

mythprint

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

VOL. 47 NO. 4

APRIL 2010

WHOLE NO. 333

Mervyn Peake's portrait of his wife, Maeve Gilmore, in 1940.



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Reviews, discussion group reports, news items, letters, art work and other submissions for *Mythprint* are always welcome. Please contact the editor for details on format, or send materials to:

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The Mythopoeic Society also publishes two other magazines: *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* (subscription \$25/year for U.S. Society members) and *The Mythic Circle*, an annual magazine publishing fiction, poems, etc. (\$8/issue for U.S. addresses). Subscriptions and back issues of Society publications may be purchased directly thorough our web site (using PayPal or Discover card), or you may contact:

Mythopoeic Society Orders Department

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Visit the Mythopoeic Society on the web at www.mythsoc.org.

Mythprint is the monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. To promote these interests, the Society publishes three magazines, maintains a World Wide Web site, and sponsors the annual Mythopoeic Conference and awards for fiction and scholarship, as well as local and written discussion groups.

Membership and Subscriptions

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My name is Philip Rose and I teach math and computer science at Carroll College here in Helena, Montana. I've been a subscriber to *Mythlore* and *Mythprint* for ... I don't know how many years, but many. I am 68 and I can't remember not being a member of the Mythopoeic Society.

I just wanted to drop you a quick note to tell you how much I enjoyed the latest issue (electronic); Vol. 47 No. 3; Whole No. 332. In both layout and content it is certainly one of the best issues I've ever seen. You have some excellent goals and the background to bring them to fruition. My own favorite parts of *Mythprint* are the book reviews; over the years I've found a number of books that I wouldn't have known of if not for the reviews.

Best wishes for all success in your position as the new editor. You are certainly off to a good start. I look forward to future issues of *Mythprint*.

Best wishes always,
Philip B. Rose
Carroll College

[My appreciation for your kind words, Phil. — JF.]

FILM REVIEW. *Avatar*. Directed by James Cameron. Reviewed by Diane Joy Baker.

Avatar is a beautifully moving comic book. No doubt: the visual elements in this film are some of the loveliest I've ever seen. It's almost on a par with seeing *The Wizard of Oz* switch from black-and-white to color. Pandora's setting is exquisite, even spiritually portentous. The characters (especially those we are supposed to sympathize with) are suitably well drawn, with ordinary, likeable qualities. From the first frame, our heartbeats synchronize with Jake Sully's (I hear echoes of that beloved New York airplane captain), as he emerges from cryogenic sleep. Who doesn't love that gritty determination, combined with his disability; a hero established in a single scene. Sam Worthington lives up to his name in an easy slide. Grace, played by all-time favorite Sigourney Weaver, is curmudgeonly, evoking *Alien* and *Gorillas in the Mist* both



at once. Even minor characters are well drawn. Too bad they didn't take as much trouble for the villains.

Underneath all those visual thrills and dollops of nobility, however, we have a two-dimensional plot-line. I don't know what the scenery is like in 3D, since I can't use the glasses, but I know what well-rounded (3D) characters are. Just watch any episode of *Babylon 5*. I have begun to formulate a rule for films: the more tech elements you see on screen, the thinner the chances that film-spinners will produce a complex, satisfying script. All those glorious colors are great: except when they're *all* that's on screen.

Consider the valued element that "The Company" is after: Unobtainium. Puh-leez! A friend of mine pointed out that the ore provides a super-conductor effect – at room temperature, which means tremendous energy. The problem? My friend should not have had to point this out to me. The writers should have. Yes, the stuff floated (as do the mountains). Visually powerful, but Cameron made no connection as to why they need the stuff, especially since The Company has Avatar units, sleek space ships, neat floating data screens that everyone carries around like sheets of plastic. Nor do they seem to lack energy. We have no notion of what Earth must be like, except for a single line indicating that "they trashed their own planet." Even the smarmy Company rep isn't talking.

In many films, broad strokes are necessary to get the story moving. Arthur C. Clarke's books (and films) are good examples. You know, when watching *2001* and *2010* that all the scientific architecture is under there, solid enough to walk upon. Clarke, though not a professional scientist, is at least scientific. Cameron's story is as slender as one of those limbs Sully crawls along as he gets used to his Avatar.

What do you get when you finish watching this film? A parable – and not a very good one. (Spoilers follow.) Bad Company exploits Noble Tribe for Greed. Add in Totally Evil Military Star who subverts Sully's mission with promises of restoring him to able-bodied glory – and blows up the Tribe's ancestral home. Jake plays Last Samurai, even evoking a mythical character from the tribe's past as he harnesses the Most Dangerous Flying Beastie to unite them. This is *after* the tribe discovers he's betrayed them. I'm sure a number of Earth Indian tribes would not keep him around after such a betrayal. Scalping might have been their response.

I kept thinking at every juncture, Cameron is far too easy on his characters. At least a few of the Tribe speak English. How did that happen, asks Sully. He gets no response. (Maybe they got it by sticking their

long braids into the Great Shining Tree, which knows all, of course.) He falls for a tribal princess (Zoe Saldana), and she conveniently falls for him. And the great military strategist can't figure out that he needs to pull the plug on Jake's Avatar? Grace is smart enough to figure this out, since they move the science base to a location unknown to higher-ups. Sure, there's a time or two when he's away from the slumped Avatar, which is in danger, as he wolfs down a hurried dinner out of the tank. So the Tribe picks him up and takes him along. (At one point, the war-chieftain points out that this is a "false body.") And of course, Grace gets killed off. Will she return as a ghost in the next film? Anything's possible!

All these inconsistencies soon begin to nibble away at every thrilling scene. Who can't enjoy all those flying scenes, the psychedelic effect of those paisley creatures, the subtle blues of the Na'vi skin, the glorious lights of the Home Tree, the colors which light up underfoot as people step on the purple ground cover? (The video for Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" kept running through my mind as I watched – an effect James Cameron couldn't have anticipated.) However, none of this involves the mind. It affects only emotions. That's because this is only a moving comic book. Lovely to watch, but after all the colors fade, there's not much to think about or take home with you, save for the giant "WOW" factor. I love a good SF film, but this barely rises to the level of "pulp." At least, when E. E. "Doc" Smith created his Lensman series, he did a little more than spray around a few pretty color-clouds. Appropriately, they won Oscars for the right elements (and only those elements): visuals. =

The Wind in the Footnotes. Reviews of two new annotated editions of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* by David Bratman.

It never rains but it pours: I am sitting here with library copies of two different annotated editions of *The Wind in the Willows*, one boldly titled *The Annotated Wind in the Willows*, edited by Annie Gauger (Norton, 2009), and the other more humbly titled *The Wind in the Willows: An Annotated Edition*, edited by Seth Lerer (Belknap Press, 2009). They're very different.

Anyone who ventures to annotate a classic should sit down and take a hard thought first: exactly what about this work needs annotation? And: do I have enough to say to justify inflicting a fat volume with wide margins on the public? The first classic modern annotation was Martin Gardner on *Alice*, a body of work just full of obscure mathematical jokes and literary allusions that would greatly benefit the reader by being explained. Now we're down to the simple, straightforward pastorales of Kenneth Grahame.

Lerer is the annotator who doesn't have enough to say. His book is full of enough dismayingly-long blank spaces through interesting parts of the narrative that you wonder why he bothered. At least he's sober and scholarly about what he does say. Most of his annotations are dictionary references elaborating on word usage, with occasional literary allusions, mostly to authors pre-dating Grahame. There's a rather ponderous notation on his p. 238 regarding the one actual language-prescriptivist argument among the characters in the book. (Don't tell me you don't remember this.)

Gauger does not worry much about meanings of words, though she

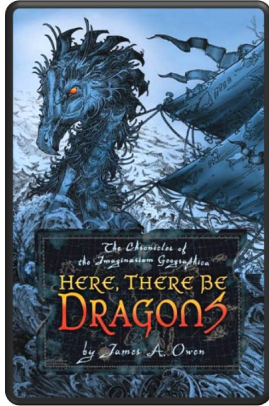
Do I have enough to say to justify inflicting a fat volume with wide margins on the public?

does annotate this one, rather more succinctly, on her p. 280, but if you compare the two annotations you'll find the worrying little fact that, while Lerer quotes a book cited in the OED, clearly identifying the source book, Gauger makes the point in almost exactly the same words without revealing that this came from anywhere. In some circles, this would be called plagiarism. Uh-oh.

Nor is that Gauger's only obvious mistake. Annotating the word "bus" in "Wayfarers All" on p. 209, she quotes A.D. Godley's frantically humorous Latin invocation against the motor buses on the streets of Oxford, adding the common error that "J.R.R. Tolkien illustrated [it] in 1927," which he did not; he owned a copy of a broadside of the poem printed that year, illustrated by Iain Macnab (*J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, catalog of a Bodleian exhibition in 1992, p. 85; the reproduction of the broadside on p. 86 has possibly given rise to the misattribution).

If Gauger isn't much interested in the definitions of words, she does make comments on the development of the text, which is good (Lerer ignores this), and comparisons to other authors including later ones up to J.K. Rowling (another clang on p. 4-5 where she claims that Grahame's depiction of rabbits as stupid was shared by A.A. Milne; actually, Milne's Rabbit is his only animal character with any brains at all, and the quote from *House at Pooh Corner* she gives in support of her argument only proves that Rabbit is fussy and pompous and that Eeyore is condescending and insulting), and lots and lots of boldly speculative source notes for





NEWSFEED

A FILM ADAPTATION of James A. Owen's novel, *Here, There Be Dragons* (Volume I in the *Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica*; Simon & Schuster, 2006), is in the early stages of development, slated for release in 2011. Recent buzz has it that Travis Adam Wright has gotten the job of adapting the novel (and the next sequel, *The Search for the Red Dragon*). Most recently, Wright penned the screenplay for the 2008 thriller, *Eagle Eye*, which starred Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monaghan. Rick Porras, a co-producer of the New Line *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy will produce the Imaginarium film series. Porras was also a second unit director for the Peter Jackson juggernaut. *The Dragon's Apprentice*, the fifth installment (of seven) in the *Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica* is due out from Simon & Schuster this Fall. James A. Owen will be attending Mythcon 41, the annual conference of the Mythopoeic Society, this July in Dallas, Texas.

SELECTED UPCOMING EVENTS



45th International Congress on Medieval Studies. May 13-16, 2010. Kalamazoo, Michigan. [REDACTED]



Baycon 2010. May 28-31, 2010. Hyatt Regency, Santa Clara CA. [REDACTED]



Infinitus Harry Potter Fan Conference. July 15-18, 2010. Orlando, Florida. [REDACTED]



Comic-Con 2010. July 22-25, 2010. San Diego Convention Center. [REDACTED]



Confluence 2010. The 22nd Annual Literary Sci-Fi Convention in Pittsburgh. July 23-25, 2010. Doubletree Hotel, Pittsburgh Airport.



Edge of the Wild Tolkien Art Exhibition. August 13-16, 2010. Redesdale Hall, Moreton-in-Marsh, England.



The Annual Convention of the Dorothy L. Sayers Society. August 13-16, 2010. University of Nottingham. [REDACTED]

Oxonmoot 2010. September 24-26, 2010. Annual meeting of the Tolkien Society. Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. [REDACTED]



H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival and CthulhuCon. October 1-3, 2010. Hollywood Theatre, Portland, Oregon. [REDACTED]



Omentielva Cantea: The Fourth International Conference on Tolkien's Invented Languages. August 11-14, 2011. Universidad Polit cnica de Valencia, Spain. [REDACTED]



The Return of the Ring: Sponsored by the Tolkien Society. Loughborough University (England), August 16-20, 2012. [REDACTED]



Festival in the Shire: August 13-15, 2010. Conference, Collector's Exposition, and Festival. Y Plas, Machynlleth, Wales. [REDACTED]



Coming Soon in Mythprint

- Interviews with Verlyn Flieger and Ted Nasmith
- A scholar-in-residence report from the Kilns
- Conference reports from Oklahoma and Vermont
- News, events, and announcements

Discussion Groups

The Mythopoeic Society has members throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries; the lucky ones are able to find other people interested in the Inklings, myth, and fantasy literature close enough geographically to meet on a regular basis. The Society sponsors Discussion Groups in several different states in the U.S., with a number of additional groups in the process of forming and active.

Groups are listed as **Active** or **Inactive**. Groups that wish to be listed in the Active category should regularly update the Secretary with their meeting and discussion plans. Groups are also encouraged to share reports of their activities with the Secretary for inclusion in *Mythprint*.

Groups that wish to become active should contact the Secretary and inform her of their first meeting, topic, time, location and contact person. Groups that have not yet chosen to become Chartered, or those who are interested in creating a new Mythopoeic Society-sponsored discussion or special interest group, please complete our group charter form at <http://www.mythsoc.org>.

Marion VanLoo
Membership & Discussion Group Secretary

memberships@mythsoc.org

Active Groups

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles/Pasadena: *Mydgard*

Lee Speth, [REDACTED]
Sunday, May 16, 2:30 pm: *Alice in Wonderland*, dir. by Tim Burton.
Sunday, June 20, 2:30 pm: *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke. Both meetings at Garfield Park, on Mission St. in South Pasadena (two blocks east of Fair Oaks, as near as we can get to the southwest corner of the park).

San Francisco Bay Area: *Khazad-dum*

Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
June 13: *Earthquake Weather*, by Tim Powers. At Edith & Amy's, 2:00 PM.
September 12: *The Legend of Sigurd & Gudrun*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. Contact Edith for location. 2:00 PM.
December 4: The Annual Reading and Eating Meeting. At Edith and Amy's at 6:00 PM.

COLORADO

Denver area: *Fanuidhol* ("Cloudy Head")

Patricia Yarrow, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
May 16: Game day: we'll be looking at, and possibly trying, board games with fantasy themes, particularly those inspired by *The Lord of the Rings*
June 13: Mythopoeic Award nominees or recent fantasy
July 11: Mythopoeic Award nominees
August 15: *Coyote Road: Trickster Tales* (anthology) edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling
September 12: Classic fantasy: *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, by Lord Dunsany
October 10: Scholarly work: *The Owl, the Raven and the Dove* by G. Ronald Murphy
November 7: *Storied Treasure* by Bailey Phelps
December 12: Recent works by Terry Pratchett

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington & Suburbs: *Knossos*

Mimi Stevens, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
March 19: *In the Land of Invented Languages* by Arika Okrent. At Brent's, [REDACTED]
April 16: *Coyote Blue* by Christopher Moore. At Mimi's, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

HAWAII

Oahu: *Sammath Naur*

Steve Brown, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Or, Ken Burtress- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
April 18: *Lavinia*, by Ursula K LeGuin
May 22: Topic: Ghosts
June 20: *The Magician*, by Lev Grossman
July 18: *The Lost Symbol*, by Dan Brown
August 21: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, by Betty Smith
September 18: *Garlic and Sapphires*, by Ruth Reichl
October 16: *A Game of Thrones*, by George R.R. Martin
November 13: *South of Skye*, by Steven Goldsberry.

IOWA

Decorah: *Alfheim*

Doug Rossman, 1316 Blue Grass Dr., Decorah IA 52101.
Email: rossmado@luther.edu
March: Lloyd Alexander's *The Book of Three & The Black Cauldron*.
April: *Brisngamen* by Diana Paxson.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis-St. Paul: *Rivendell*

David Lenander, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
TBA: *Thirteenth Child*, by Patricia Wrede.
TBA: *The Magician's Book*, by Laura Miller.
TBA: *Iolanthe*, by Gilbert and Sullivan

NEVADA

Reno: *Crickhollow*

Joanne Burnett, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Crickhollow
March: *Pandemonium*, by Daryl Gregory
April: *Lavinia*, by Ursula K. LeGuin
May: *The Bell at Sealey Head*, by Patricia McKillip

OREGON

Portland: *Bywater Inklings*

Gary Lundquist, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh: *Fantasy Studies Fellowship*

Lori Campbell, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

WASHINGTON

Seattle: *Mithlond*

John D. Rateliff, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee: *The Burrahobbits*

Jeffrey & Jan Long, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Note: *Burrahobbits* is currently full to overflowing with members. If you live in the Milwaukee area and would like to be a part of a discussion group, why not start your own? Contact the Discussion Group Secretary for more details.

Inactive/Prospective Groups

CALIFORNIA

Oakland: *C.S. Lewis Society of California*

David J. Theroux, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

FLORIDA

Tampa Bay: *Hobbiton*

Paul S. Ritz, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

North Central Florida: *Eryn Galen*

B.L. McCauley, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

ILLINOIS

Peoria: *The Far Westfarthing smial*

Mike Foster, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

INDIANA

Central Indiana: *Cerin Amroth*

Ellen Denham, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge: *Roke*

Sally Budd, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor area: *Galadhremmin-Ennorath*

Dave Lovelace, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MISSOURI

St. Louis: *The Khazad*

Gary & Sylvia Hunnewell [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

St. Louis: *Imladris*

Tonia O'Neal, The Tolkien Adventure Community, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NEW YORK

New York: *Heren Istarion*

(The New York Tolkien Society)

Anthony Burdge & Jessica Burke, The New York Tolkien Society, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte: *The Carolina Tolkien Society*

Matt & Renita Peeler [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

OHIO

Akron:

David Staley [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

OREGON

Mid-Willamette Valley Area

Donovan Mattole, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PENNSYLVANIA

Lancaster Area: *C.S. Lewis and Friends*

Neil Gussman, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia: *The Columbia C.S. Lewis Society*

Nina Fowler, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Special Interest Group

The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship

Carl Hostetter, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Newsletter, Vinyar Tengwar.

Journal, *Parma Eldalamberon*: Christopher Gilson, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Active Correspondence Groups

Once Upon A Time (children's fantasy)

Laura Krentz, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Correspondence circular. Issues come out every other month, on the even numbered months. Our membership is small; we would welcome new members. Interested people can contact Laura for a sample issue.
[REDACTED]

Online Discussion Groups

Mythsoc Announcements

Society announcements

Sign up: [REDACTED]

or contact Joan Marie Verba at [REDACTED]

Mythsoc E-List

Society activities and general book-related discussion.

Sign up: [REDACTED]

or contact Joan Marie Verba at [REDACTED]

LiveJournal Mythopoeic Society discussion forum

Society activities and general book-related discussion, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. It is also a place to talk about The Mythopoeic Society and to post Society News. Sign up: [REDACTED] or contact Lisa Deutsch Harrigan: [REDACTED]

Facebook Group

Society activities and general book-related discussion.

Friend "The Mythopoeic Society" or contact Lisa Deutsch Harrigan: at [REDACTED]

JANET BRENNAN CROFT, ED. *Tolkien and Shakespeare: Essays on Shared Themes and Language*. Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2007. ISBN 978-0-7864-2827-4. tp, 327 pp., \$35.00. Reviewed by Merlin DeTardo.

Introducing *Tolkien and Shakespeare*, Janet Brennan Croft writes that its essays are intended either to show William Shakespeare's influence on J.R.R. Tolkien, or to achieve new insights through examination of motifs common to both authors. Croft also summarizes Tolkien's knowledge of Shakespeare's plays and explains why Tolkien's much-reported dislike of Shakespeare is somewhat exaggerated. Several contributors repeat Croft's points in their articles.

Eighteen essays are arranged into four broad categories. First is "Faërie", whose four studies begin with Allegra Johnston's account of the differences between Shakespeare's traces to Celtic and Germanic traditions, respectively. Tolkien confuses Gimli with Boromir "Silmarillion" texts (13, 16), and of the Rings of Power (17). The next essay, by Jessica Burke, follows the history of diminutive fairies from Shakespeare through Tolkien's own early poetry, emphasizing their port-theater. Burke's awkward prose obscures some interesting ideas, including a proposal that Elwing represents Tolkien's mature response to the winged imagination.



Shakespeare's *Midsummer* mechanicals are the subject of Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario's article. She finds them similar as surrogates for readers, as English country types, in their chattiness and humor, and in their surprising depth. Romuald I. Lakowski ably shows how different aspects of medieval fairy queens appear in Shakespeare's Titania and Tolkien's Galadriel, but not why those aspects were selected. However, he finds a better hobbit analogue to "Bottom's Dream" than Do Rozario does.

The first of six essays on "Power" is a lively study by the late Daniel Timmons, who offers a good defense both of Tolkien's presentation of war and of the cause of the West in *The Lord of the Rings*. Shakespeare's *Henry V* is offered for contrast: Timmons asks why critics are kinder to Shakespeare and Harry than to Tolkien and Aragorn. Timmons's attempted enlargement of the argument to address contemporary attitudes to war is less successful. Kayla McKinney Wiggins then compares epic and tragic literary modes, using *The Lord of the Rings* and *Hamlet* as her respective examples. She also considers the works' princes (referencing Machiavelli) and attitudes toward vengeance. (Concerning revenge in Tolkien, also see Brian Rosebury's article in *Tolkien Studies* 5.)

Judith J. Kollmann contrasts Aragorn and Henry V as kings in waiting, yielding some good insights into Aragorn's appeal. Her attempt to show that Tolkien intends Aragorn as a response to Hal falters, beginning with her title, which references not the Henriad but *The Merchant of Venice*. In a short study, Annalisa Castaldo argues that only in Shakespeare's history plays could Tolkien have found a model for his mock-historical fiction, for such ideas as choice versus fate and a role for commoners. Castaldo is silent on three intervening centuries whose historical literature sometimes addresses those subjects.

Inspired by Michael Drout's analysis in *Tolkien Studies* 1, Leigh Smith examines four themes shared by *King Lear* and *The Lord of the Rings*: misguided fathers, kingship, disguises, and the nature of evil. Smith means to show Shakespeare's influence, but that needs a longer study. However, her comments on the leafy crowns of Lear and Tolkien's Cross-roads king are nice. Smith incorrectly claims there are more occurrences of "nothing" in *Lear* than in Tolkien's story (150). In Anne C. Petty's essay, Shakespeare serves only for contrast; her suggestions as to more direct connections to Tolkien are insufficiently developed. Petty does better applying Aristotle's definition of catharsis to Thorin, Denethor, and Fëanor, though the first two are mere supporting characters, while Fëanor, the central figure of a few chapters, is presented at a distance that obscures his tragedy. Tolkien's most significant tragic figure, Túrin, is entirely absent from this collection, which shows why *The Children of Húrin* was needed.

There are three essays under the heading "Magic." In the first, Nicholas Ozment reminds readers that Gandalf's angelic nature distinguishes his wizardry from the (to Jacobean) morally dubious magic of Prospero in *The Tempest*. Frank P. Riga, noting that Merlin is variously portrayed as a good or evil figure, believes this duality influ-

enced the beneficent and tyrannical aspects of Prospero, with Tolkien dividing these characteristics between Gandalf and Saruman. Croft's own contribution, reprinted from *Seven* 21, examines *Macbeth*, the best-known Shakespearean source of motifs in *The Lord of the Rings*. She expands a little on earlier work by Tom Shippey. Since Croft knows that Tolkien acknowledged the partial influence of the Scottish play on the Ents, why does she allow Riga (206) and Maureen Thum (229) to claim that there are no examples of Shakespeare directly affecting Tolkien?

Thum starts the last section, which includes five papers on "The Other," by comparing *Twelfth Night's* Viola and Olivia to Éowyn and Galadriel, respectively. I think she is wrong that Tolkien masks Galadriel's power in conventionality, while a claim that critics "frequently" overlook Galadriel's importance requires more than one citation (245). Also, it's not true that Tolkien's writings include "no female witches whatsoever" (247) – see "The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun". Given Thum's subject, it is odd that Robert Gehl finds that "Tolkien's work does not address gender" significantly (251). Gehl's attempt to compare Frodo and Gollum to Iago and Othello is sloppy and tendentious. In Gehl's reading, the "dominant culture" of the West in Middle-earth is "challenged by an outsider", Gollum (251) – but doesn't Mordor dominate, with Frodo as the challenger? Gehl reads racially where moral analysis is called for: he terms the Nazgûl a "genetic perversion" of humankind, with Gollum "blackened by Sauron's power" as a "miscegenated foil" for the hobbits (258). His conclusion completely misreads Tolkien: in "the rise of Men", Gehl sees the marginalization of Orcs (264), but not the loss of Elves. Dissenting opinions are either dismissed out of hand (Patrick Curry, Sandra Straubhaar) or not mentioned (Christine Chism, Anderson Rearick).

Anna Fähræus finds antecedents for Tolkien's ideas about death and decay in the *Richard* plays. Imagery in Clarence's dream suggests the Dead Marshes and the Ringwraiths, while language in Gaunt's speech evokes Númenor. Lisa Hopkins notes similarities between Gollum and Caliban, particularly as Shakespeare's "monster" has been interpreted in light of evolutionary theory. She also touches on novels by Shelley, Stoker, Haggard, Buchan, and Huxley. Both essays need some correction: Sméagol and Déagol don't fight in a boat (271). Morgoth not Sauron is defeated as the First Age ends (273). Men awake but do not "arrive" (in Beleriand) when the Sun first rises (276). A remark by Pippin is attributed to Sam (290). There is a confusing reference to the "lost language of Númenor" (285). And Buchan's use of "Mirkwood" came too late, in 1941, to influence Tolkien (287).

In the collection's final entry, Charles Keim analyzes Gollum's "Slinker" and "Stinker" personas and suggests their division was influenced by Othello's final scene. Keim is careless with the textual history of *The Hobbit*, struggles with Tolkien's geography, and misreads Othello's circumcision as evidence of his conversion to Christianity (299, 302).

The cover illustration is probably supposed to represent Dunsinane Castle. Croft's index, like her introduction, is good. Infrequent typos include "Sare Hole" for "Sarehole" (62), "in media res" for "in medias res" (134), "Ilthilien" for "Ithilien" (144), and "Smégol" for "Sméagol" (271). Factual errors are more common. In addition to those noted above, some writers confuse Tolkien's books with Peter Jackson's films (which are regularly cited, usually to no advantage). So Gehl describes "Gollum's screams of 'Baggins' and 'Shire'" (263). Keim mentions occasions when Gollum "casts the stones at Sam" (302). Riga claims Gandalf won't "even touch the Ring" (210). And Fähræus has the hobbits go straight from the Ferry to the *Pony* (271). But the main problem with *Tolkien and Shakespeare* is that most of its essays are neither thorough enough to convincingly show that Shakespeare is Tolkien's source, nor expansive enough to demonstrate why comparison between their works was needed. =

everything from scenery to character motivation. They do push the text off the page at times, requiring flipping back and forth to find the annotations. This is not always superior to Lerer's blank space. Neither annotator has any comment to make on why Ratty says that he is both afraid and not afraid of the piper at the gates of dawn. I'd have thought this a point well worth literary discussion. Gauger does provide a note at this spot, which one turns to eagerly only to discover that it's to inform you of ... a binding error in the Bodleian's copy of the manuscript. How anti-climactic and unnecessary can you get?

Lerer has very few illustrations except for a color section; Gauger has lots of illustrations and photos. She shows a particular partiality for the truly ghastly work of one Wyndham Payne, who illustrated a 1920s edition of the book, and includes relatively few of Ernest Shepard's. And speaking of illustrations, here's *The Illustrators of The Wind in the Willows, 1908–2008* by Carolyn Hares-Stryker (McFarland, 2009), covering a cast beginning with a trickle and spreading into a flood in recent years. The illustrations book is a work of compilation but not of scholarship, and I can't highly recommend either of the annotated editions. An interleaved edition of both would be worse than either; the ideal annotated *Wind*, if any, would be about halfway between them. =

BROOKE MCELLOWNEY. *Pibgorn Rep: A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Kennebunk, Maine: Pib Press, 2008, paperback, 176 pages, \$26.99, ISBN 978-0-9788315-1-6. Reviewed by David Emerson.

One of the great things about Shakespeare's plays is how infinitely adaptable they are. Not counting modern retellings like *West Side Story* or *Kiss Me Kate*, there are still a lot of different ways to do the originals. I've seen *Richard III* set among organized-crime families in London's East End, *Romeo and Juliet* in the context of L.A. street gangs, King Lear cast as the CEO of LearCorp, and *As You Like It* transposed to 19th-century Japan. Since the original texts are almost completely devoid of stage directions (save entrances & exits) and descriptions, directors are free to impose their own visions onto the scripts. Now cartoonist Brooke McEldowney has gone one better, and presented *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a film noir Busby Berkeley musical screwball sex comedy – in comic-strip form!

McEldowney, creator of the stylish and sexy newspaper strip "9 Chickweed Lane," started an equally stylish and sexy online-only comic a few years ago called "Pibgorn." At first it was a cute little thing about a cute little fairy named Pibgorn, but Brooke realized he could do a lot of things online that no newspaper syndicate would allow, in terms of format as well as content. In a sequence running from February 2006 through March 2007, he took his characters from "Pibgorn," filled out the cast with some "9 Chickweed Lane" characters, and at the rate of three panels a week, had them run through Shakespeare's most famous comedy. The completed play was finally collected in book form, with a few panels added and a few altered, and is now available directly from the author/artist (one can order via email at pibpress@verizon.net).

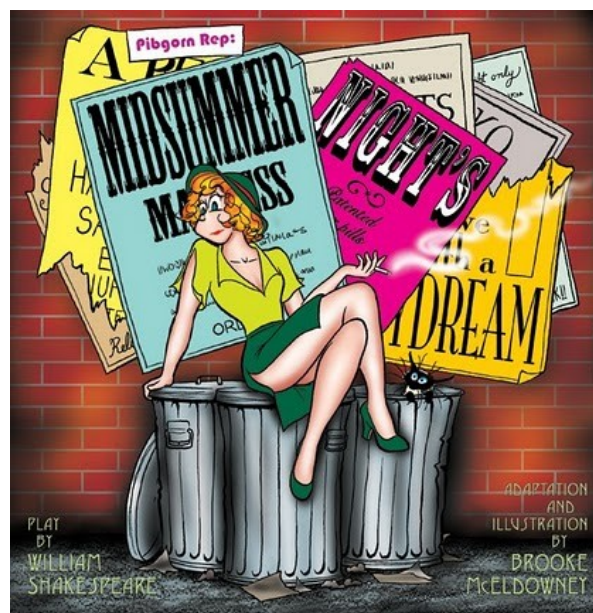
The art is beautiful. McEldowney mixes a cartoony line with exquisite colors and shading, creating an unusual effect that manages to be both 2- and 3-dimensional at the same time. He varies his layout effectively, sometimes cramming a lot of small talking-head panels onto a page, sometimes juxtaposing two or three oddly-shaped panels, sometimes filling the whole page with one scene. Even judging it simply as a comic, it is impressively done.

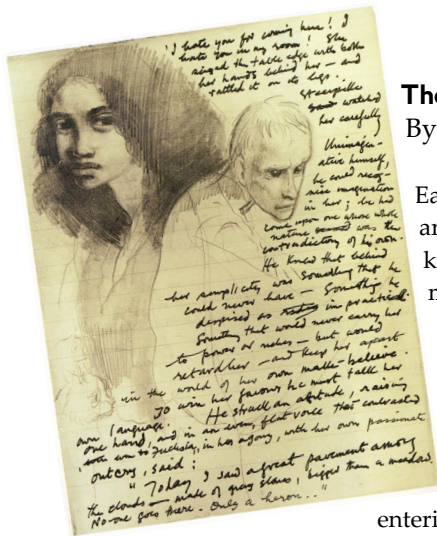
But the truly wonderful thing about *Pibgorn Rep* is the interpretation of the characters and settings. He has taken a few liberties with gender, so that Hermia's father Egeus becomes her mother Egea, Bottom and the other "rude mechanicals" (except for Peter Quince) are all chorus girls, and most importantly, Puck is female ("played" by Pibgorn herself); this last substitution creates an erotic component to the relationship between Puck and Oberon, and adds dimension to the Oberon/Titania antagonism. Athens has become a fairly modern city (approximately 1940's era), and the wood where the lovers run off to has become "The Wood," a nightclub/hotel. Oberon dresses (and acts) like a Mafia don. Titania's "Indian boy" is no child, but a dark and handsome gigolo (which makes much more sense out of Oberon's issue with him).

Did I mention Busby Berkeley? There's a production number when Titania retires and bids her fairies sing her to sleep. They come strutting out as scantily-clad Vegas showgirls, and the tuxedo-clad Indian "boy" rises from the grand piano he's been playing and does a tap dance that ends with a strip tease. The "Pyramus and Thisby" playlet at the end also ends with a chorus line, complete with top hats and canes and jazz hands.

This is the sexiest interpretation of Shakespeare I've ever seen. Couples don't just kiss, they make out passionately. There are plenty of butts groped, thighs grabbed, skirts raised, and heads thrown back with closed eyes and gasping mouths. It doesn't hurt that the gorgeously-drawn female leads spend most of their time in evening gowns.

There's some very funny comedy, too. Dirty looks and double-takes abound; McEldowney comments on the spoken lines with often-hilarious facial expressions and body language. The scene near the end when Theseus comes upon the sleeping lovers is classic slapstick that wouldn't be out of place in a Bugs Bunny cartoon. But in spite of all these alterations and reinterpretations, Shakespeare still shines through. Like most directors, McEldowney had to make some cuts here and there, but all the words on the page are the original lines, and they all make sense in their new contexts. This is a worthy addition to the large and growing body of Shakespeare plays produced for today's audiences. =





The New Home of the Mervyn Peake Archive. By Jason Fisher.

Earlier this month, the British Library announced that it has acquired the complete archive of British author, Mervyn Peake (1911–1968), for £410,000. Peake is best-known, of course, for his Gormenghast series, long beloved by Mythopoeic Society members, but he was also an accomplished poet, artist, and dramatist.

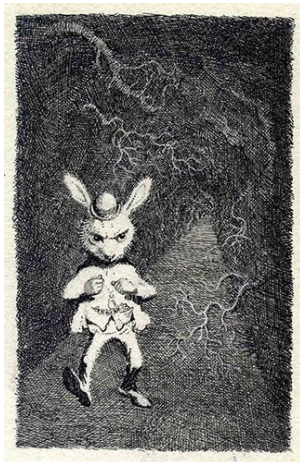
From the British Library's announcement to the press: "Dating from 1940 through to his death in 1968, the archive represents the majority of Peake's literary output and contains a significant amount of unpublished material [...]. It also contains a collection of personal letters and postcards from Peake to his wife, Maeve Gilmore, including nine letters from Germany when he was commissioned as a war artist by *The Leader* magazine, observing war-crimes trials in Germany, and entering the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp."

The British Library's acquisition represents an enormous amount of material, including:

- 39 holograph notebooks comprising the complete drafts of the Gormenghast novels, with revisions, accompanying sketches, plot summaries, and other marginalia;
- The complete set of 65 original drawings and 9 preliminary sketches made by Peake to accompany Lewis Carroll's *Alice* novels;
- An extensive collection of letters with many correspondents, including C.S. Lewis, Grahame Greene, Laurence Olivier, Dylan Thomas, and Orson Welles;
- A draft of the story, *The White Chief of the Umzimbooboo Kaffirs*, written when Mervyn Peake was just ten years old;
- Manuscripts and typescripts of Peake's plays, including *The Wit to Woo*;
- The unpublished draft of the sequel to the Gormenghast trilogy, written by Maeve Gilmore (Peake's widow pictured on the cover of this issue), based on Peake's notes. The draft was discovered earlier this year.
- Approximately 200 leaves of poetry, much of it previously unpublished.



Sebastian Peake expressed his gratitude by saying, "I know I speak on behalf of the whole family when I say how absolutely delighted we are that the extensive Mervyn Peake literary archive has been acquired by one of the world's great libraries. Beyond the immense satisfaction this brings to the inheritors of the work, the decision vindicates my mother's unswerving belief in her husband's art. Whether his novels, plays, poetry, or the illustrations to some of the best-loved texts in the English language, my mother always felt strongly that this artistic eclecticism should one day be shared with the nation. 2011 being the centenary of my father's birth in China, it is a fitting moment to thank both my father, for a wonderful legacy, my mother for her dedication to promoting it, and the British Library for making her wish come true" (quoted from British Library press release, 4 April 2010).



According to the British Library's Curator of Modern Literary Manuscripts, Rachel Foss: "Mervyn Peake occupies an almost unique position as a creative artist equally gifted in literature and art. The acquisition of his complete archive now allows researchers to view Peake's life and work as an integrated, organic whole, and to understand the way his creative endeavours were balanced across an extraordinary interplay of text and image."

The archive opens to scholars sometime in the first part of 2011. For more information on the collection, contact Chloé Titcomb, Press Assistant, British Library at chloe.titcomb@bl.uk. On a personal note, I would like to thank Sebastian Peake for his kind permission to reproduce the paintings and manuscript pages accompanying this article. All images are the sole property of the Mervyn Peake Estate. ≡

The Mythopoeic Society



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