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Abstract

Outline of Romantic Theology. Charles Williams. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

The Saga of Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer. Intro and Translation by Jesse L. Byock. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie. Ed. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs. Reviewed by Pat Reynolds.

The C.S. Lewis Handbook. Colin Duriez. Reviewed by Glen GoodKnight.

Let There Be Light. III. Pauline Baynes. Reviewed by Glen GoodKnight.

The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft. Rosemary Ellen Guiley. Reviewed by David Bratman.



REVIEWS



A Theologian in Love

Charles Williams, *Outline of Romantic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 113 pp. ISBN 0-8028-3679-8.

Available until now only as an original pencilled version at the Marion E. Wade Collection and a typescript in the possession of the late John Fellow, the title essay of this book, "Outline of Romantic Theology," written in 1924 and here ably edited by its author's major biographer, places in the hands of every interested reader the germ of Charles Williams' thought. It is accompanied by a later but equally seminal essay, long out of print, "Religion and Love in Dante: The Theology of Romantic Love," (1941) which has been discussed more often and will not be elaborated here.

Alice Mary Hadfield's interpretive contribution is cleverly interspersed with these materials, making the reading of them into a suspenseful, perhaps even sensational narrative. Her first portion describes Williams' marriage to Florence Conroy, and introduces "Outlines of Romantic Theology." The second describes his love for Phyllis Jones, an "office romance" which intervened for awhile in that marriage, and introduces the essay on Dante. Put in Jungian terms, Charles Williams underwent a profound projection of his own *anima* or feminine principle as found in the male personality, perceiving in his young friend Florence a manifestation of the divine. Unfortunately, perhaps, for both of them, he married her while still under the spell of his own vision, and was left like many another lover to cobble together a marriage with a real human being. I don't argue with Williams' interpretation of this event — he says that the manifestation was real, and I agree. It was a major psychic event and can in fact happen to persons of either gender. The vision or projection is always a genuine psychic event in the life of the perceiver, in this case, Williams, and it was withdrawn in due course, as it always is.

Williams in equally due course underwent the same experience in regard to a new, younger woman, who did not in the event reciprocate. He pursued her over a period of years and even blamed her for her disinterest in the middle-aged married man he had become. The episode is perhaps rather commonplace and even mildly sordid, difficult to see in its sufferer's romantic terms. It is clearly called for in C.S. Lewis' concept of "stock responses," in which a person in the grip of an emotional temptation toward what is or has become or could become illicit must draw upon reserves of religiously based propriety and resist the desire. In any event, Williams was saved by the

lady's disinterest and eventually forged a final and lasting relationship with Florence (whom he nicknamed Michal).

The "Outlines of Romantic Theology," written in 1924, formulates ideas Williams had already explored in his early poetry. He argues that the experience of falling in love is an authentic encounter with the divine, and that the lovers can make it the focus or expressive vehicle of their religious lives. The strongest chapter interprets the entire Eucharistic canon in these terms, shockingly or intriguingly in accordance with your own Eucharistic theology.

He does not distinguish very clearly between the medieval ideal of Romantic Love, always a relationship between people not married to one another, and certain nineteenth century ideas, notably those of Coventry Patmore, in which the lovers are always married to one another. The kernel of Williams' later thoughts on the Arthurian are set forth here with precision, not to say prescience, like a handful of jewels with which this watchmaker will later craft a marvellous engine of the imagination, in his late poetry.

Students of Williams will be grateful for the publication of this intensely interesting and useful and even important book, by and about Charles Williams. Somewhere he himself said that if nothing else, his previously unpublished essays show that as a young man he had already thought of his life's ideas. Together the two essays in this volume indeed present the outline of those ideas, and are well worth the presentation for new or renewed scrutiny.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

Eating the Serpent's Heart

The Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer. Introduction and Translation by Jesse L. Byock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 145 pp. ISBN 0-520-06904-8.

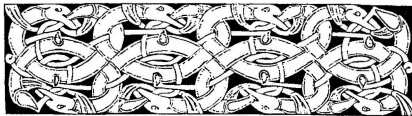
In this introduction, Jesse Byock states of the Saga of the Volsungs that it "deeply influenced William Morris in the nineteenth century and J.R.R. Tolkien in the twentieth. Richard Wagner, in particular, drew heavily upon the Norse Volsung material in composing the Ring cycle." (pp. 102) He might also have mentioned the name of C.S. Lewis, who was disciple, friend and devotee, respectively, of the above three men, and who wrote of his youth in *Surprised by Joy*, "I would have laughed at popular bunglers who confused the late mythological Sagas with the classical Sagas, or the Prose with the Verse Edda, or even, more scandalously, the Edda with Saga." (Lewis 1955, p. 157) For all these reasons, *Mythlore* readers will be delighted

with this spirited translation of a work written circa 1200-1270 which entwines the primordial roots of European culture with the harsh politics of the Migrations Era.

In this world, Regin tells Sigurd, "My brother Otr ... had the likeness of an otter during the day and was always in the river bringing up fish in his mouth." (p. 57) More familiarly, Sigurd in his turn, having slain the dragon, "stuck his finger in his mouth. And when the blood from the serpent's heart touched his tongue he could understand the speech of birds." (p. 66) Here too, King Gunnar, cast bound into a snakepit, plays a harp, "artfully plucking the strings with his toes." (p. 103) And what women there are! Signy, Hjordis, Brynhild, Gudrun, Svanhild, struggling in a world of fierce loves, unwanted marriages, terrible revenges, difficult births, awesome deaths. They are more than a match for their hero loves and kingly husbands, among whom is numbered Attila the Hun!

When the Public Broadcasting System played the entire Ring Cycle of Wagner as performed by the Metropolitan Opera on four successive nights, my seven-year-old grandson Shaughnessy sat all the way through *Das Rheingold*, enraptured, as dwarfs, gods, giants and Rhine-maidens made a place in his mind among the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. This experience occupied a single summer's evening of his young life, but it will be with him forever. The Saga of the Volsungs will occupy most readers of Mythlore for about the same span of time, but those who have never read it before, or who want a well-documented and sprightly new translation, will find it served fresh and still hot, a feast of dragon's heart. Enjoy!

— Nancy-Lou Patterson



Lengthening the Rope

Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie. Edited by Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs. Oxford University Press, 1990.

This collection of papers, covering an immense range: from the writings of a seventeenth century child Prophet to the accession diaries of Peter Opie, is typified by its frontispiece where the Opies are skipping with a group of children: obviously enjoying themselves. The authors all are aware that they are adults skipping in a children's playground, all enjoying the exercise, and all aware that for adults, the rope has to be lengthened.

The first essay, "Collecting Children's Books: Self-Indulgence and Scholarship" by Brian Alderson contains the unfortunate truth (that I know to my cost) that "one book spawns a desire for a dozen more." His insights into the

Opie's collecting and to the collection of children's books in general is well matched by the second essay, which is comprised of "Selections from the Accession Diaries of Peter Opie," introduced and edited by Clive Hurst. Peter Opie recorded his thoughts on collecting: "Collectors items have, I suspect *always* been expensive. Possibly because no collector worthy of the name limits himself merely to what he can afford." And on the books themselves: "Amongst the catalogues ... I began reading and there was first one treasure and then another ... books I have dreamed of possessing for more than twenty years." As a collector, it is possible to sympathize totally with Peter Opie's triumphs and tragedies. Those who do not collect may be left cold.

Further essays cover topics including children in society, children as writers, and focus on publishers, illustrators and authors of books for children. Many of the essays will be of interest to readers of fantasy and mythopoeic literature, especially Jack Zipes "The Origin of the Fairy Tale for Children or, How Script Was Used to Tame the Beast in Us," and the papers on Lewis Carroll, Arthur Hughes (illustrator of MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*), E. Nesbit, Beatrix Potter, Kenneth Grahame, J.R.R. Tolkien and William Mayne.

In "Tolkien's Great War" Hugh Brogan considers the evidence for Tolkien's reactions to his WWI experiences. Noting that neither the *Letters* nor Carpenter's biography have much to say, Brogan compares a passage from *The Lord of the Rings* with one from Siegfried Sasson's *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, and suggests that while it is unlikely that Tolkien was influenced by Sasson, it is highly likely that Tolkien was drawing on his memories of shell-fire. Brogan says he wishes to avoid the "biographical reductionism" incurred by "tour[ing] *The Lord of the Rings* (and *The Hobbit*, for that matter) looking for outcroppings of war experience," and goes on to ask "how it was that Tolkien, a man whose life was language, could have gone through the Great War, with all its rants and lies, and still come out committed to a 'feudal' literary style." Brogan makes some interesting points about Tolkien's writing compared to other "Great War" writers, who *did* abandon the 'feudal' style.

Alison Lurie's paper, "William Mayne" discusses the art of a fantasy author rarely touched upon: I was only sorry that she did not cover A Grass Rope, the story of a unicorn hunted by science and with the fairies' help escapes. While the essay does not feel cramped, Lurie should have written a book.

Only one essay is not worth the reading (for most people): "Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre or, How History Reaches the Nursery" by Giles Barber, who obviously believes that unless one knows French, one could not possibly have any interest in learning how History Reaches the Nursery. Still, with my basic French, I did make it through most of the essay, only to find that Giles Barber similarly believes his readers will understand Andalusian and Catalan Spanish. (I think there are two

dialects, but not knowing Spanish at all, the Andalusian *may* have been rendered into Catalan by the recorder, George Borrow.) It is a pity, for with the provision of useful translations, this essay would have been very interesting.

In all, this is a delightful book for any book collector or reader of fantasy.

— Pat Reynolds

From The Adolition of Man to Wormwood

The C.S. Lewis Handbook by Colin Duriez. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990. 255 pp. ISBN 0—8010-3001-3.

Here a useful alphabetized guide to the characters, places, and themes of Lewis' fiction, as well as his other works, personalities in his life, literary criticism and basic ideas. The entries range from brief descriptions to detailed miniature essays which are sure to bring new information and insights.

Following the entries is a list of books by Lewis, followed by a list of books about Lewis. Finally we are given a reference guide that is breaks down the entries into nine categories: 1. Life; 2. Works; 3. Literary Criticism; 4. Themes; 5. Thought; 6. Science Fiction; 7. *The Screwtape Letters*; 8. *Till We Have Faces*; and 9. Narnia — which itself is broken down by each of the seven books.

Duriez, who wrote "Leonardo, Tolkien, and Mr. Bagin's" in *Mythlore* 3 in 1969, is now a general books editor at InterVarsity Press. It is good to see him continuing in Inklings related subjects.

— Glen GoodKnight

A Riot of Creation

Let There Be Light, illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: Macmillan, 1990. ISBN 0-02-708542-2.

Readers who have read books by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien over the years are familiar with the work of Pauline Baynes. Her illustrations for these authors alone would make a long list indeed. She has illustrated many other beautiful books as well. Most recently we have seen two new books that featured her illustrations: *Bilbo's Last Song* and *The Land of Narnia* (both reviewed in the last issue).

Pauline is surely the best known and best loved of all the illustrators of Tolkien and Lewis. And when a book of hers appears that evokes strong parallels with another book by one of these authors, it should be noted and brought to the attention of *Mythlore's* readers. *Let There Be Light* is a lavishly illustrated version of the first chapter of *Genesis* as given in the King James version. If one reads Chapter IX "The Founding of Narnia" from Lewis' *The Magician's Nephew*, and then compare this with the illustrations for *Let There Be Light*, you will see the parallels. In Narnia Aslan causes the animals to boil and bubble up from the earth. In *Let There Be Light* the plants and animals

fairly explode off the pages at the moment of their creation. Baynes has obviously used great love and imagination in these large full page color illustrations, making this delightful children's book another *tour de force*.

The books treats the six days of creation. Day one is the creation of light. Days two is the creation of firmament (vault of heaven or sky). Day three is the creation of the dry land and the plant kingdom. Day four is the creation of the sun and moon. Day five is the creation of life in the waters and of the birds. Day six is the creation of the land animals and of man. Day seven is the day of rest. Baynes interprets these events so that the plants and animals explode outward in a riot of diversity. There is loving humor here, as when she shows the humble kiwi and dodo along with the rest of the birds, or when she depicts the koala and smiling tree sloth along with the large mammals. Her final two page illustration of Adam and Eve beholding the paradisaical earth and all its diverse life is magnificent and quintessentially Baynes. There is an imaginative link between this book and *The Magician's Nephew*. By comparing them, both are enriched.

— Glen GoodKnight

All about Witches

The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft by Rosemary Ellen Guiley. Facts On File trade paperback, 432 pages.

No question about it, this is a fat and fact-filled book. All sorts of questions you might have on specific aspects of witchcraft, ancient or modern, can be answered in here. To the best of my limited knowledge of the field, it's accurate, and much of its information, especially on recent neo-Paganism, is not otherwise easily available.

The one thing it isn't definitive — it's neither the complete nor the final (to date) word on the subject — and this may be a problem if the hallowed word "encyclopedia" leads you to expect too much. Like most one-person encyclopedias, it reflects the author's personal areas of interest, so it's rather patchy and erratic in its coverage. Essentially this is three or four books combined into one, obscured by their being divided into bits and rearranged in alphabetical order.

First, it's a book about Western European magical folklore, with entries like "Druids," "horses," "jack-o'-lantern," "Lilith," "money," and "red." Guiley describes their history and the magical properties they traditionally have in folklore, which will obviously be useful for scholars studying folklore and myth. There are entries for "goblins" and "lycanthropy," but none for vampirism (although it is mentioned a few times, findable through the index). I'm not sure why, unless it's that vampires traditionally haunt eastern Europe, far from the Anglo traditions that North Americans associate with witchcraft.

Second, it's a book about the Burning Times, which Guiley defines as "the period in Western history of intense

witch-hunting and executions”, roughly 1450-1750 A.D. There's less emphasis on the witches than on their persecutors, as much because the witchcraft of the period was largely in the letters' imaginations as because the evidence for real witchcraft was burned. But besides the entries for “Salem Witches,” “Louviere Possessions,” and “Loudun Possessions,” the Mathers (Cotton and Increase) and Pope Innocent VIII, there are a few for “grimoires,” “Mother Shipton” (who is to be found under *M*, don't ask me why) and “Nostradamus.”

Third and largest is the book about neo-Paganism, the recent revival of wiccan practices in a new “Old Religion.” There are plenty of entries for neo-Pagan religious customs such as “sabbats” (the festivals, Beltane and Samhain and so on) and “coven” relatively concise entries for founding figures like Aleister Crowley and Gerald B. Gardner, and long, self-indulgent biographical articles on currently active witches such as Otter Zell (the man who fused a goat's horns together and called it a unicorn), P.E.I. Bonewits (holder of the only college degree in magic), and Anodea Judith (sister of Martin Mull), and their various organizations. If you want to know where these people got their strange names, or how many times they've been married (a lot, some of them), this is the place to look, all right. Guiley got most of her information first-hand, and has clearly favored her informants. Other neo-Pagans may not agree with the implications as to who is most important in their movement. (Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* (Adler has an entry) is a better introduction to neo-Paganism, I believe.)

Fourthly, there are some entries included to define just what witchcraft and neo-Paganism are not: “Satanism,” “Vodoun.” There are plot summaries of the books/films *The Exorcist*, *Rosemary's Baby*, and *The Witches of Eastwick*, mostly to note that these depictions of satanic witches “describe and perpetuate numerous stereotypes.” Thankfully Guiley doesn't go on with *The Omen*, et al., but I wish she'd included a note on *The Wicker Man*, the only feature film I know of that's about neo-Pagans, even if they aren't exactly real neo-Pagans.

Which brings me to the book's main flaw for Mythopoeic readers: it has very little about non-satanic witchcraft in fiction. As Guiley notes in her entry for Gerald Gardner, novels are a way to describe witchcraft in print where it's illegal or unpopular, and some important mythopoeic literature has been produced this way. But there's only passing mention of the novels of Gardner and of Dion Fortune (a contemporary of Charles Williams whose work is superficially quite similar to his). An entry for Marion Zimmer Bradley devotes six paragraphs to biographical trivia, 3 to explaining why she does not consider herself a witch, and one to describing *The Mists of Avalon* — which (along with other, unnamed books) is the only reason she's included. There's nothing on Charles Williams (or his friend the non-fiction mystic writer Evelyn Underhill), but Williams scholars may find some

useful background information in the entries for “Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn” and “Simon Magus.” There is no mention of Katherine Kurtz, Diana L. Paxson, or Charles de Lint, well-known authors (and Mythopoeic Conference guests of honor) who have expressed authentic neo-Pagan ideas forcefully in their novels.

Guiley would have been better off putting her bits into logical order instead of alphabetical, and writing a treatise on witchcraft where she could have exposed her personal expertise and interests forthrightly instead of disguising them as encyclopedic. Still, in the absence of a genuine encyclopedia of witchcraft, this well-researched labor of love will be useful to the student.

— David Bratman.



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