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Review of The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis

Mark J. Hamilton

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Review Essays

Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* (New York, 2010). xx + 326 pages. \$29.99. ISBN 9780521711142.

In 1998, an excellent two-week centenary conference on C. S. Lewis was held at Oxford and Cambridge, which provided a thorough survey of the extensive *corpus* of recent and ongoing Lewis scholarship. If that event was a forerunner, the new *Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* is the real thing: it succeeds in condensing more erudite scholarship on Lewis into one volume than any other available publication. It also serves an important practical function for those teaching in higher education: while courses on Lewis are now widely offered in English and Religion departments throughout America, his scholarship is not always given the respect it deserves. This is due principally to his overt Christian convictions, his advocacy of Natural Law and belief in absolute moral standards, his being type-cast as a writer of children's books, and his outspoken opposition to modernism and its antecedents: scientism and a belief in the inevitability of moral progress. This new volume will go some way to amend all such misplaced notions.

This book is divided into three parts with twenty-one exquisite chapters covering a vast array of topics. The first part analyzes Lewis as a literary and historical scholar. The second looks at Lewis as a theological thinker with chapters divided by dominant themes such as "On Scripture," "On Naturalism," "On Theology," "On Suffering," and "On Moral Knowledge." The final part focuses on Lewis as a writer of conversion autobiography, fiction and poetry. This book is imaginative in its approach, distinctive in its range, and valuable in demonstrating that Lewis was more than just a writer of children's stories.

In the introductory chapter, Robert MacSwain describes Lewis as "both a phenomenon and an anomaly" (1)—a claim corroborated by the other essays in the volume. Lewis' status as a phenomenon is due to his enduring popularity: each of his numerous books remains in print (and demand) half a century after his death, his imaginative literature continues to provoke admiration and fierce loyalties, and the details of his life and career still fascinate both his ardent admirers

and harshest critics. A remarkable number of scholarly and popular works on Lewis (and his writings) continue to be published, including volumes of literary criticism, theology, biblical studies, philosophy, ethics, biographical studies, science fiction, devotional writings and even travel. Lewis' status as an anomaly, on the other hand, is due largely to the continued disagreement among scholars over the significance of his writings. MacSwain appropriately warns that an academic world that ignores or dismisses Lewis is:

in great danger of sealing itself within a very small, self-enclosed echo chamber in which experts talk to other experts while losing all contact with the outside world. Meanwhile, Lewis continues to sell millions of books a year and to shape the religious faith of thousands. (4)

Concerning the editors' principal motivation for producing the volume, MacSwain writes that they wished "to stimulate conversation about Lewis in academic theology and religious studies, and to facilitate a greater understanding of his work" (10). They should surely achieve these goals.

The second chapter by John Fleming covers Lewis as literary critic, and was this reviewer's favorite chapter: it will significantly expand nearly everyone's understanding of Lewis the scholar. This aspect of Lewis' career is little known by his popular admirers, yet this is an area in which he excelled. Lewis wrote exceptional works of a critical and analytical nature. An examination of each of his major works is critiqued in the chapter. Included are stimulating summaries and reviews of his *Allegory of Love* (1936), *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942), *The Discarded Image* (1964), and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1954, which Fleming describes as "The greatest single monument to Lewis's astonishing literary erudition" (23). In his assessment of *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, Fleming writes:

Lewis's essay performs beautifully the true office of criticism, which is to effect a respectful introduction between a reader and a work, to clarify the text and encourage the reader without attempting to supplant either, and then leave text and reader, if not too dazzled, to get further acquainted on their own. (19)

For those who have little knowledge of Lewis' scholarly work, this chapter is an essential read; it should stimulate interest in anyone familiar with Lewis to explore his works of literary criticism.

Stephen Logan continues the analysis of Lewis as a literary theorist in the third chapter, and places Lewis in his historic context as a romantic in a post-structuralist era. Some additional background in literary theory would prove helpful for many readers, but even those unfamiliar with this arena can learn from Logan. An agreeable part of the chapter highlights (and praises) Lewis' *An*

Experiment in Criticism (1961), one of his most underrated books. Another part elucidates Lewis' literary connections to poets such as Eliot, Keats, Spencer and Coleridge. Logan explains how Lewis rejected the ideas being advanced by post-structural naturalists and, instead, affirmed a traditional metaphysical supernaturalism. As Logan explains,

What distinguished Lewis as a literary theorist was that he was fully intimate with the older and far longer metaphysical tradition at a time when it was beginning to come under attack—when the cultural changes were occurring which would result in the emergence of an aggressively secular and materialistic form of literary theory. (40)

It may surprise some readers to learn that Lewis also published works of historical analysis. Dennis Danielson's chapter evaluates Lewis as an intellectual historian. He persuades the reader of the classical depth of Lewis' educational and historical understanding as expressed in four separate works: "*De Descriptione Temporum*" (1954), *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, and *The Discarded Image*. At a conference marking the centenary of Lewis' birth in 1998, the actor Joss Ackland (who played Lewis in the 1985 original BBC film version of *Shadowlands*) was introduced to the attendees as Lewis. He then proceeded to take the podium and, in character, delivered "*De Descriptione Temporum*"—Lewis' inaugural lecture at Cambridge. It was a stunning performance, etching that essay into the memories of the audience. Danielson summarizes this speech, explaining Lewis' rejection of the artificial divisions between historic eras, and his argument that the only meaningful historic divisions are those that lie between pre-Christian and Christian, and Christian and post-Christian eras. His lengthy analysis of *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* reveals Lewis' passion and depth for the literature of that era. Near the end of this section, Danielson makes the following sparkling observation:

One of Lewis' outstanding skills is his discernment of affinities between apparently disparate elements within a period. For example, as to the temperament of the Puritans and humanists, Lewis comments, 'both felt themselves to be in the vanguard, both hated the Middle Ages, and both demanded a 'clean sweep'. (51)

In an interesting contrast, Danielson expresses disapproval of Lewis' over-generalizations about the past. Despite this reservation, he admires Lewis' historical analytic skills, and encourages readers to adopt a similar outlook. After Fleming's contribution, this chapter may prove the most useful to popular readers of Lewis, deepening their appreciation for his vast scholarly knowledge of the classical and medieval periods.

In the final chapter of the book's initial section, Mark Edwards looks at Lewis as a traditionalist. He summarizes the nature of Lewis' classical education and his ongoing use of classical themes throughout his writing. Most readers of Lewis are aware of his classical sympathies and interest in mythology, including the Arthurian legends. However, not everyone will be aware of the depth of Lewis' early exposure to such writings. Love of the past was ingrained in Lewis, and, throughout his life, he remained unsympathetic to both technological innovation and the latest fashions in scholarship. Not surprisingly, classical themes resurrect themselves on a regular basis in Lewis' writings. Edwards pays particular attention to Lewis' understanding of myth and the creative application of classicism in his novel, *Till We Have Faces* (1956).

These first five chapters are the most penetrating and innovative section of the entire volume. Those with only a nominal knowledge of Lewis and his writings will be stunned when they come to understand the nature and extent of his academic activities. The chapters convincingly establish Lewis' reputation as an intellectual and scholar of the first order.

The second part of *The Cambridge Companion* delves into theological themes found in his writings. In chapter six, Kevin Vanhoozer explains why Lewis was able to transcend the divisions in Christendom by focusing on Scripture. He concludes that "Lewis was less interested in critical approaches to, or doctrines of, scripture than he was in the realities about which scripture speaks" (75). Lewis took refuge not in systematic theology or doctrine drawn from a specific denominational tradition, but in what he called "Mere Christianity." Vanhoozer hypothesizes that this was because Lewis "distinguished himself from fundamentalists, who lose the 'myth' (imagination), and from modern biblical critics, who eliminate the 'became fact' (history)." (76) Lewis did not believe that every statement of the Bible was inspired in the same way. Reemphasizing the transforming nature of Scripture and the importance of how the Bible is read, Lewis sought to re-enchanted Scripture and "take every thought, and imagination, captive to the word of God" (84). Vanhoozer's chapter correctly places Lewis on the theological spectrum: conservative with a high view of Scripture, certainly not fundamentalist, but with hints of neo-orthodoxy.

Even those who read casually in Lewis can recognize an ongoing theme of personhood. In chapter seven, Paul Fiddes focuses on Lewis' understanding that persons become more complete as they experience more of God. As Fiddes writes, "As we are drawn into God's Trinitarian life, we become truly persons or—as Lewis puts it—become real selves" (90). This is depicted most clearly in *Perelandra* (1943), *The Weight of Glory* (1949), and *Mere Christianity* (1952), and more subtly in other works, including *The Great Divorce* (1945) and *Till We Have Faces*, neither of which Fiddes considers. He does paint a fascinating picture of

the Trinity as he sees it expressed in Lewis: it is a dynamic dance, and the eternal generation of the Son is part of the dance. It is hard to determine how literal or how metaphorical this image is for Lewis (or for Fiddes); the chapter, however, is intriguing as it creates room for interpretation in the minds of the reader. Fiddes adeptly emphasizes Lewis' theme of the invasion of the supernatural into the natural and how this invasion "comes into us," drawing us into the Great Dance where personhood is completed.

Charles Taliaferro ("On Naturalism") divides naturalism into two forms: strict, as portrayed by Richard Rorty, and broad, as found in Richard Dawkins. The strict form believes nature is only "that which may be described and explained in terms of a complete physics" (105). The broad form considers, in addition to rigorous physics, the results of the social sciences, evolutionary biology, and even human consciousness. Taliaferro then evaluates Lewis' argument against these from his book *Miracles* (1947), with particular emphasis on the arguments from reason and morality. He presents two valuable adjustments to Lewis' argument from reason that make his case more successful without compromising or devaluing Lewis' argument. He illustrates that Lewis' argument works well against strict naturalism. The argument from morality also stands up against strict naturalism. A broad naturalist could support the idea of a naturally developed (or evolved) objective morality, but adds that he knows of no uncontroversial, successful broad naturalist account of such emergence. Moreover, Lewis has not demonstrated that such an account is impossible. This chapter is an excellent critique of Lewis' arguments by reason and morality, as found in *Miracles*. In the last part of this chapter, the author adds useful additional observations on Lewis' argument for Heaven from human longing, and how humans cannot be reduced simply to material processes.

In the ninth chapter, "On Moral Knowledge," Gilbert Meilaender probes the structure of morality found in Lewis' concept of Natural Law (or the *Tao*, as described in *The Abolition of Man*, 1943), in the context of his work, *That Hideous Strength* (1945). Mark Studdock (one of the central characters in the book), out of sympathy with the *Tao*, is nevertheless claimed by its moral truths. The *Tao* resides in the structure of reality; to step outside of it entirely is, therefore, "to lose the very ground of moral reason itself" (121). Lewis believed that character is formed by moral education, or as we become able to "just see" the moral maxims as the first principles of morality (124). Meilaender then raises two obvious questions in regards to Lewis' argument: How do different backgrounds affect a person's understanding of the *Tao*? (122) Is there a rule for resolving conflicting duties that are both founded on the *Tao*? (123) Meilaender's engaging summary of Lewis' concept of the *Tao* would have been strengthened by addressing Lewis' presupposition that, since the Fall, elevated human reason has the capacity to

grasp Natural Law. What is the postlapsarian effect on human reason and the *Tao*? Beyond a discussion of morality, this chapter examines epistemology: this question is certainly part of the epistemological dilemma.

“On Discernment,” the tenth chapter, by Joseph Cassidy, looks at two works: *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) and *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (1964). Cassidy provides a careful interpretation of about half the letters from *Screwtape*, and judiciously compares chapters of *Letters to Malcolm* to the writings of Ignatius of Loyola. Any teacher of *The Screwtape Letters* will find these brief analyses valuable and insightful. In his commentary on letter eight, for example, which focuses on “obedience and freedom,” Cassidy writes:

Lewis points out that God does not use irresistibility or irrefutability to overwhelm human souls. This is an important insight, for many Christians will have prayed to be ‘possessed’ by God. But in the Christian tradition, only Satan can ‘possess’ and God, in contrast, maximizes freedom by calling us to choose. (133)

Most Christians have difficulty praying, so *Letters to Malcolm*, like Ignatius’ *Exercises*, are a welcome contribution. For a person interested in the Catholic mystical prayer tradition, the latter half of this chapter will be quite inspiring.

Caroline Simon’s stimulating chapter “On Love” addresses a theme to which Lewis repeatedly returns. She begins with a careful summary of *The Four Loves* (1960), a book that initially appears rather straightforward in nature, but which has a subtle depth to it. Simon takes a clever and successful approach in dividing the book into two paradigms. The first breaks down Need-love, Gift-love, and Appreciative love; the second is a fourfold analysis of Affection, Friendship, Romantic Love, and Charity. Through most of the chapter, Simon breaks down the distinct types of loves described by Lewis (rather than discussing the theme in Lewis’ other writings), comparing and contrasting Lewis’ view to that of Augustine, Spencer, Nygren, and Dante. In several powerfully condensed paragraphs, she then applies these types to *The Great Divorce* and *Till We Have Faces*.

Ann Loades’ “On Gender,” summarizes and clarifies Lewis’ opposition to the ordination of women, as outlined in his provocatively titled essay, “Priestesses in the Church” (1948). The final section of the chapter concentrates on the mysterious aspects of gender found in Lewis’ second and third installments of his Ransom Trilogy, where masculine and feminine archetypes transcend biological gender. As Loades observes, Lewis characterized men as initiators and women as responders, yet we all are “feminine” in our response to God:

This may raise severe difficulties for men, given that Lewis thinks that the deficiencies of men mean that they are not masculine enough. He does not

make clear how to overcome the problem of the way men are to relate to God as if they, on the one hand, must strive to become sufficiently assertively 'masculine' while, on the other hand, becoming appropriately receptively 'feminine' as part of broader of humanity. (169–70)

The thirteenth chapter, by Judith Wolfe, explores Lewis' approach to the hierarchical cosmology of the ancients and medievalists. As we have seen in Michael Ward's recent—and seminal—scholarly work, Lewis was certainly drawn to this imagery, but, as Wolfe argues, Lewis eventually shifts away from this toward a more relational approach. Her excellent chapter is highlighted by the claim that Lewis' "own vision of spiritual hierarchy postulates not a quasi-scientific 'chain of being', but rather an 'analogy of love' between the relationships of God the Father and God the Son, Christ and humanity, father and child, husband and wife, and ruler and ruled" (182). This is not an easy distinction to make, however. She astutely adds, "but while the two versions of hierarchy are logically independent, they are nevertheless not easily separated in Lewis's writings" (182). This chapter initiates a large and insightful study that could easily evolve into a separate book.

Predictably, Stanley Hauerwas challenges Lewis' views on war and violence. Hauerwas is a well-known pacifist—a view not shared by Lewis. Hauerwas traces Lewis' own experience of serving on the Western Front during World War I, he explains Lewis' view of war as a necessity, and he argues, rationally, that Lewis should naturally have been a pacifist. According to Hauerwas, Lewis considered war "a species of punishment that may require our death or the death of the enemy, but we must not hate or enjoy hating those we kill" (192). Such views arise out of his belief in Natural Law (or the *Tao*), which is known to all people in all times. Hauerwas, however, remains unconvinced. To him, Lewis has made little effort "to understand the most defensible forms of Christian pacifism;" moreover, "non-violence is constitutive of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus (196). Therefore, after his conversion to Christianity, Lewis was wrong in rejecting pacifism and in failing to see how reason can be transformed. He understood "the difference that being a Christian makes for what it means to believe in God, but how he understood that difference did not deeply shape his thinking about war" (197). Hauerwas then raises the example of Lewis' interpretation of the expression "resist not evil," found in Matthew 5:39: Lewis' suggestion "that those hearing Jesus' words were 'private people in a disarmed nation' and, therefore, would not have thought 'Our Lord to be referring to war', is as nice an example one could wish for the kind of speculative reading associated with historical criticism" (197). Perhaps Lewis' view on violence was influenced by his attempt to sustain an ethic of chivalry (an idea foreshadowing Michael Ward's subsequent contribution)? While not

all will concur with Hauerwas' commentary on Lewis' critique of pacifism, few will fail to be intrigued by it.

In chapter fifteen, "On Suffering," Michael Ward argues that Lewis' personal struggle with suffering and evil contributed significantly to his conversion to Christianity: "Lewis became 'awake' by focusing his attention on Christ, the archetypal innocent sufferer, the true dying and rising God" (207). Lewis resolved his basic approach to suffering by coming to terms with the suffering and shame of the cross. He then carried this presuppositional standpoint into his composition of three works on the subject: *The Problem of Pain* (1940), "Five Sonnets,"¹ and *A Grief Observed* (1961). Ward's lengthy examination of *The Problem of Pain* presents one of the clearest analyses available of this often controversial book. His brief but effective analysis of Lewis' poem, "Five Sonnets" is particularly enjoyable and compelling. In response to one of the sonnets, for example, Ward explains that "the problem of pain . . . is that it presents itself as one thing (the frustration of our will) when in fact it is another thing (the requirement that our will should be surrendered into God's hands)" (213).

The third part of this volume addresses Lewis' spiritual autobiographies and popular fiction. Chapter sixteen is a perceptive critique by David Jasper on *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933) and *Surprised by Joy* (1955). The *Pilgrim's Regress*, he concludes, is the work of an immature writer who mixes allegorical and archetypal metaphors, lending "disharmony to the voice of the narrator" (226). Both books introduce the concept of joy and illustrates Lewis' developing rhetorical skills. Jasper describes how *The Pilgrim's Regress* "anticipates the more completely imagined fictional worlds" of his later works (228), and he praises the rhetorical devices employed in *Surprised by Joy*, where "the rhetoric is perfectly concealed within the fabric of the text" (229). This illustrates the difference between a writer who is a novice and one who brings a mature voice to his work, and perhaps explains why some feel little motivation to reread *The Pilgrim's Regress*, while *Surprised by Joy* remains to many fresh and compelling. Of particular interest here is the way Jasper connects the primary themes in these two volumes: specifically, the role of journey and *Sehnsucht* or sense of longing.

In the following chapter, T. A. Shippley navigates through Lewis' Ransom Trilogy—*Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength*. He begins with an amusing anecdote from Tolkien's *Letters* about how *Out of the Silent Planet* originated as a result of a conversation between him and Lewis about mythology. They each agreed to write a mythical work, one about space and one about time; they flipped a coin and Lewis got space. The most valuable part of this chapter charts the influence that various science fiction writers,

¹ C. S. Lewis, "Five Sonnets," nd, in *Poems*, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York, 1964), 125–7.

including Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and Charles Williams, had on Lewis. Given the considerable quantity of material published on the Ransom Trilogy in recent years, there seems little of surprise here.

In chapter eighteen, Jerry Walls examines *The Great Divorce* (1945). As Wall reminds us, Lewis believed that the reality of good and evil have a fixed nature, in stark contrast to Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. *The Great Divorce* thus presents powerful visual and moral images of the contrast between Heaven and Hell. Walls summarizes all this nicely, including propounding Lewis' idea that Hell is a state of mind. Some conservative readers have found the surreal setting of the book and its portrayal of freedom after death to be troublesome, a position Walls appears to share. In response, he advances three useful, important, and problematic, logistical and philosophical concerns. The first considers the chapter in which Pam seeks her son who has been taken from her due to her inordinate maternal love. The second resolves how "Lewis' notion that the saved were always in Heaven and the damned were always in Hell, with his dynamic view of freedom and character formation" (258). The third takes up Lewis' suggestion that universal salvation "remains a possibility" (259), an idea that he forcefully dismissed in *The Problem of Pain*.

Lewis' most popular writings, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950–6), are addressed in chapter nineteen. Alan Jacobs argues quite plausibly that the original order of publication is the best order to read the books, rather than the internal chronological arrangement now being pushed by HarperCollins. There is a nice section on how Lewis came to write the series and how various other writers influenced his methodology. Jacobs proposes that the continuous theme in the *Chronicles* is what he refers to as "disputed sovereignty." He makes a good case for this; after all, Narnia is "a realm in which authority is contested, in which the present and visible Queen of This World 'isn't a real queen at all' but rather a usurper, while the rightful King is frequently absent and invisible—but liable to return and assert his authority" (274). The chapter concludes with a summation of Lewis' cosmology as explained in Michael Ward's *Planet Narnia* (2008). If you have not read *Planet Narnia*, this section will certainly whet your appetite.

Lewis' favorite of his many writings was *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1956), a work that established him as a true mythopoeist. Peter Schakel probes the value and meaning of this highly acclaimed novel, and reminds us that it remained, conceptually, in Lewis' mind for nearly forty years before coalescing under the guidance of Joy Davidman, his future wife. The chapter includes a valuable summary of the story and a brilliant application of *The Four Loves* to Orual's various troubled relationships.

Many avid readers of Lewis remain strangers to his poetry. Chapter twenty-one, "Poet" by Malcomb Guite, is invaluable for those unfamiliar with—and those

who have already come to appreciate—Lewis’ verse. There is an insightful exploration of Lewis in contrast to other contemporary poets, which discusses Lewis’ discomfort with the modernist poetry of T. S. Eliot, among others. The section on Lewis as a “war poet” is particularly observant. Guite believes that Lewis’ poetry has been undervalued, and his contribution to this volume should go some way in dispelling that notion.

The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis is a wonderful book. There is nothing pedantic in the text. This reviewer has read nearly everything that Lewis has written, taught courses on him for over twenty years, and read numerous biographies and secondary works on Lewis, yet no individual work has provided the depth and breadth of scholarship on Lewis as this new volume. Each chapter presents something new. One of the most vivid impressions it makes is the discussion of Lewis’ professional scholarship—beyond and separate from his popular works of fiction and apologetics. Most admirers of Lewis’ writings know that he was a medievalist and Renaissance scholar, and are aware of his use of images drawn from these studies. But this book digs into writings not commonly read by the multitude, and is therefore a more informed study than most. Its readers will be in no doubt in regards to the respect Lewis’ scholarly works have generated and the high quality he reaches in his critical writing.

This volume also benefits from careful construction and editing. For a book with so many chapters and authors (twenty-one), all writing on one general topic, there is surprisingly little duplication. The authors generally paint a very sympathetic portrait of Lewis, and some may see this as a point of contention. The indisputable qualifications of the contributors, however, along with the high level of their scholarship and writing, should negate criticism of their sympathetic approach. In short, these efforts are best characterized as sympathy arising out of admiration, not blind disengagement of critical evaluation.

With a book as comprehensive, scholarly, and praiseworthy as this, it is a little disappointing that no attention has been paid to Lewis’ essay: “The Inner Ring” (1944), which describes the relationship of insiders and outsiders to established (and often powerful) groups. It is also unfortunate that little was done on Lewis’ critique of (or concern about) the emerging social sciences in the middle of the twentieth century, as we find expressed in works such as *That Hideous Strength* and “The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment” (1949).

Despite these minor omissions, the book demonstrates the overwhelming depth of Lewis’ writings and reaffirms his validity as a towering intellectual. A recurrent question is whether Lewis should be considered principally a rationalist or a romantic? This book clearly establishes that he is both. As Malcomb Guite has aptly expressed it, “There is an internal coherence between all his efforts in every field. Taken together these efforts constitute an attempt at the redemptive

reintegration of reason and imagination, the broken modes of our being and knowing” (308).

Readers who love Lewis the intellectual and scholar will enjoy the insights contained in the first section of this volume. Those who are drawn to Christian themes found in Lewis’ apologetic and imaginative writings will find much to their liking in the following section. Those who admire Lewis the storyteller will be delighted by its final section. And for those who simply cannot get enough of Lewis, the entire new *Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* will come close to satisfying their longings and, in the process, bring great “joy.”

Mark J. Hamilton
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Diana Pavlac Glycer, *The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community* (Kent, Ohio, 2007). xix + 293 pages. \$30.00. ISBN 9780873389914.

C. S. Lewis once famously wrote, “As for anyone influencing Tolkien, you might as well (to adapt the White King) try to influence a bandersnatch.”¹ This saying (and others like it) has been repeated numerous times by writers concerned with the two, or with the Inklings more generally. That the members of the Inklings read their works to one another and discussed them is, of course, undisputed. But did such readings and discussions influence the works read and discussed? *Prima facie* this might appear unlikely, and Professor Glycer has set herself the task of looking to see how far it is justified. Her own experience as a writer suggested that the denial of influence—even when made by members of the Inklings and not just by Lewis writing about Tolkien—“just didn’t make any sense” (xviii).

It should be disclosed at the outset that while Glycer’s subtitle refers only to Lewis and Tolkien, her book examines extensively the writings of the other members of the Inklings. Charles Williams figures prominently, of course, as does Owen Barfield; the works of a number of what might be described as the less prominent members of the Inklings are dealt with as well. Glycer has consulted numerous published and unpublished writings, and her book is a mine of information about them and their authors.

¹ Letter of 5 January 1957, in *C. S. Lewis, The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. by Walter Hooper, 3 vols. (San Francisco, 2004–7), 3:824.