood is not relieved by the pleasant perfume of Longbottom Leaf. Feasting never follows fear; rest never follows test. To allude to *On Fairy-stories*, Kullervo's is one long torturous and tormented crucifixion with no redeeming Easter Sunday sunrise.

Dr. Flieger has long been a pre-eminent Tolkien teacher and scholar. As readers will discover, *The Story of Kullervo* adds another gem to her tiara. Readers seeking another happy hobbit holiday here, however, will be deeply disappointed. This stark story is sterner, sadder stuff. *Caveat lector*.

—Mike Foster

**THE VICTORIAN APPROACH TO MODERNISM IN THE FICTION OF DOROTHY L. SAYERS.** Aoife Leahy. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. viii + 203 p. ISBN 978-1-4438-0993-4. \$58.99.

Aoife Leahy argues that Sayers has echoed Victorian authors' books and lives in her mystery fiction, in contexts that allow them to comment on the themes of modernism. Most of the time she assumes that these echoes are deliberate on Sayers's part and that indirect didactic purposes are Sayers' goal. Leahy is certainly right about some of the allusions she points to, and she makes interesting cases for the purposes. But this reviewer was left with the belief that much is overstated in these arguments.

The easiest example for discussion is the second section of the first chapter: it surveys the allusions to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (and sometimes *Through the Looking-Glass*) that appear in *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*. The allusions in other chapters and other sections of this chapter are to the novels of Wilkie Collins, the fiction of Oscar Wilde, and the lives of George Eliot and John Ruskin (among the writings and lives of other Victorians). For members of the Mythopoeic Society, knowledge of Lewis Carroll is more certain than of the Victorians generally, so it makes a better illustration here.

In addition, Leahy says that the influence of Carroll on *The Unpleasantness* is the simplest example she is discussing because Sayers indulges in the fewest allusions (26). In reading through Sayers' novel, this reviewer sees three obvious borrowings from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Two of them appear in speeches by Sir James Lubbock, "the well-known analyst," in Ch. 7. (He analyzes traces of material at crime scenes for testimony, if useful, at court hearings.) When Lord Peter Wimsey tells him what he is to analyze and what case it is related to, Sir James says, "Curiouser and curiouser. Never mind, it's nothing to do with me." Alice exclaims "Curiouser and curiouser!" at the start of Ch. 2 of *Wonderland*:

"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice (she was so much surprised that for a moment she quite forgot how to speak good English); "now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!"

Slightly later in the conversation in Sayers' novel, Sir James reacts to Wimsey's suggestion that the analyses may be important without giving any detail, "You're only doing it to annoy, because you know it teases." This is a slight re-handling of two lines of the "sort of a lullaby" that the Duchess sings to her baby in Carroll's Ch. 6:

*“Speak roughly to your little boy,  
 And beat him when he sneezes:  
 He only does it to annoy,  
 Because he knows it teases.”*

Since Sir James is only a minor character in *The Unpleasantness*, presumably these two allusions are meant to suggest something about him outside of his science, making him slightly more rounded as a personality.

The third allusion is later in Sayers’ book, Ch. 12. Wimsey has been speaking about a “person” whom another character has invented as an obfuscation. “Well, you see, I had a feeling that unless we did something pretty definite, Oliver would keep vanishing and reappearing like the Cheshire Cat [...]” (The Cheshire Cat appears and vanishes several times in Ch. 6 of *Wonderland* and makes a final appearance and disappearance in Ch. 8.)

So much for what this reviewer finds; now let him illustrate Leahy’s comparative technique by simply citing the first five examples in “Post-War Alice” (the second section of the first chapter, as mentioned). Her thesis statement seems to be this one: “George [Fentiman] is an Alice figure struggling through a world where the people around him seem inhumane and uncaring in the face of his pain.” (His pain is due to “shell-shock” [PTSD] from World War I.) Leahy continues, “Sayers continually uses imagery and reference from Carroll’s novels to remind her readers of this” (30). Her reference to the plural “novels” does allow her to spread her comparisons, but she primarily focuses on *Wonderland*.

(1) When George, in the Bellona Club, gets excited over and loud about his post-war situation, “A shocked veteran, till then invisible in a neighbouring armchair, poked out a lean head like a tortoise and said ‘sh’ viperishly” (Ch.1). One might take “shocked veteran” to be a clever pun, since the members of the club were almost entirely veterans of earlier wars and this one is shocked at noise on Armistice Day; George is a shocked veteran in another sense. But Leahy goes elsewhere, saying that “Instruction in etiquette seems [...] cruel under the circumstances”(30). She makes this comparison:

Like the turtle “called [...] Tortoise because he taught us” [us = the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon] in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, the older veteran in the club teaches lessons that are skewed and do not make sense to every student. (30)

Of course, Sayers *may* have been thinking of the tortoise in Wonderland when she compared the club member to one, but it seems a far-fetched analogy to this reviewer. The turtle/Tortoise being a tutor (Ch. 9) and a metaphoric tortoise in the club saying “sh” are in different categories—although any

teacher probably has to shush his or her pupils occasionally (not a connection that Leahy makes).

(2) The general's body is found in "a great chair with ears, after the Victorian pattern" (Ch. 1). "Ears" is the common term for those forward-slanted sides of armchairs. Leahy compares the dead body in the chair to the March Hare (of the Mad Tea-Party) because the Hare's house is built to resemble him, with fur on the roof and especially with the chimneys shaped to resemble ears (the end of Ch. 6). Presumably the general "dwells" in his chair at the club in the same way the March Hare can be assumed to dwell in his house (when he is favor with Time). This association of ears of chairs and of chimneys seems forced, although not quite so extremely as the two tortoises.

(3) In the same paragraph with the associated ears, Leahy offers a contrast, not a comparison, with no comment showing her awareness that it is an argument against her position. She writes,

[Alice] is usually too big or too small at any given moment and changes herself [via the mushroom, *etc.*] to fit in. George's inability to keep changing himself to meet society's demands has made him desperate. There is no magic pill that he can take [...]. (31)

The thesis statement said that George *was* an Alice figure, not that he contrasted with her.

(4) The next paragraph continues with contrasts and comparisons of dwellings and adaptability. But one contrast seems to involve similar phrasing. Leahy quotes this passage about Alice's size in the White Rabbit's house: "one arm out of the window, and one foot up the chimney" (Ch.4); Leahy says that it illustrates "human stupidity" in not having appropriate dwelling places, as does (in some sense) Wimsey's comment about dead people: "Dead people don't go about jamming their legs into things and forcing their own joints" (*Unpleasantness*, Ch. 5). Leahy ties these together in her next sentence: "Living people do jam themselves into trains, offices and ways of life that cause discomfort, just as George tries to squeeze himself back into 1920s British society." Presumably Leahy reads Alice's getting larger in the house as a symbol she is growing into adulthood and she has not found an appropriate way of life yet. But, of course, her argument of the similarity of children and dead people as not having social difficulties, is based on the contrast of the growing-up Alice's "foot [read leg] up the chimney" and the dead General Fentiman's non-"jamming [his] legs into things" (31). This is a clever comparison/contrast, but it seems unlikely that Sayers was thinking about Alice when she wrote about the corpse, with one leg forced out of *rigor mortis* before the stiffness had naturally passed off.

(5) The next paragraph begins this way:

Wimsey lifts General Fentiman's corpse carefully, noting the rigor mortis as "It came up all of a piece, stiff as a wooden poker" [...]. Alice lifts the White Queen and White King living chess pieces in *Through the Looking Glass* [*sic*—no hyphen] in a similar fashion [...]. (31)

With the shift of the Alice books, this need not have anything to do with the thesis about the similarity of George and Alice, and, of course it does not. Here Leahy has found a similarity of Lord Peter and Alice; surely she does not mean that Sayers deliberately gave the General *rigor mortis* in order that there might be a likeness to chess pieces. In short, Leahy seems to be forcing her analogies in order to have something to say; if one expects a well-argued thesis, the development is badly flawed. On the other hand, Leahy in her Introduction, before the first chapter, discusses the dream analyses of Freud (3), so no doubt she can say any sort of comparison or contrast can be part of the general relationship between works at a dreamlike level. (In an endnote to the second chapter, Leahy writes, "Some readers will start thinking about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in the early pages of *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* without immediately knowing why. The first references are almost too subtle to be noticed on a conscious level, such as the ears on General Fentiman's chair" [90n54].)

So much for the five illustrations. Perhaps this reviewer should add that Leahy discusses "Curiouser and curiouser" slightly later in the chapter (34) and mentions Sir James Lubbock's quotation from the Duchess's lullaby in an endnote (56.n45).

The above discussion is based on, as indicated, the second section of the first chapter. The third section, "Intertextuality and avoiding intertextuality," although touching upon Lewis Carroll to a degree, has its most interesting discussion about "modern writers"—with, as one would expect, a comparison, albeit a *brief* comparison, of Septimus Warren Smith, the World War I shell-shocked veteran who commits suicide in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, to George Fentiman (41). In Sayers's novel, George's new breakdown, coming from strain over the mysterious poisoning of his grandfather, leads him to confess to the murder (Ch. 21). Also a collection of modern novels, including Woolf's, by one of the persons in *Unpleasantness* is heavy on the women authors, but with "quite a row of D.H. Lawrence" (41; *Unpleasantness*, Ch. 18)—Leahy finds "the list [...]" as useful today in identifying good authors to read as it was in 1928" (41). (James Joyce is not represented, but it is a woman character whose collection it is.)

The other three sections of this second chapter—"The Contrast of *Strong Poison*" (44), "The Importance of Being Alice" (47), and "A Note on *Even the Parrot*"—are, respectively and in brief, a connection of themes from *Unpleasantness* into the next Sayers' mystery, a discussion of *Alice* allusions in other of the mysteries, and a discussion of Sayers' didactic fiction (compared by Leahy to Lewis Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno* books). The subsequent chapters are these:

2. Victorians Reborn in *The Documents in the Case*
  3. From the Fun of Sensation Fiction to *fin de siècle* Families
  4. From Late Victorian to Modernist—And On?
- Conclusion

The second chapter is suggestively related, in inverse way, to the annulment of the wedding of John Ruskin and his wife Effie on the grounds of his failure to consummate the marriage (she then married the painter John Everett Millais and had eight children). Sayers's novel shows the danger of a lack of knowledge of the law about annulments. The third chapter is focused on the influence of Wilkie Collins' novels on Sayers's mysteries. Since Sayers planned, but only partially finished, a biography of Collins, her knowledge of his works is certain. The fourth chapter examines "Sayers' connections between the *fin de siècle* and modernism, as she demonstrates how 1890s wit and cynicism turns into twentieth century despair and angst" (125). Of course, the actual discussions are more complicated. For example, Wilkie Collins wrote a novel about an unconsummated marriage—*Basil*—and Sayers' comment on it appears on the second chapter, not the third (65). A suggestion that Sayers's *Whose Body?* was influenced by Stevens's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* appears at the start of the "Introduction" (1), no doubt as an opening example of Leahy's approach (and she makes an interesting—if far from certain—case for deliberate echoes). The full list of authors involved in Leahy's comparisons and contrasts include Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, Sheridan Le Fanu, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, James Joyce, and T.S. Eliot, as well as those mentioned above (Leahy's list, with introductory sketches, appears in her "Introduction" [13-20]).

Leahy's "Conclusion" begins with a celebration of the reading of detective fiction as training in looking for literary clues of an intertextual sort (164-165). This reviewer feels she is finding, often enough, clues to meanings which were not intended. To speak in critical jargon, she finds what she believes to be obligatory intertextuality, but this reviewer believes is mostly accidental intertextuality (see "Intertextuality," *Wikipedia* 15 February 2016).

Freud, in a largely non-sexual way, is on Leahy's side. (This reviewer regrets his position, for Leahy refers to the two Mythopoeic Press volumes on Sayers with appreciation.)

—Joe R. Christopher

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**READING JOSS WHEDON.** Rhonda V. Wilcox, Tanya R. Cochran, Cynthia Masson, and David Lavery, eds. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014. 9780815610380. 461 p. \$29.95; also available for Kindle.

THIS BEAUTY VOLUME COVERS WHEDON'S television, film, and comic book output through the 2013 release of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The table of contents offers two ways to approach the included essays: first, by the title of the production that is the main focus of the essay (*Buffy*, *Dollhouse*, *Cabin in the Woods*, etc.) and secondly, by theme (Narrative, Character, Gender, etc.). This makes it easy for the reader to concentrate on the essays grouped under, for example, "Myth and Intertext," "Symbolism," or "Heroism," three areas which might be of particular interest to readers of *Mythlore*.

Two essays in particular stand out for me, both dealing with the mythic structures underlying different Whedon series. For readers interested in modern uses of mythic material, Janet K. Halfyard's "Hero's Journey, Heroine's Return? Buffy, Eurydice, and the Orpheus Myth" alone is worth the price of admission. Halfyard brilliantly analyzes how Buffy lives out the Orpheus myth—at times as Eurydice, the girl who needs to be rescued; at times as Orpheus, "repeatedly venturing into the underworld and returning with the boon of safety from evil and apocalypse" (41); and sometimes playing both roles at once, the self-rescuing princess, embodying her own central conflict between girl and hero. Willow also "takes on the role of Orpheus to a variety of Eurydices" (47)—Angel, Tara, and especially Buffy multiple times; and I would argue, also plays Eurydice to Xander's Orpheus in "Grave" (6.22). Halfyard traces the Orphic elements of four pivotal episodes in particular: "Prophecy Girl" (1.12), "Anne" (3.1), "Once More With Feeling" (6.7), and

"Normal Again" (6.17). The essay also briefly touches on the Orpheus myth in *Angel* (an episode is named for the myth, 4.15) and *Dollhouse*, the premise of which "inverts the fundamental Orphic gesture" (51) so that we follow the Eurydice-like Dolls through trials in the sunlit world above.

K. Dale Koontz uses a different myth to understand *Dollhouse* in "Reflections in the Pool: Echo, Narcissus, and the Male Gaze in *Dollhouse*." *Dollhouse* has been critiqued as a betrayal of Whedon's championing of the strong, self-aware female character, with its central premise of beautiful, mindless "Dolls" programmed to suit the desires of the clients who purchase their services (though there are both male and female Dolls, their resting state of passivity leads the viewer to read them all as coded female). But Whedon's apt choice of code name for the main character, "Echo," offers us a clue as to how to read its mythic underpinnings. Like her namesake nymph, Echo/Caroline "loses her ability to speak as a punishment for challenging the prevailing power structure" (205) and attempting to expose the truth behind Rossum Corporation, inverting the myth in which Echo is punished by Juno for distracting her from Jupiter's philanderings. In this structure, the Rossum Corporation is Jupiter and Adelle DeWitt, who runs the Dollhouse, the Juno-figure. *Dollhouse* also mirrors the later portions of Echo's story; the rogue Doll Alpha represents Narcissus, and there is a thematic focus on the male gaze and recurring visual imagery of unreliable reflective surfaces. Issues of the self-reflective gaze and isolationist narcissistic behavior come to a head in Alpha's obsession with making over Echo in his image as host-body to a multiplicity of personalities; here we also see Whedon's overarching concern with community, created family, and connection with others as moral goods.

Two other essays, not quite as strongly mythic, are also interesting for their interpretations of monstrous and non-human characters. In "What the Hell? *Angel's* 'The Girl in Question,'" Cynthia Masson makes a case for what some have called "the worst episode of *Angel* ever" (134-135) as an essential incident of existentialist drama leading directly to the final two episodes, "Power Play" and "Not Fade Away" (5.21 and 22). She points out echoes of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Sartre's *No Exit* in structure and dialogue and states that "[i]mmortality without forward movement or change" is thus revealed as "the hell represented in 'The Girl in Question'" (137)—a hell in which *Angel* and Spike obsess over Buffy, blame The Immortal for all their woes, and fail to fulfill their actual mission. This whole episode revolves around the importance not just of freedom of choice, but of freely making choices as the only way to escape from the stasis in which *Angel* and Spike are tempted to remain, a trap made worse by their immortality.

I found Ananya Mukherjea's "'It's Like Some Primal, Some Animal Force . . . That Used to Be Us': Animality, Humanity, and Moral Careers in the



Buffyverse" somewhat less focused than I expected from the title; while it deals with the moral implications of animal elements in human characters, such as Oz's werewolf component, the author includes monsters and perceptions about race in her broad definition of animality; the definition almost becomes too broad to be useful, and doesn't even touch on episodes like "The Pack" (1.6, where Xander and other Sunnydale students are possessed by the spirits of demon hyenas). But the observation that the "wildness" in characters like Angel and Oz is "tempered by the attachments these men have with their friends" (61) is sound; for Whedon, the goal is to "tame, not eradicate" (62) the monster within and aim for synthesis rather than dichotomy (67)—again, that emphasis on community and connection so vital to his oeuvre.

The rest of the book should certainly not be neglected, because it is full of worthwhile insights. For example, Rhonda Wilcox's "Introduction" shows how *Much Ado About Nothing* references and builds on themes in Whedon's earlier work; David Kociemba's "From Beneath You, It Foreshadows" demonstrates how the critically neglected (and even reviled) first season of *Buffy* contains all the themes of the series in miniature; and Kristopher Karl Woofter's "Watchers in the Woods" dissects the meta-layers of *Cabin in the Woods*'s critique of horror movies and reality television, as well as its inter-textual references to *Dollhouse*. Particularly meaty is Gregory Erickson's "From Old Heresies to Future Paradigms," on the question of the soul in Whedon's works: the tensions between "what we do and who we are, between action and being, [...] memory and reality" (341) that complicate and enrich characters that fascinate us, like Spike, Illyria, and Echo, or terrify us, like the Reavers. Those interested in Whedon's work in general and not just in the mythological aspects I've touched on in this review will find the whole a worthwhile collection.

—Janet Brennan Croft



BRIEFLY NOTED

**DISCUSSING MERE CHRISTIANITY: EXPLORING THE HISTORY, MEANING AND RELEVANCE OF C.S. LEWIS'S GREATEST WORK.**

Devin Brown and Eric Metaxas. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. Book: 120 pp. DVD: 170 minutes. ISBN: 9780310699873. \$49.99. Bestselling author of *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* Eric Metaxas hosts scholars Jerry Root, Diana Pavlac Glyer, Joseph Pearce, Devin Brown, and Alister McGrath as they take turns providing a close analysis of *Mere Christianity* in eight sessions. The accompanying book by Devin Brown provides discussion questions that make this set particularly useful for groups. —Melody Green

**C.S. LEWIS'S CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS: PRO AND CON.** Ed. Gregory

Bassham. Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2015. 272 pp. ISBN: 9789004301252. \$89.00. Volume number 286 of Brill Rodopi's Philosophy and Religion series focuses on five specific aspects of C.S. Lewis's apologetics: the argument from desire, the argument from reason, the moral argument, the trilemma argument, and the problem of evil. In an attempt to present a balanced perspective, each section is divided into four chapters: one in support of Lewis's argument, one opposing it, and then shorter chapters that the authors wrote in response to each other's chapters. —Melody Green



## ABOUT THE REVIEWERS

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