

to them as a simplified version of *The Silmarillion* or a guide through Middle-earth, which it is certainly not. The danger of acquiring some misconceptions about Tolkien's legendarium is high with this one.

So, who can benefit from reading this book? Readers who are well-oriented in Tolkien's universe and its critical research and at the same time not too sensitive to Day's unorthodox interpretation, who are looking for some light reading to go with their afternoon tea or second breakfast, or who just desire another interesting artsy piece to add to their Tolkien fan book collections.

Reviewed by Martina Juričková

Tolkien's Library: An Annotated Checklist

By Oronzo Cilli
Luna Press, 2019.

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'One writes such a story not out of the leaves of trees still to be observed, nor by means of botany and soil-science; but it grows like a seed in the dark out of the leaf-mould of the mind: out of all that has been seen or thought or read, that has long ago been forgotten, descending into the deeps' – J.R.R. Tolkien (*Carpenter*, p. 126).

There have been many biographies written and published about what Tolkien has seen and thought – here, over the course of five years of research (and counting), Cilli attempts to document what Tolkien has read. The title of the book might lead us to think that he has listed the books that Tolkien owned during his lifetime. Were this volume to do only that, it would be a useful research tool for finding possible connections between Tolkien's writings and other authors', looking for inspirations or refutations to better understand Tolkien's own leaf-mould. *Tolkien's Library* goes well beyond such a simple checklist of 'primary' books owned by Tolkien though. It attempts to infer books that Tolkien read or was knowledgeable of through copious annotated notes for secondary sources as well – be they authors or books that his students wrote theses on, titles mentioned by him or close family and friends in interviews and letters, lectures that Tolkien gave, or references that Tolkien would have been exposed to while he worked on the *New English Dictionary* (now the *Oxford English Dictionary*) from 1919-1920.

As a research tool, *Tolkien's Library* does very well at positive confirmation. To find out if Tolkien read or had any opinion on Frank Herbert's *Dune*, looking at page 118 (entry 964) shows two primary sources, both unpublished

letters, where Tolkien states that he 'dislike[s] *DUNE* with some intensity.' For obvious reasons, it does rather poorly for books not listed. There is no entry for any books by Isaac Asimov – does this mean that Tolkien never had any exposure to his works, or that Cilli was unable to document any? There is no way to know based on this book. The sheer number of references, however – almost 2600 at the time of publication – means there is more than enough material for decades of reading to catch up with Tolkien. For example, a researcher interested in Tolkien and George MacDonald will find nine entries on pages 177-178, all with collaborating primary and secondary sources showing that Tolkien found him an important author, allowing the researcher to trace what Tolkien said and when, for each book. Information such as this will prove invaluable for validating existing research, but also discovery of new and interesting potential threads through casual browsing.

There is a note of caution that must be kept in mind when using this as a reference book, however, in order to not infer too much from the small nuggets of solid information that Cilli has assembled. A book may be included in this annotated checklist due to an ownership signature as seen in an auction, or due to Tolkien being given a copy. Beyond these bare facts, there is no indication of what Tolkien thought, or even if he read the cited work. Take for example entry 1009 by Richard Hoffman, 'The Theme of "Judgement Day II"' (p. 123). Cilli adds this to *Tolkien's Library* based solely on the fact that a copy was recorded as being sent by the author to Tolkien. Cilli does an excellent job annotating this entry with exactly this information and nothing more, and the reader should exercise the same caution.

Tolkien's Library is a powerful starting point for any research project about Tolkien and his possible inspirations. In the form of an annotated checklist, I expect it will not often be cited as a primary source of information. It is more a conduit between the researcher and hundreds of other primary sources. The value it adds is in the aggregation of all these other sources in a single place, well documented, with enough annotation to enable the reader to quickly move on. Cilli's meticulous research acts more like the librarian who knows where to find the information you are looking for – invaluable and praiseworthy, and hopefully not neglected in the acknowledgements.

Cilli has compressed a very large amount of information into the 432 pages of this book, and with that compression comes a lot of shorthand notation and his methodology for abbreviating and cross-referencing. The methods he has chosen make for a non-trivial amount of moving back and forth through the book to understand fully all of the information for a particular entry. Were Cilli to write everything out in longhand, though, the book would possibly double in length, so these shortcuts are fully understandable but do take some getting used to.

Beyond the primary 'Section A' that covers the book

entries themselves, there are five additional sections included – Section B lists Tolkien’s publications in chronological order (duplicating many entries from Section A, as Cilli has also documented copies of Tolkien’s own books that he is known to have owned); Section C quite usefully lists interviews and reviews; Section D covers Tolkien’s research students, their theses and which colleges they attended – useful to understand Tolkien’s breadth of knowledge through those he taught between 1929 and 1960; Section E is a checklist of all of the publications of the Early English Text Society from 1938-1972 – Tolkien was on the EETS committee during this time, and would have been at least aware of all of their publications; and Section F gives an overabundance of detail for the lectures that Tolkien is known to have given.

Lastly the book has multiple indexes, most of which are useful. I think the book would greatly benefit from adding one more index covering subject matter. It would multiply the usefulness of *Tolkien’s Library* tenfold in my opinion, to be able to see all the books that crossed Tolkien’s desk on a particular topic. The indexes that are present, however, do allow for easily finding all of the books by a particular author, or finding books by title.

A labour of love and meticulous research such as this is never finished, and never completely and correctly documented. Cilli maintains an online Addenda and Corrigenda for the book (tolkienslibrary.blogspot.com) with these updates.

Reviewed by Jeremy Edmonds

Works Cited

Carpenter, Humphrey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, 1st edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977)

Chilli, Oronzo, *Tolkien’s Library: An Annotated Checklist* (Edinburgh: Lunar Press, 2019)

Sub-Creating Arda: World-Building in J.R.R. Tolkien’s Work, Its Precursors and Its Legacies

Edited by Dimitra Fimi and Thomas Honegger
Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2019.

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This volume takes up the threads of Mark J.P. Wolf’s 2012 monograph *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation*. Wolf’s work provided a ‘grammar’ for discussing world-building as worthy of study and attention in its own right. Following that vein, *Sub-creating Arda* collects twenty essays which showcase diverse approaches for considering the world-building elements of various fantastic and fictional text-worlds – some of them more convincing than others. As the name suggests, this anthology is primarily concerned with Tolkien’s *Legendarium*, taking for granted the fact that it presents a supremely convincing example of a secondary world.

But it would be a mistake to think that this book is only about Tolkien. In fact, it is divided into three sections: five essays which consider the theoretical problems and solutions which world-building provides, nine essays focusing on world-building in Tolkien’s work, and six essays looking at world-building by other writers through a Tolkienian lens. Each of these sections has its gems, but it is also worth mentioning that many of these essays are best considered in dialogue with the other pieces in the collection. This review will take the approach of highlighting one essay from each of the volume’s three sections, and then suggest ways in which that essay can be read in dialogue with the others in the book.

In the first section, Massimiliano Izzo’s ‘Worldbuilding and Mythopoeia’ critiques Wolf’s grammar of subcreation by making a distinction between ‘worldbuilding’ and a ‘myth-making’ or ‘mythopoeia.’ By the former, Izzo means the scientific, quantitative, or computational aspects of a secondary world: economics, physics, and intricate magical systems borrowing from the physical sciences of the primary world. In explaining the latter set of terms, Izzo draws upon Tolkien’s seminal essay ‘On Fairy-stories,’ in which the things that lend verisimilitude to a secondary world are primarily mythical and linguistic constructs. Thus, there can be said to be a dialectical opposition, or at least a tension, between worldbuilding and myth-making. Izzo argues that Tolkien’s successors in the fantasy genre have often failed to hold this tension. Contemporary high fantasy authors have far exceeded the *Legendarium* in terms of volume, detail, and scale,