

mythprint

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

VOL. 47 NO. 5

MAY 2010

WHOLE NO. 334

The Kinslaying at Alqualondë. © Ted Nasmith, 2004.



The Kinslaying at Alqualondë (sketch). © Ted Nasmith.

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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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Send other Correspondence to:

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Deadlines for receiving material for each issue of *Mythprint*
are the 1st of the preceding month.

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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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

Mythopoeic Society membership: \$12/year includes an
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Many Lovely Students and One Much Too Late Night: A Report on Tolkien at Vermont 2010. By Leslie A. Donovan.

A little more than a year ago, I received an email message from Tolkien scholar Chris Vaccaro asking me to be the 2010 keynote speaker for the seventh annual "Tolkien at Vermont" conference. I was excited to accept his invitation not only because the conference theme "Tolkien in the Classroom" is a topic I have done a lot of work on recently, but also because I had heard such positive reviews of this conference over the last few years.

Glad to have the chance finally to experience this conference for myself, I arrived in Burlington, Vermont, to be charmed and inspired by the many immense red brick, white-columned, Revolutionary Era buildings gracing the University of Vermont campus and the nearby downtown area. Such sights made a westerner used to pueblo-style architecture, like me, feel as if I had truly traveled to another country.

On my first evening in Burlington, I was treated to a gourmet Italian dinner by Chris Vaccaro and enjoyed conversation with him and another of the conference speakers, Matt Dickerson (author of *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings*, a 2004 Mythopoeic Scholarship nominee). During that conversation, I learned that the majority of the audience for the conference would be undergraduate students. On one hand, that knowledge truly delighted me, as students are always my favorite audience. Yet, on the other hand, understanding this made me suddenly anxious about the speech I had worked on for the past several weeks. Since the conference theme was "Tolkien in the Classroom," I had assumed that the audience would be primarily teachers and so had tailored my talk to that audience.

The more I thought about making my speech to students, the more horrified I became. To try to correct my error, I missed what later sounded to have been a very enjoyable Open-mike fireside Tolkien reading and performance that evening in order to stay up until 4:00 a.m. revising my speech to try to make it more suitable for students. But, frankly, I am just too old these days for that to have been a wise choice, no matter how necessary it seemed to me at the time.

So, Saturday morning, after a few hours of sleep, I straggled in a few minutes late to the 8:30 a.m. session. As bleary-eyed as I was, I appreciated the first session's two papers "Reading the Ring as an Exemplary Figure: The Council of Elrond as a Model for Teaching *The Lord of the Rings*" by Andrew Hallam and "Tolkien

in the Environmental Classroom" by Matt Dickerson. Hallam, a graduate student from the University of Denver, introduced some theoretical perspectives on how themes from the Council of Elrond scene might serve to parallel what happens in an actual classroom setting. Then, Dickerson, a Middlebury College professor, gave a highly engaging presentation on effectively using Tolkien's works in conjunction with more traditional environmentalist writers.

The second session featured papers by Rich Fahey, a recent graduate and one of Chris Vaccaro's former students from the University of Vermont, and Peter Grybauskas, a graduate student of Verlyn Flieger's from the University of Maryland. Fahey's paper "Feminine Duality in *The Lord of the Rings*" made a provocative suggestion that Galadriel may have been physically present to battle Shelob in defense of Sam and Frodo, while Grybauskas made a striking comparison between blues musicians and some of Tolkien's wanderers in his paper, "Tolkien on the Margins: Wanderers in Middle-earth."

After lunch, I gave my newly revised keynote speech, "Transgressing Boundaries: The Legacy of Teaching Tolkien." As I read my paper and clicked past my Powerpoint slides, I realized my error in staying up so late to revise my work. Not only had I not had time to properly practice it in order to make better contact with the audience, but my revision was rough, needing much more polish, repetitive in too many places, and 5-10 minutes too long. In the brief time we had for discussion afterward, I was grateful for the audience's kindness in not pressing me about the failings of my speech and instead choosing to ask me questions that put me at ease.

The last paper session was overall the strongest of the day with outstanding papers by Kristine Larsen, Central Connecticut State University professor and Mythcon 2008 chair, as well as Anna Smol, professor from Mount Saint Vincent University. In her paper "In the Beginning": Tolkien and the Teaching of Creation Myths," Larsen discussed what she has become so famous for in Tolkien circles, her work on teaching Tolkien's inclusion of astronomic ideas in undergraduate science courses. Larsen's energy and enthusiasm for her topic was compelling. Listening to her, I was riveted and she gave everyone in her audience a clear sense of how exciting her science course must be. Smol also gave a particularly intriguing talk, titled "Traditional Storytelling, Tolkien and Contemporary Fandom," which explored the ways contemporary fans recast Tolkien's stories and themes to suit their own needs and purposes. One especially strong exam-

ple Smol showed to illustrate this modern storytelling technique was a fanvideo that joined clips from Peter Jackson's films to music titled "My Immortal" by Elvira in order to express a different intimacy between Sam and Frodo than Tolkien probably intended. (If you want to see the video, it can be accessed at [REDACTED].)

The day concluded with an enjoyable roundtable discussion in which the speakers answered questions from the audience. I was sincerely impressed with the thoughtfulness of questions from the students as well as the faculty and community members present. Although by this time I was deeply tired from my late night efforts, I was encouraged to hear so many people discussing matters of real import for understanding Tolkien's work in the twenty-first century.

In the end, while my first keynote speaker experience was fraught with errors in judgment that were completely my own fault, I would highly recommend attending the "Tolkien at Vermont" conference, especially if you happen to live within driving distance of Burlington. Because the conference is supported by college funding earmarked specifically for student enrichment programs, it is completely free of charge. In addition, this conference provides a good mix of ideas from experienced scholars as well as those just starting their careers. And, perhaps most significant, it offers the appreciable advantages of a highly receptive audience of knowledgeable community and faculty members along with strongly engaged and well-versed students. =

Sanford Schwartz. *C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy*. OUP: 2009. 240pp. \$27.95. Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller.

For those who may have found C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy baffling or who want a deeper understanding of the classic trilogy, Sanford Schwartz provides both interpretation and historical context for general readers and scholars alike. Though Schwartz retells the stories of these books, his text aims at an academic or literary audience. Some may be unfamiliar with persons and ideas that influenced Lewis's work.

According to Schwartz, the chief influence for Lewis's Space Trilogy appears to be a not widely known philosopher, Henri Bergson, who at the time sought a middle ground to explain the natural world between religious explanations and natural determinism. But: "[...] just as Bergson transfigured a 'mechanistic' theory of evolution still entangled in the

static categories of traditional metaphysics into a new principle of Becoming, so Lewis transfigures Bergson's 'vitalistic' naturalism, rejecting his reduction of the divine to an immanent creative impetus but reworking his radical reformulation of the concept of time into a Christian vision of perpetual cosmic development" (55).

Arthur C. Clarke was also an influence on Lewis, exchanging letters and ideas. Sadly missing here is any reference to *From Narnia to a Space Odyssey* (Ryder W. Miller, 2003), which first documented the letters between Lewis and Clarke, who sought to convince Lewis that space explorers would not be Imperialists with questionable motives. After Clarke's letters concerning *Perelandra*, Lewis never published a book set off our planet again.

As such, Schwartz's study is more of an exploration of the reaction of Lewis to evolutionary ideas (with references to "Survival of the Fittest" and H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* in particular), rather than Environmentalism. Lewis wrote these novels at least a generation before Earth Day. These "imaginary" planets are not of interest to exploiters of natural resources in Schwartz's exploration, rather the home of different beings to conquer or protect. It is the treatment of indigenous "cultures" and religious domains that are at stake here, not a warning against the questionable exploitative schemes of those times.

Despite the title, there is also no reference here to *Star Trek*, which follows the trilogy by at least a generation. Lewis does appear to have influenced *Star Wars*, which also trumpets the use of the history making "Force", but there is no mention of it here either. The Space Trilogy presents itself as an alternative to these fan "fictions", but more Mythopoeic readers would rather go to Narnia again than the intergalactic ideological battleground created by Lewis.

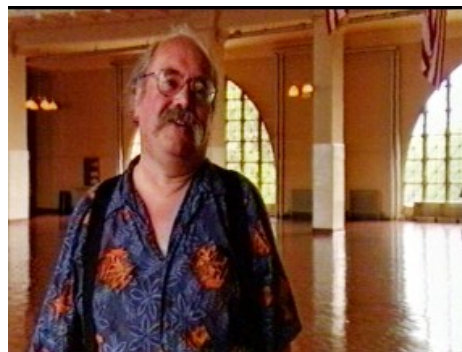
Schwartz provides useful interpretations, though there are room for others. Schwartz's treatment is not monolithic and one can explore the Space Trilogy in different ways. One can search for its influence in the science fiction which follows. Certainly it seems to usher in the Mars-"friendly" *Martian Chronicles* of Ray Bradbury, who also alerted us to potential damagers of The Red Planet. Rather than being solely an anti-Imperialist exploration, one can revel in the post-Copernican arguments in the Space Trilogy. One can also read the Space Trilogy as an exploration of a failing argument for Pacifism. One should be reminded that Lewis was a soldier before he was a scholar, but as Schwartz shows, he was certainly concerned by some of the scientific ideas of his day.

Many of the points made by Schwartz would not be obvious to the casual reader. The book does set the context to better understand the interplanetary strivings of that era, which at the time were still just dreams and nightmares. Here one is reminded that *Out of the Silent Planet*, a reaction to H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*. The World Wars following the turn of the century cast mankind as villains, and the Imperialistic enterprise and arguments were waning. The technology of the day was zooming forward, and Lewis may have been surprised that we had not yet made it to Mars.

The language does not usually overwhelm, but Schwartz's ideas require careful reading. These represent valuable insight into Lewis's multifaceted Space Trilogy. Schwartz has made a contribution to Inklings studies here, but there is clearly intellectual space for others. =

ALEXEI KONDRATIEV (1949–2010)

It is with great sadness that we must report the death of Mythopoeic Society member Alexei Kondratiev on May 27 of an apparent heart attack. Alexei was long active in the Mythopoeic Society and frequently attended the Society's annual conference (Mythcon). At Mythcon 22, Alexei was the Scholar Guest of Honor. It is my hope to feature a fuller obituary in the next issue of *Mythprint*. If any reader would like to write this obituary, or would simply like to share thoughts and memories of Alexei, please feel free to contact the editor at mythprint@mythsoc.org.



SELECTED UPCOMING EVENTS



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 Politécnica 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]



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]
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]
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 Sky*, by Steven Goldsberry.

IOWA

Decorah: *Alfheim*

Doug Rossman, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
March: Lloyd Alexander's *The Book of Three & The Black Cauldron*.
April: *Brisingamen* by Diana Paxson.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis-St. Paul: *Rivendell*

David Lenander, [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] See also [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh: *Fantasy Studies Fellowship*

Lori Campbell, University of Pittsburgh, Department of English,
[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]



The Mythopoeic Society

2010 Mythopoeic Award Finalists



Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature

Barbara Campbell, *Trickster's Game* trilogy consisting of
Heartwood, *Bloodstone*, and *Foxfire* (DAW)
Greer Gilman, *Cloud & Ashes: Three Winter's Tales* (Small
Beer Press)
Robert Holdstock, *Avilion* (Gollancz)
Catherynne M. Valente, *Palimpsest* (Spectra)
Jo Walton, *Lifelode* (NESFA Press)

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature

Kage Baker, *The Hotel Under the Sand* (Tachyon)
Shannon Hale, *Books of Bayern* consisting of *The Goose Girl*,
Enna Burning, *River Secrets*, and *Forest Born*
(Bloomsbury)
Grace Lin, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (Little,
Brown)
Malinda Lo, *Ash* (Little, Brown)
Lisa Mantchev, *Eyes Like Stars* (Feiwel & Friends)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award: Inklings Studies

Gavin Ashenden, *Charles Williams: Alchemy and Integration*
(Kent State, 2008)
Dimitra Fimi, *Tolkien, Race, and Cultural History: From Fairies
to Hobbits* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
Douglas Charles Kane, *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of
the Published Silmarillion* (Lehigh Univ. Press, 2009)
Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the
Imagination of C.S. Lewis* (Oxford, 2008)
Elizabeth A. Whittingham, *The Evolution of Tolkien's
Mythology: A Study of the History of Middle-earth*
(McFarland, 2008)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award: Myth & Fantasy Studies

Lucas H. Harriman, *Lilith in a New Light: Essays on George
Macdonald's Fantasy Novel* (McFarland, 2008)
Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Wesleyan Univ.
Press, 2008)
Marek Oziewicz, *One Earth, One People: The Mythopoeic
Fantasy Series of Ursula K. Le Guin, Madeleine L'Engle and
Orson Scott Card* (McFarland, 2008)
Leslie A. Sconduto, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary
Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance*
(McFarland 2008)
Caroline Sumpter, *The Victorian Press and the Fairy Tale*
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature is given to the fantasy novel, multi-volume, or single-author story collection for adults published during 2009 that best exemplifies the spirit of the Inklings. Books are eligible for two years after publication if not selected as a finalist during the first year of eligibility. Books from a series are eligible if they stand on their own; otherwise, the series becomes eligible the year its final volume appears. The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature honors books for younger readers (from Young Adults to picture books for beginning readers), in the tradition of *The Hobbit* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Rules for eligibility are otherwise the same as for the Adult Literature award. The question of which award a borderline book is best suited for will be decided by consensus of the committees. The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies is given to books on Tolkien, Lewis, and/or Williams that make significant contributions to Inklings scholarship. For this award, books first published during the last three years (2007–2009) are eligible, including finalists for previous years. The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies is given to scholarly books on other specific authors in the Inklings tradition, or to more general works on the genres of myth and fantasy. The period of eligibility is three years, as for the Inklings Studies award.

The winners of this year's awards will be announced during Mythcon XLI, to be held from July 9–12, in Dallas, Texas. A complete list of Mythopoeic Award winners is available on the Society web site: [REDACTED]

The finalists for the literature awards, text of recent acceptance speeches, and selected book reviews are also listed in this on-line section. For more information about the Mythopoeic Awards, please contact the Awards Administrator: David Oberhelman, [REDACTED]

Inkheart. New Line Cinema, 2009. Directed by Iain Softley. Reviewed by Lynn Maudlin.

I did not know the source material, the German novel *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke, but I wandered into the DVD store and saw this movie with a fantasy cover, I noted the fine cast and I figured it would be worth viewing – and it is, very much so. In a nutshell, Mortimer (Mo for short, played by Brendan Fraser) has the gift of a ‘silver tongue’: when he reads out loud, characters come to life and leave the world of their creation to enter ours. The dark secret is that something from this world must leave to replace it – sort of a fictional version of the law of the conservation of energy.

After a brief glimpse of Mo, his wife and daughter as a toddler, we are brought into the present: Mo specializes in the repair of rare books and his now teen-aged daughter Meggie (Eliza Bennett) has observed that he’s always looking for a particular book and is always disappointed when he doesn’t find it. While Mo is searching an old bookshop, Meggie meets a strange man with a ferret and a scarred face who seems to know her; he calls Mo “Silver Tongue.” They flee from the man and Mo indicates it has something to do with Meggie’s missing mother – it’s mysterious because Mo wants to protect his daughter from something but we don’t know what. The two drive across the Alps to the home of Mo’s Aunt Elinor, played by the always-fabulous Helen Mirren.

She enters the scene with the engaging exclamation, “For the love of Thomas Hardy!” She is crotchety and rich and lives in an Italian villa complete with a fabulous library. Elinor, outspoken and insensitive, tells Meggie she was *abandoned* by her mother. Later Meggie enters the library without permission; she first alienates and then engages Elinor: she learns Elinor loves all things Persian and asks if Elinor has been to Persia. She answers, “Yes, a hundred times. Along with St Petersburg, Paris, Middle-earth, distant planets and Shangri-la – and I never had to leave this room. Books are adventure; they contain murder and mayhem and passion. They love anyone who opens them.” What reader doesn’t relate?! *Bliss*

The scarred man, Dustfinger, reappears and we meet more characters from the illusive book and learn its name: *Inkheart*. Some of the men have words printed across their faces: they’ve been ‘read out’ of the book but imperfectly, incompletely. Mo, Meggie, and Elinor are kidnapped and Elinor’s library ransacked by “solecistic thugs.” It is in the dungeon of the villain, Capricorn – a stable, really, containing the ticking crocodile from *Peter Pan*, flying monkeys from *The*

Wizard of Oz, and more curiosities – that we hear the story that Meggie has been waiting her whole life to hear: how her mother disappeared, how Mo bought a copy of *Inkheart* and innocently read from it, drawing Capricorn and Dustfinger and other characters out of the book while his wife disappeared *into* the book.

Meggie is understandably horrified to think of her mother living all these years in the rough fantasy world of *Inkheart* and her father, trying to comfort her, says, “Pretend you’re in a book; children always escape in books.” Meggie sensibly responds, “No they don’t. Remember the little match girl? They found her in an alley, frozen to death.”

We learn Dustfinger has also been desperately looking for a copy of *Inkheart* because he wants to be read back *into* the book to reunite with his family. Brought into Capricorn’s great room, Mo reads under duress, bringing forth treasure from *Tales of the Arabian Nights*, along with young Farid. When Capricorn discovers Mo has at last found a copy of *Inkheart*, he takes it and burns it – he has no desire to be sent back to the novel and has sought-out and destroyed copies of the book for years now. Back in the stable-dungeon, they befriend the confused young Farid and Mo is tempted to despair but Meggie reasonably points out that if the author of the book is still living he must have a copy of it – if they can only escape.

All of this is further complicated when Dustfinger discovers the mute woman working in Capricorn’s kitchen is, in fact, Resa, Mo’s wife and Meggie’s mother, lacking the ability to speak because she was imperfectly read back out of *Inkheart* by Capricorn’s stuttering silver tongue. Dustfinger is determined to free her and reunite her with her family but ultimately leaves her behind in an act of fearful self-interest when the growing troupe escapes to find Signor Fenoglio (Jim Broadbent), the man who wrote the book.

In a wonderful confrontation with the author, Dustfinger says, “Do you think I care what you wrote? You don’t control my fate. Otherwise I wouldn’t be here. I’m not just some character in your book ... and you ... you’re not my god.” This is the real, thoughtful core of *Inkheart* and it deals with the questions of free-will and what does control our fate: is Dustfinger bound to be only a coward, selfish and weak, because he was written that way? Or is he more? Even ‘the real world’ characters challenge their limitations in the struggle to be more.

It’s a lovely film, well acted and beautifully made, and a story with entertaining twists and turns and humor, but, best of all, it leads one to consider essential questions of courage, character, and identity. =

Illustrating Tolkien: An Interview with Ted Nasmith. By Randy Hoyt. First published in *Journey to the Sea*, Issue 7 (January 2009) 

Ted Nasmith is an artist best known for his illustrations depicting scenes from J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. His first published Tolkien pieces appeared in the 1987 Tolkien Calendar, and he has continued to contribute to these calendars in subsequent years. (The calendars in 1990, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2009 featured him as the sole artist.) He also provided the artwork for the first illustrated version of *The Silmarillion* published in 1998, developing a strong working relationship with Tolkien's son Christopher during that project; the second edition containing even more of his paintings was published in 2004.

Randy Hoyt: When did you first encounter the works of Tolkien? What impact did they have on you?

Ted Nasmith: My older sister gave me a copy of *The Fellowship of the Ring* when I was 14. It hit me really strongly, as it does so many people. I just loved it right from the start. It was set in the distant, romantic past, amid traditional English-style landscapes, and it was all very nostalgic, fairy-tale and storybook material. It really grabbed me. I was an art student at the time, and I started to draw pictures inspired by the book fairly quickly. That was a big turn for me: I had been drawing spaceships, cars, and all kinds of more mechanical stuff. Tolkien was a big new element in my artistic imagination.

RH: How did you get started publishing your Tolkien illustrations?

TN: The first Tolkien calendar came out in 1973. It contained Tolkien's own artwork, but then calendars with other artists' work quickly followed, which greatly impressed me, since it demonstrated that *The Lord of the Rings* had struck a resounding chord of artistic inspiration with others, too. I had already accumulated my own paintings and drawings through high school and into the '70s. The calendars in theory provided a way for me to get my stuff in front of the publishers; it proved to be a process that required persistence, but that eventually bore fruit. My work started appearing in the calendars in the late '80s, fifteen years after I first sought its publication.

RH: When did you first encounter *The Silmarillion*?

TN: I read *The Silmarillion* as soon as it came out in 1977. It was not nearly as enjoyable as *The Lord of the Rings*, but it was more of Tolkien's Middle-earth. More images came to me through these 'new' legends. I deliberately included something of Beren and Lúthien or one of the other major stories for the calendars, in order to integrate more of Tolkien's legendarium into my growing body of paintings.

RH: Many authors, Tolkien included, describe their stories as something that they discover more than something they invent. Do you find that to be the case with your paintings?

TN: Yeah, I definitely understand why they would say things like that. There have been times where something just sort of came through me in a way. I didn't overly deliberate on it: I just got out of the way and let it come onto the page. So yeah, I really relate to that kind of creative description of what happens. It is a bit of magic, for sure.

RH: Do you have a favorite piece of all the ones that you have done?

TN: That's a question I get often. I could probably narrow it down to ten or fifteen or something. There are so many individually that are successful, for one reason or another.

RH: My personal favorite is *The Kinslaying at Alqualondë* from the 2004 illustrated version of *The Silmarillion*. Would you include that one in the list? [The painting is reproduced on the cover of this issue.]

TN: Yeah, that came to mind. There are a couple of things I wanted to show there. Firstly, it's an opportunity to show a glimpse of the lost city of Alqualondë and the wonderful culture of the Teleri. The ships are described as the Teleri's greatest work. I imagine they would have been so beautiful that no artist could truly have captured this accurately — but it's my job and fascination as an artist to approximate it as best I can. Compositionally, the curving wharf portrays a more feminine and dynamic setting. The battle taking place was difficult; scenes with many figures interacting are not my strong suit. But you just get down and you work on it much more to make sure that it's up to the standard level of the other parts. I used to work mainly as an architectural renderer, so I have a facility for architecture; it was interesting to try to envision Elven architecture of the First Age. What would that be? Certainly it would be exotic, all carved, elegant and otherworldly. Then there's the problem of lighting; the scene is under starlight with no sun and moon. The text mentions lamps on the quays and piers, so that gives you something. I played a bit with the color of the water to make it almost luminous. When you try to do as realistic art as I do, you

get caught sometimes thinking you have to do it according to all the laws of physics. But this is fantasy. I have learned to take liberties to convey more than just the hard facts and the surface of things, and not to worry about someone saying, “Hey, that isn’t real.” None of it is ‘real’, although it is famously realistic to a high degree, and thus presents tantalizing dilemmas.

RH: I saw on your web site an earlier image you did of this scene, which you called a “sketch.” What’s the relationship between that sketch and the image from the book? [The sketch also appears on the cover.]

TN: That first color sketch was based on a thumbnail drawing of a raw impression of the wharfs, ships, and the battle. Christopher Tolkien worked with me in choosing illustrations, and I was encouraged that he expressed great praise for this initial rough image. I tried to preserve what was good about the sketch but make it more sophisticated.

RH: The scene in the sketch felt like it took place at night, but in the final illustration it really feels like it took place before the sun and the moon, before day and night existed. I often forget that the sun and moon hadn’t appeared yet, and I often picture these scenes as if they were in daylight. This illustration really drives that home.

TN: I’m glad. It’s difficult. That’s often the way you draw a scene, with that daylight impression. It may make for a nice picture, but isn’t accurately illustrating it. I used to wonder why there weren’t more great illustrations of the Fellowship traveling through the countryside as they came south to Moria, but it’s because they traveled mostly at night! The Peter Jackson movies showed the Fellowship against these wonderful landscape shots — but in the daytime. The Tolkien illustrator is often left with a serious limitation. Take Bilbo and Gollum and the riddle game: it’s pitch black except for Gollum’s eyes — not too great for an illustrator! You’ve got to take a little license on some of these things.

RH: A big theme I see in Tolkien is the interaction of beauty and sorrow, which this illustration captures really well: the beauty of the ships on the left and the sorrow of the battle here on the right.

TN: Right. That was an important part of it for sure. Somehow you’ve got to underscore this terrible kinslaying scene, the violence and obscenity of it. Paradoxically, the beautiful is that much more tragic because of the incongruity of something terrible and violent juxtaposed with it.

RH: What new projects are you working on and what new artwork should we expect to see from you in the near future?

TN: I recently did the scene with Frodo, Sam, and Pippin meeting Gildor and the Elves in the Woody End. I always loved that scene, right from the first time I started imagining and creating the illustrations. I never found a chance to illustrate it earlier, though; I never felt I was in the right moment or something. Yet it was an immediate hit, and I was commissioned to do another version of that same piece because the first one sold quite quickly at the exhibition! I’ve also been fortunate enough to get involved with George R.R. Martin, another amazing fantasy author. I’ve done a lot of new work in ‘Westeros,’ his imaginary universe, for an upcoming big-format reference book on his fantasy novels. [The 2011 George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire Calendar will be published later this year. See the announcement here,

[\[redacted\]](#)

*You can learn more
about Ted’s work by
visiting his web site,*

[\[redacted\]](#)

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with this interview are
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Elves in the Woody End. © Ted Nasmith, 2006.

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