

# mythprint



**Quarterly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society with Book  
Reviews, Short Articles, Event Information, and More!**

VOL. 53 NO. 3

FALL 2016

WHOLE NO. 378



# Quarterly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

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## TABLE of CONTENTS

### NEWS

Mythopoeic Award Winners ..... 3  
 Mythcon 47 Miscellany ..... 3  
 Mythcon 47 Reports ..... 4

### FEATURES

Young Presenters at Mythcon ..... 5

Cover Art: *Hunditar*. By Ebe Kastein. [Redacted]  
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### REVIEWS

Grevel Lindop. Charles Williams: The Third Inking.  
 Reviewed by Emily E. Auger ..... 7  
 Suzannah Rowntree. *Pendragon's Heir*. Reviewed by  
 Emilee J. Howland-Davis ..... 8  
 Charles Williams. *The Chapel of the Thorn*. Reviewed by  
 Tiffany Brooke Martin ..... 2  
 Ralph C. Wood. *Tolkien Among the Moderns*. Reviewed  
 by Ryder W. Miller ..... 10

ANNOUNCEMENTS ..... 10

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Megan Abrahamson  
 Editor, *Mythprint*



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Visit The Mythopoeic Society online at [www.mythsoc.org](http://www.mythsoc.org).

*Mythprint* is the quarterly 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 discussion groups.

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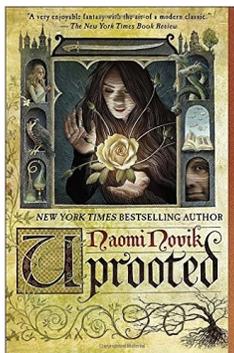
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## 2016 MYTHOPOEIC AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

### Mythopoeic Fantasy Award For Adult Literature

Naomi Novik, *Uprooted*  
(Del Rey)



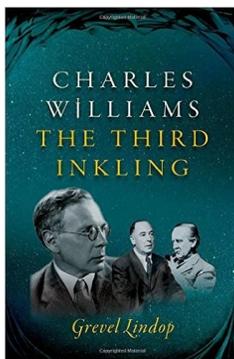
### Mythopoeic Fantasy Award For Children's Literature

Ursula Vernon, *Castle Hangnail*  
(Dial Books)



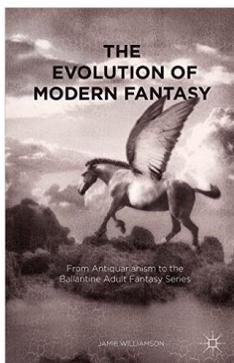
### Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies

Grevel Lindop, *Charles Williams: The Third Inklings*  
(Oxford Univ. Press, 2015)



### Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies

Jamie Williamson, *The Evolution of Modern Fantasy: From Antiquarianism to the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series*  
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)



Congratulations to the winners! The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature is given to the fantasy novel, multi-volume novel, or single-author story collection for adults published during the previous year that best exemplifies “the spirit of the Inklings.” Books not selected as finalists in the year after publication are eligible for a second year. 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 beginning readers to age thirteen, 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. Books for mature “Young Adults” may be moved to the Adult literature category.

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 (2013–2015) 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 were announced at Mythcon 47 in San Antonio, Texas, on August 7, 2016. A complete list of Mythopoeic Award winners is available on the Society website.

## MYTHCON 47 MISCELLANY

### Alexi Kondratiev Award For Best Student Paper

Megan B. Abrahamson, “Ferumbras, Feirefiz, and Finn: Motifs of the Converted Saracen in *The Sultan of Babylon*, *Parzival*, and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.”

### Golfimbul Winners

#### ACCURACY:

Bronze: Don Williams  
Silver: Bruce Leonard  
Gold: Chris Crane Jr.

#### DISTANCE

Bronze: Carl Hostetter  
Silver: Bruce Leonard  
Gold: Jason Harris

#### GOLFIMBOWLING

Bronze: Elliott Crane  
Silver: Matt Breth  
Gold: Jason Harris

## Clerihew Contest Winners

The winners of the Nth Not Very Annual Mary M. Stolzenbach Memorial Clerihew Contest are hereby announced.

A panel of judges, They Who Must Not Be Named, met in a secret location at an undisclosed time to rank the submitted clerihews in three categories: Humor, Originality, and Clerihewness.

Each winner receives, as a prize, a jeroboam of *Chateau de Porteur d'Anneau* invisible champagne. The honorable mention just gets an invisible cup of coffee.

The winning entries, published exactly as written, include:

**Honorable Mention**, for most difficult to categorize chronologically:

The Bandersnatch  
Had some plans to hatch.  
So he chanted some spells from his mythic-Kindle  
Then went whistling down the Witywindle.  
—Andrew Lazo

**Before Tolkien:**

Owen Barfield  
Was the Inkling before whom those others reeled.  
Ol' Steiner helped him save the appearances  
So Jack and Tollers could invent their romances.  
—Joel Hunter

**During Tolkien:**

Theoden, son of Thengel  
Composed a rousing jingle.  
He was a grand orc-beater  
In alliterative meter.  
—Don Williams

**After Tolkien:**

Mr. Walter Hooper  
Editor, scholar, or pooper.  
With analysis of Cusum,  
The results could be gruesome.  
—Hildifons Took (Gary Hunnewell)

## MYTHCON 47 REPORTS

My First Mythcon by  
Moses Allen

As a new member of Mythopoeic Society, it was important for me to

find my way to Mythcon. The road goes ever on, they say. So I set out without delay. Over rock and under tree, alas I did not bring my cape with me. By caves where never sun has shone, I traveled far for crown and throne. By streams that never find the sea; I found knowing Boenig & Fisher, ranger kings to me. Over snow by winter sown, lay queens Croft & Donovan shown. And through the merry flowers of June, at Mythcon I did swoon. Over grass and over stone, I knew at once, she would pwn. Whilst beholding BB-8 in sartorial splendor, I listened aghast that Finn was merely Saracen in a blender! And under mountains in the moon, At MythCon merrily I found many a boon. For Tolkien himself would delight, in such a gathering of scholarly light. Afore the end, songs were shared and goodbyes were given. Through hugs and drink, all were forgiven. Till next year, return we shall ready to rally, with more younglings at our vanguard driven forward by Rob Tally.

MythCon 47 was a fond adventure. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting with and listening to the assorted ring of scholars. Each presentation was well informed and interesting. It's a wonderful feeling to find one's tribe. Though the timeless tradition of storytelling seems to be withering with the influx of contemporary fads such as reality TV, I am happy to know there are still mythic circles waiting for me and my kind. To all the organizers who labored through toil and trouble to put it together, and to all the presenters who shared their discoveries, their insights, and their voices with us, I thank you deeply. I look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

Mythcon 47: How Stories Intertwine  
by Aaron Kelly Anderson

My tale of this year's Mythopoeic Conference is an incomplete one—free for others to build on. That is what I have always admired about the dynamics of storytelling: the all-encompassing drive to keep a story living and breathing. If we reflect on how authors like Tolkien and Lewis have been so present in our collective consciousness for years and years, and how they have evolved into such fabled figures themselves, then we arrive at the very core of what the Mythcon community is all about—allowing these treasured stories to bounce around the rooms and sit atop our shoulders at dinner tables and intermingle with



one another. Isildur had his epic journey with the One Ring, and so did Bilbo. And so did Frodo. And so did we, when we devoted hours and hours to the world-building tomes of Tolkien, Lewis, and every fantasy author and folklore/mythology scholar that has followed their example.

Now, admittedly, I can only claim cursory knowledge of Tolkien's canon; I read *The Hobbit* almost a decade ago and have seen the recent film adaptations of *Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* series. Perhaps that is one way my tale of Mythcon 47 is "incomplete." I do not get the full effect of every joke or every reference, but simply witnessing the connections of speaker to audience and vice-versa is a spiritually engaging experience. Garry Leonberger performing the Tolkien/Swann song cycle in an operatic Elvish dialect was an especially mesmerizing highlight of the conference; each word felt like a powerful incantation. Bob Boenig, ever so suitably, achieved a magical feat by using brilliant scholarship to captivate every person in the banquet room on a Friday evening. Oh, yes, and let us not forget the age-old tradition of "Golfimbul." Based on an old Tolkien legend of Bull-roarer Took beheading a goblin chieftain with such force that his head landed in a nearby hole, it is said to have inspired the modern everyday-human sport of golf. It was my first time participating in the three annual contests: accuracy, distance, and bowling. I came dangerously close to receiving the "bronze medal" in distance, but what really transformed me is the simple concept of batting a damaged doll head around for an hour or two. It sounds silly at the outset, but your first-time experience with these games will forever be one of your most entertaining memories.

And that is the major advantage of actually going to Mythcon—there is a certain kind of story to be found in every corner. Some are poignant, some are amusing, and some will straight-out alter your worldviews. You have the opportunity to become fast friends with your scholarly peers, to realize your gift or passion for storytelling, and to march and play and worship the limitless fantastical imaginations of humankind. Ultimately, I was not able to stay in San Antonio until the conference ended on Monday—another reason why my tale of Mythcon experience is not complete. But, just throughout the span of two days, I became a member of a culture I only wish I had discovered several years sooner. My own presentation was about the presence of trauma in ancient mythologies from Greece, China, Scandinavia, and other realms and how those stories can give us courage and heal our agonies. My story of Mythcon 47 may not be complete, but I feel like a

more fully recognized scholar—a more complete person—for being there. I feel a strange sense of healing on many levels. Friends, colleagues, warriors of mythopoeia—please help me in keeping these transformative stories afloat.

## Brief Mythcon Statement by Berni Phillips Bratman

As one of the older members of the Society (my first Mythcon was in 1988), one of the greatest delights Mythcons hold for me is how I come away renewed intellectually. I love the papers. I come home resolving to read things I would not normally read or re-read things on which I have gained a new perspective due to a paper presentation.

I was very excited by Whitney May's scholarship on Tamora Pierce's *Tortall* books. She spoke of her plans for a future paper on how the events of 9-11 may have influenced the writing of one of the quartets, so I have begun rereading those books.

I am not a scholar, but I do enjoy reading the occasional book on the scholarship list, especially the ones dealing with myth and fantasy. I left Mythcon this year with a resolve to join the committee for that award next year.

## YOUNG PRESENTERS AT MYTHCON 47

The Mythopoeic Society saw an unprecedented number of under-18 presenters giving papers at Mythcon 47. These junior scholars give us great hope for the future of the society. Three of them, Christopher Crane, Elliott Crane, and Courtney Riojas, graciously agreed to be interviewed for this issue of *Mythprint*.

### Can you tell us about yourself?

**CC:** My name is Christopher Crane, I am thirteen years old, I presented a joint-paper at Mythcon 47 called "Fair or False Faces" with my brother, Elliott. I attend Rockbridge Academy Classical Christian School.

**EC:** I am Elliott Crane and I'm fifteen. My brother and I presented our paper called "Fair or False Faces?"

**CR:** My name is Courtney Riojas, and I am sixteen. My first time attending a Mythcon was last year with my grandma, my dad, and my brother. This year at Mythcon 47, my grandma and I presented "Mythologies: A Remembrance of Things Past...and Future?" I live in Selma, California and am graduating

from high school next year.

**What was your presentation was about?**

**CC:** My presentation was on how in early fantasy, someone's supernatural change in appearance can reveal their identity, and in more contemporary young adult fantasy, this same type of change reflects their identity.

**EC:** Our presentation was about how different young adult fantasy novels deal with a change in appearance related to a change in identity.

**CR:** Our presentation was to show from a Christian perspective that there is a core truth to mythologies by showing the resonances and overlaps of various flood and creation myths with the Biblical accounts.

**Where did you first get the idea for your presentation?**

**CC & EC:** We think we first got the idea of our topic as a paper from the name of this year's conference and then started to realize that in some of the books we have read there might be some evidence for a paper.

**CR:** Growing up and reading myth, I had already begun to notice that there were resonances between myths and the Bible. Earlier this year, my grandma suggested that we present a paper together discussing how mythology is a way for man to remember the past and how it helps us in our lives. We were unable to go as deep as we had planned because the subject was huge.

**Who helped you most with your presentation, and what kind of encouragement or assistance did you get from them?**

**CC:** My dad helped me most in writing my paper. He helped me to organize my paper and figure out what sort of steps I needed to take in writing my presentation.

**EC:** My dad helped some by providing discussion for us to be able to articulate our thoughts better.

**CR:** My dad and my grandma were the people who helped me most with my presentation. With my dad, I was able to discuss my doubts as I tackled the Ragnarok story and the paper in general (as it was my first paper which I have presented). He did a lot to encourage me. My grandma and I wrote the paper together, and having her beside me as we presented it at Myth-

**MYTHCON 48**

*will be held in*

**Champaign-Urbana, Illinois**

**July 28-31, 2017**

con was reassuring. Without them, I wouldn't have been able to present the paper.

**Do you think you had more fun writing your presentation, or did you have more fun actually giving the talk at the conference?**

**CC:** I enjoyed presenting my paper and answering the questions because I had already completed what I think is the most difficult part of the whole process and could tell people what I learned from all my research.

**EC:** I found that writing the paper and discussing our ideas was more fun because that was when we actually got to delve into our topic more and find things that we didn't realize were there before.

**What was the coolest or most interesting thing you learned about your topic while researching and writing your presentation?**

**CC:** One thing that I learned from the research I did for my paper was that evil can often appear good, but in reality, it is not good at all and only is deceptively beautiful. This truth is found in many fantasy novels, but it still applies to real life as well.

**EC:** For me the most interesting thing I found was how so many different books have similar yet slightly different ways of dealing with identity and appearance.

**What was your favorite thing about Mythcon?**

**CC:** My favorite part about Mythcon this year was hearing Mr. Andrew Lazo speak about The Chronicles of Narnia because I learned about a whole new dimension of C. S. Lewis's writing.

**EC:** My favorite part about Mythcon is always the way that the conference is scholarly but feels more fun and engaging than just a few panels and papers.

**CR:** I enjoyed everything at Mythcon: the papers, the people, Golfimbul, the Masquerade, and much more. If I were to select one of those as my most favorite, it would be talking to people. I enjoyed getting to know and listen to people.

**Do you think you'll attend future Mythcons? Why or why not?**

**CC:** I plan to come to Mythcon in the future because it is a conference that I can both learn and have fun at.

**EC:** I think we will attend future Mythcons because we love to go and listen to papers and to enjoy the

festivities and good company.

**CR:** I hope to attend future Mythcons if I can because I enjoy it a lot.

## REVIEWS

Grevel Lindop. *Charles Williams: The Third Inking*. Oxford University Press, 2015. 464 pp. Reviewed by Emily E. Auger.

Grevel Lindop's *Charles Williams: The Third Inking* is an exceptional book, offering new material about Williams's life based on previously unexamined documents and first-hand interviews. It unquestionably belongs in the "highly recommended" category for serious historians of early twentieth century British authors, particularly the Inklings, and students of poetry and potboiler alike. That said, if you are thinking about picking up *The Third Inking* because you have enjoyed a few of Williams's novels and because you think it might be an interesting "tell-all" about his occult activities, but you are also the sort of person who doesn't patronize philandering, slightly sadistic authors with quirky sexual preferences, you might want to leave it on the shelves. Academics weary of accounting for classroom evaluations that lack the enthusiastic praise indicative of high "groupie" appeal might also want to give it a miss. That's not a judgment on Lindop's research or writing, but rather an observation about the emotional stuffing of Williams's life.

While reading *The Third Inking*, I thought repeatedly of the birthday speech Tolkien gave to Bilbo: "I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve." The descriptive aptness of this quotation is far from precise, but, just so, I found I had soon learned more than I cared to about Williams's methods of making life interesting, and finished the book not knowing nearly as much as I wanted about his wife Michal and son Michael. Like Bilbo's neighbors, they are there near the beginning and back again at the end, but in between we do not hear much about their activities. Lindop does mention them from time to time, returns more seriously to them—as Charles did—at the end, and clearly sympathizes with Michal's position, but most chapters are full of Williams carrying on with... well, whoever he was carrying on with, and so he

### A Note on Mythcon 49

Do you ever think, "Gee, this would be a great location for a Mythcon?" If so, please email Lynn Maudlin ( ) and she will work with you on the process. Yes, it's a lot of work but it's also a lot of fun and very gratifying to see it all come together. We can't have Mythcon without you!

makes less of Williams's family than does the impression of their plight. In addition, I repeatedly wondered why the family always seemed to be so short of money? Surely Williams's job was a reasonably good one, so how could his salary not have been enough to keep a practical wife and a single child? How much, or

rather how little, I wonder, did a man in Williams's position earn that he was so driven to write and lecture so much beyond what he really had time for, simply because such opportunities meant a little more money? Or was money not the real issue driving him? Lindop makes the financial difficulties apparent, but stops short of explaining why they existed or even offering so much as a paragraph on salaries in the publishing industries during the period of Williams's working life.

Lindop's research and contacts did lead him to new details about Williams's involvement with Arthur E. Waite and various secret societies. These, like the details he exposes regarding Williams's relationships with various women, may be of special interest to some readers. Certainly there is much about Williams's relationships with women in this book; many of the numerous quoted passages convey the realities of these associations as the participants experienced them. By comparison, Williams's involvement with secret societies, particularly those associated with Arthur E. Waite, is little explored. Of noteworthy interest, however, is Lindop's discovery that Williams's own decks included a Marseilles Tarot and the *Rider-Waite Tarot* (1909), designed by Arthur E. Waite and Pamela Colman Smith. Lindop does not mention the possible connections between Williams and Waite's second Tarot deck, referenced with some illustrations in Ronald Decker and Michael Dummett's *A History of the Occult Tarot* (2002) and more fully studied and illustrated in Marcus Katz and Tali Goodwin's *Abiding in the Sanctuary: A Christian Mystical Tarot* (1917–1923) (2011).

Lindop discusses *The Greater Trumps* (1932), Williams's only novel including Tarot without thoroughly examining the possible influence of Waite's rituals on it, perhaps because he thinks of it as a "(rather silly) adventure story" (ch. 12). He makes no such judgment of Williams's other novels, however often they were rejected for publication. He does add an interesting argument to the ongoing discussion about Williams's membership in the Golden Dawn. Lindop takes Williams's declaration that he belonged to the Golden

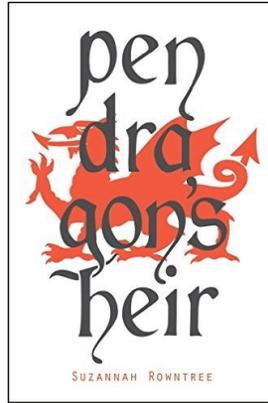
Dawn seriously, in spite of considerable evidence that Williams could not have belonged to the original organization. As Ronald Decker and Michael Dummett summarize in their *A History of the Occult Tarot 1870–1970* (2002), the Golden Dawn, founded in 1888, came under Waite's leadership in 1903 and he renamed it “the Order of the Independent and Rectified Rite” and then dissolved it in 1914. He founded “The Fellowship of the Rosy Cross” in 1915 with new members and members of the former Golden Dawn (121-22, 143). At the end of Chapter 5 of *The Third Inkleling*, Lindop cites a document written by Williams as an indication that he had passed into the advanced grade of Waite's Independent and Rectified Rite of the Golden Dawn; a problematic claim given that Williams did not meet Waite until 1915. Lindop rhetorically asks,

*Did Nicholson and Lee (or someone else) initiate Williams to that level? Again, we may never know. But the likelihood is that from 1919, if not earlier, Charles Williams was an initiate not only of Waite's Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, but also of one of the Golden Dawn's original branches—either the “Independent and Rectified Rite” or the magically oriented Stella Matutina. He probably never told Waite about his parallel membership. (ch. 5)*

While the Stella Matutina was indeed a separate offshoot of the Golden Dawn, unassociated with Waite, the “Independent and Rectified Golden Dawn” was Waite's creation, so it is unclear how Williams could have joined it without Waite knowing. Lindop proposes that Henry Lee initiated him into the “original” Golden Dawn after it ceased to exist so that their conversations would not be hampered by the oaths of secrecy associated with membership. This explanation for the oft-cited point about Williams's apparent claim to membership in the (original) Golden Dawn is plausible, although, as I am sure Lindop is aware, not entirely satisfactory. Given the seriousness with which membership in such societies was taken, it seems unlikely that anyone, least of all Williams himself, would have construed an after-the-fact initiation to a defunct organization, conducted for the purpose of circumventing oaths of secrecy, as an indication of legitimate membership in anything. Even so, it is a possibility and it does explain the otherwise contradictory information available on the subject.

*The Third Inkleling* is a thoroughly researched and detailed accounting of Charles Williams's life—

including his all too human failings—that offers much to anyone curious about him, his relationships, his ties to the Inklings, his involvement with secret societies, and the formation of his own Companions of the Coherence and the effect it had on his life.



Suzannah Rowntree. *Pendragon's Heir*. Bocfodder Press, 2015. 422 pp. \$17.99. Reviewed by Emily J. Howland-Oavis.

I like Suzannah Rowntree's retelling of the “matter of Britain.” She has taken the Arthurian myths of the Middle Ages, and in the spirit of Malory, combined them and re-envisioned them into her own Arthurian epic. The novel opens in Gloucestershire in 1900. Blanche Pendragon is an orphaned 18-year old being raised by her guardians Sir Ector and Nerys. We quickly learn that Blanche, short for Blanchefleur, is the daughter of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere and she has been placed in Gloucestershire at the end of the nineteenth century in order to protect her from those in her own time who doubt her legitimacy.

I am a medievalist, so the stories that Ms. Rowntree has drawn from are familiar. I enjoyed the changes she made to the story, such as making Sir Perceval the son of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell. I also really liked her use of medieval Arthurian stories, and I enjoyed the time traveling aspect. The relationship between the characters is much more developed in Ms. Rowntree's re-telling. Sir Gawain is given a lot of depth, which is sometimes missing in medieval versions. The relationship between Gawain and Lancelot, and its tragic end, is also developed in a really thoughtful way. Their story, as told by Malory, is heartbreaking. Ms. Rowntree has treated that heartbreak in a lovely way that allows the reader to see nuances in the relationships of the characters. Morgan la Fey's treachery, and that of Mordred, is given more back story. As a result, Morgan's character is more sympathetic than she is in late medieval versions of the story. Blanche is an intriguing character. She is torn between her duty to Camelot and Arthur, and the Victorian world she has left behind. These character developments were a welcome change from medieval literature.

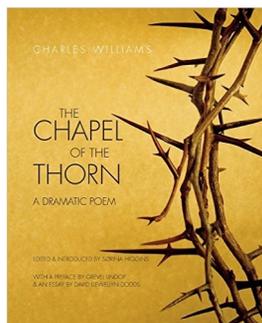
The story did lag at times, partially because the author tried to use perhaps too much of medieval Arthuriana. While these stories are interesting, and Ms. Rowntree uses them in intriguing ways, it did make the

story drag. As a result, there wasn't enough room for Ms. Rowntree's own story to really shine. The idea that Blanche must go back to Logres, serve as the Grail Maiden, and then save Camelot is fascinating. However, I felt like there was not enough of that part of the story. The end of the book felt rushed, and readers are only given a brief look at Blanche's own story separate from medieval Arthuriana. As a reader, as a medievalist, and as a scholar of medievalisms, I wanted more. I wanted more action from Blanche. So much of her action is tied up with Ms. Rowntree's retelling of the Arthurian stories. I wanted to see just what Blanche could do as the heir of Arthur. Some of the retellings were so similar to their medieval source that it felt like Blanche was just stuck in there. The end of the book is hopeful, which is a big change from traditional Arthurian stories, but I wanted to read more about Blanche and Perceval. I wanted to hear more about them and their story separate from the medieval Arthurian stories that Ms. Rowntree drew from. Additionally, there were also several instances of Latin and Welsh use which were not translated, and context was not always useful for understanding the phrases. I imagine that this book will be very popular with young adult readers who might find the untranslated use of foreign language challenging.

I liked this story. I enjoy modern retellings of King Arthur. *Pendragon's Heir* allows readers familiar with the story of King Arthur to find hope and a future for the doomed Camelot. The story gives the heroism to a young girl, and our fiction certainly needs more of that. Ms. Rowntree provides us with a new Arthur story where all is not lost, and a young girl can rescue the greatest realm that never was.

Charles Williams and Sørina Higgins, ed. *The Chapel of the Thorn: A Dramatic Poem*. Apocryphile, 2015. 147pp. \$16.95. Reviewed by Tiffany Brooke Martin.

Prior to his association with the Inklings, Charles Williams wrote his short play *The Chapel of the Thorn* in 1912; however, it was not published until 2015, thanks to the excellent work of Sørina Higgins in making it available to the general public. Her appreciation for Williams is evident in her meticulous editorial treatment of the manuscript housed in the Marion E. Wade Center in Wheaton, Illinois. The



manuscript shows the collaborative work that Williams engaged in with his friend and coworker Frederick Page, whose comments helped shape the final product. Higgins outlines the manuscript's history, and she provides a thoughtful, thorough introduction for the reader regarding the play's depiction of the tension between Christians and pagans over the relic of the Crown of Thorns. After the play's text, Higgins includes a Notes section that details editorial and manuscript changes, which grants additional insight regarding both her and Williams's approach to the text.

In her introduction, Higgins summarizes the plot and evaluates the main characters who are "vying for control of it [the Crown of Thorns relic] or for occupation of the site of the Chapel" (10). As she notes, "a sacred ritual object is common practice" for Williams to "serve as catalysts of spiritual revelation and change" (11). The main characters are Christian, pagan, and community leaders, as well as a king (named Constantine, though not necessarily the historical one). Higgins claims that the play "contains many of [Williams's] most important ideas, more or less developed" (20). She then discusses the play's problems and possibilities as a dramatic production. Higgins also compares the play to two other early works by Williams, *The Silver Stair* (1912) and *The Arthurian commonplace Book* (c. 1912 - c. 1923?). In closing, Higgins discusses central themes to Williams—coinherence, substitution, and exchange; the revelatory sacral object; affirmation and negation; romantic theology; occult imagery—that provide helpful background for the reader.

The two-act play itself is short and comprises less than half of the publication. Set at some time during the first few centuries in Britain (10), the first act occurs "on the vigil of the feast of St. Cyprian; the second [act] in the morning of the feast" (41). There is not much action since the emphasis is on dialogue and reflection with the characters serving as "types or embodied attitudes," according to John Pellow (123). The priest Joachim presides over the Chapel of the Holy Thorn, and he and others debate who should control the Thorn and its Chapel. The sea's sound is a constant throughout the play (41), which though significant to the setting is not examined in the introduction or appendix. This symbolism with the sea, its rhythm, and its own voice is worth evaluating in its correspondence with the drama's emphasis on singing and chanting, and its spiritual import. Williams also highlights the sea with

references to storms and ships in the characters' dialogue. A particularly compelling line that directly refers to the sea and language occurs near the end when Joaquim exclaims, "How is it that ye need words? hark the sea!" (2.506). Perhaps it is the sea that has the last word since the play's ending is open to interpretation, as Higgins suggests various alternatives in her analysis (18-19).

Williams saw the supernatural in the everyday, a concept that appears in this early text with its focus on a relic and spiritual site. For scholars, the editorial work and commentary by Higgins is valuable. In addition to the critical analysis by Higgins, the book concludes with a perceptive appendix by David Llewellyn Dodds that was published almost 30 years prior in 1987 as a scholarly article about the play. Now that it is available, *The Chapel of the Thorn* will be of most obvious interest to those studying the Inklings, particularly Williams and his major themes.

Ralph C. Wood, ed. *Tolkien Among the Moderns*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2015. 303 pp. \$32.00. Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller.

Assembled in this volume are nine academic papers that shed light on some of the context in which J.R.R. Tolkien wrote and sub-created his famous fantasies. Tolkien is compared to many writers, with full chapters about James Joyce, Iris Murdoch, and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. There is also philosophic explorations with ideas of Plato, Friedrich Nietzsche, Emmanuel Levinas, and Postmodernism explored. One might need to consult a dictionary for some of these essays, but most of the writing is accessible, and at times wonderful. The book does not just focus on *LOTR*, but also expounds about *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*.

There is some intriguing ideas and observations for people of all stripes in this one. History, Literature, and Philosophy are consulted to tell the tale of Tolkien's literary accomplishment. One sees how he was exploring some of the same ideas that others of his time were interested in. There is a bit of cheerleading here, and fans are likely to gain new insights into the literature of the time and Tolkien's place in the literary scheme of things. The book however is not about other fantasists, even if one gains a fuller appreciation of Tolkien's legacy from exploration.

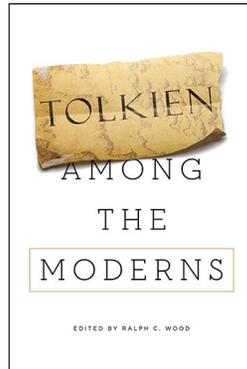
The book is a reaction to Tom Shippey's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* with Editor Ralph C.

Wood writing: "Shippey does not explain how Tolkien's moral vision engages the specific concerns that animate the work of such major modern writers. This book seeks to fill this considerable gap" (1). The goal is to "place modern writers and modern quandaries in lively engagement with the textual particularities of Tolkien's masterpiece, in the conviction that we can thus illumine *Lord of the Rings* in provocative and constructive ways" (2).

The nine essays are from a seminar organized by the Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts held at Baylor University. Editor Ralph Wood writes that they believe Tolkien to be among the moderns. One of the influences being a reaction to the new war technology of the twentieth century.

The book might not be interesting to those who seek to place Tolkien in the history of genre writing. There is not a lot of discussion here about Tolkien's predecessors or decedents. One should remember that Tolkien is credited with creating the market for modern fantasy. There might not have been a Shannara, Thomas Covenant, Harry Potter or *Game of Thrones* without him. His success however did make it easier to forget the past of the Fantasy tradition for some.

As shown, J.R.R. Tolkien was not only an entertainer, he also shed light on modern times. One leaves the book wanting more of such explorations. With Tolkien there are still all sorts of other explanations available about him and his Inklings colleagues. In this one he is with the philosophers of modern times and some of the classic writer that we should know about. The serious fantasy fan might want a discussion of other authors, but that can be found elsewhere.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Science Fiction Poet Passes

K. Cassandra O'Malley, who died late 2015 (she'd been in increasingly fragile health for quite some time) was a long-time prominent member of the Twin Cities SF poetry group. Ruth Berman, Terry A. Garey, and Eleanor Arnason have now edited and published two chapbooks of her poetry as a memorial to her. The smaller one, "The Freeways of Heaven," reprints poems of hers that had been published before (in our group collection, *Lady Poetesses from Hell*, 2012, the anthology *Time Gum* and other poems from the Minicon

poetry readings, ed. Terry A. Garey & Eleanor Arnason, 1988, and issues of Pandora and Tales of the Unanticipated); the larger one, “The Wells of Change,” has previously unpublished poems, mostly on SF or fantasy themes. Cassandra was the daughter of Walt Kelly (of “Pogo” fame) – something she didn’t like to have pointed out, but I suppose won’t mind now (and I imagine the connection will interest readers, as two of the “Change” poems, “Green Blues, Blue Greens” and “The Man Behind the Pictures,” are about him).

Copies are available from Terry A. Garey, Bag Person Press, 3149 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407. “The Freeways of Heaven” is \$7.00 plus \$1.50 postage, “The Wells of Change” is \$10.00 plus \$2.50 postage, or the two together are \$15.00 plus \$3.00 postage.

### An Inklings’ Son Remembers

First-hand memories of Oxford’s Inklings writer’s group, including J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis will be shared as part of the Urbana Theological Seminary’s annual Tolkien conference on Nov. 5. Colin Havard, the son of Inkling Dr. Robert E. Havard, will discuss Tolkien and the other Inklings in “An Inklings’ Son Remembers.” Prof. Mike Foster, the North American representative of the Tolkien Society since 1995, will serve as interlocutor.

Other presentations will include Diana Otto, director of the Ithaca Fellowship, Seth Kerlin of the Urbana Free Library, and other speakers to be announced. The Wheaton [Illinois] Tolkien Society will also perform.

The day-long conference, which begins at 9:30 a.m., will be held at Grace Community Church,



Beyond Bree 2017 Calendar Cover Art  
“Theoden” by Thomas Hijo ©2016

The cost is \$25 and includes a catered lunch.

To register, go to [redacted]. For more information, contact Dr. Melody Green at [redacted].

### Beyond Bree is happy to announce its 2017 Calendar

Roads Go Ever On! We are delighted to take a journey through Tolkien’s Middle-earth in 2017 by horse, boat, wing and foot! Travel through the First, Second, and Third Ages of Middle-earth with the beloved characters of J.R.R. Tolkien’s works

as interpreted by a truly international range of artists from across the globe.

The color and black and white calendar will be 11 x 8 ½ inches, opening to 11 x 17 inches. It will have both Middle-earth and real world holidays so you can follow the travels and adventures of your favorite characters.

Pricing: \$20 plus shipping: USA \$2.00, the rest of the world \$5.00. For large orders, please inquire for details. For PayPal orders please add \$1.00. Send PayPal payments (in USD) to: [redacted]. Send check or postal money order (in USD drawn on a US bank) to: Nancy Martsch, [redacted].

[redacted] You may send US currency, at your own risk, in a sturdy envelope. For more information please e-mail: [redacted].

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## MYTHCON 48

will be held in

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July 28 - 31, 2017

Registration is now open!