

Coming out soon

J. R. R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield and the Cosmic Christ

J. R. R. Tolkien and Owen Barfield were both part of the Inklings, a literary circle of the early 1930s to late 1940s, which has had great importance in shaping culture and literary tastes in the English-speaking world. The two authors offer us two very different worldviews, mirrored in the fact that they had little contact with and understanding for each other. They mostly passed each other by. And yet their contributions are highly complementary, and both just as needed.

This work looks at some of their purest literary imaginations (*The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silver Trumpet*, *The Rose on the Ash-Heap*) and does so within the context of an integral understanding of the two authors; biography as well as driving ideas. It finds two very different ways to create works of fantasy.

The Lord of the Rings has enjoyed an enduring and unabated success because it brings together past, present and future. Clothed in an otherworldly and mediaevalist garb (both in style and partly in themes) it speaks with urgency to the present. Past and future continuously interplay and weave into each other. When seen from an anthroposophical perspective Tolkien brings forward into the present the echoes of the Mysteries of the West, those Mysteries that interwove the paths to microcosm and macrocosm, and knowledge of far past and far future.

Barfield spoke with great clarity to the challenges of the Consciousness Soul in its search for meaning. His most imaginative works—*The Silver Trumpet* and *The Rose on the Ash-Heap*—speak of the evolution of consciousness and the possibility for human beings to regain a sense of participation with the macrocosm, no longer the original atavistic participation, but a conscious one. The two early works foretell all of Barfield's literary output. On the way to conscious participation sharpening our thinking to penetrate macrocosmic polarities leads to the attainment of Imagination as a first step towards rendering our knowledge a life-changing experience.

Tolkien brings us the echo of great Mysteries of the past in what they can offer prophetically to the present; Barfield indicates the way to the great Mysteries of the present and future. Two vastly different perspectives that can explain why they walked parallel paths as practically strangers to each other. And yet two very complementary paths.

Additionally, Tolkien and Barfield show us two aspects of the Christ Mystery in our time. Tolkien instinctively went from the historical Christ to the cosmic Christ; his *The Lord of the Rings* gives an expression of the Christ event, placed between macrocosm and microcosm. Barfield, taking his departure from the cosmic Christ in the expression of macrocosmic polarities, shows us his connection to the historical Christ. Together both authors point to the Christ in the etheric in our time.

In closing, this book forms in a sense the tenth chapter in the book *Aristotelians and Platonists: A Convergence of the Michaelic Streams in Our Time*. It explores the above polarity in the realm of literature.