

**Jonathan B. Himes (ed.), *Truths breathed through Silver*,
Review by Charles Foster
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Truths Breathed through Silver: The Inklings' Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy. Ed. Jonathan B. Himes. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 160pp. ISBN 1-84718-444-8.

The tweedy men who made up the loose, shifting coalition of the Inklings were a variegated crowd. Apart from their tweed, their gender, their IQ, and their love of beer and books, they had only two things in common. They believed that myths contain deep, resonant, inescapable truths—truths that rule us. We will bow willingly or unwillingly to those truths, but bow we will. And they believed that Christianity was the supreme myth: the myth of which the others were more or less accurate foretastes.

Their respect for myth, and their fascination with the cultures in which their best loved myths had been most colourfully expressed, determined the shape of some of their writing. If myth is deep truth, the implicit reasoning seems to have been, deep truths are best expounded in myths. And so they set to work forging their own mythologies. Since the overarching Christian myth has a moral component, myth was morality's amanuensis too .

That is what I thought this book would be about. But it isn't. It is fascinating and welcome, but it is not about the Inklings' moral and mythopoeic legacy. It is an exhilarating, learned ragbag of essays on all sorts of things: Lewis on verbicide, Tolkien's treatment of the Fall, a history of libraries in Tolkien's Middle Earth, mathematics in the spirituality of George MacDonald, and more. Swashbuckling stuff, all of it, and some of it (particularly Himes' ponderings on the genesis and meaning of the appalling *Dark Tower*), timely and important. But it is an opportunity missed. There's a significant book to be written on the myth-making of the Inklings, qua Inklings. And please, when it is written, let's have none of the usual craven, uncritical deference to Lewis, but a manly assault on his corrosive, dangerously repercussive Platonism.

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