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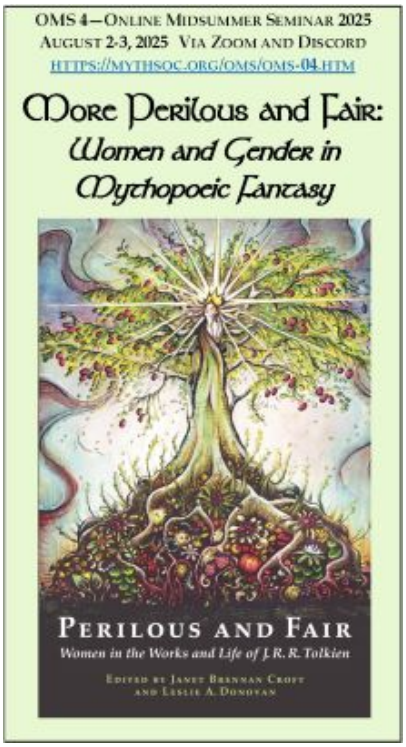

Reviews

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Reviews

Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits. Dimitra Fimi. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. xvi + 240pp. Hardcover: ISBN 978-0230219519, $90.00 (£50.00); softcover: ISBN 978-0230272842, $28.95 (£16.99).

In the spring of 2008, Tom Shippey wrote a guest editorial for *Mallorn*, the journal of the Tolkien Society, in which he discussed several areas of Tolkien studies which he felt had not yet been adequately explored. In one of these areas, "the influences on [Tolkien] of writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so often now deeply unfashionable, forgotten and out of print" (3), Shippey gratefully acknowledged Dimitra Fimi's "articles on the Victorian fairy tradition" (4) as one more step in the right direction. He also called for more extended studies of this kind, wondering (for example) whether the fraud of the "Cottingley fairies" in 1917 might have played some part in Tolkien's abandonment of the diminutive fairies in his earliest works (loc. cit.). Dimitra Fimi's full-length study, *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits*, answers Shippey's call and attempts to answer questions of the kind he raised in his editorial.

Fimi addresses the development of Tolkien's legendarium in three broad categories, with a major section of the book devoted to each. In the first part, she discusses the evolving conception of Tolkien's supernatural beings, initially fairies in the late Victorian mold, but eventually becoming the remote, imposing, and even holy elves of his later works. In the second part of the book, Fimi expands her study to encompass Tolkien's "secret vice" of creating ideal languages and alphabets. In the third, she turns to questions of nationalism and race, particularly in terms of how these are reflected in the material cultures Tolkien devised for his legendarium. Throughout the book, Fimi takes great care to contextualize Tolkien's writings within the cultural, linguistic, and nationalistic milieux in which he lived. Rather than point to Tolkien as an exception to his time, Fimi argues rather the reverse, that in many cases what

Tolkien was doing was not so extraordinary (yet how he did it, and what he accomplished, were).

Part I brings to the stage the central figures of Fimi's study, Tolkien's elves—in their earliest conception: fairies, dryads, gnomes, and so on. She examines the parallel questions of the diminution of fairies in the literary and folkloric traditions of the primary world and as reflected in Tolkien's secondary sub-creation (the former being the groundwork for the latter). Fimi deftly traces the history of the fairy image, exploring the reasons for its gradual diminution from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance to the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and finally noting its abrupt end with the frauds of the "Cottingley fairies" and the arrival of the Great War. She contrasts this with Tolkien's initial acceptance of the traditional "flower-fairies and fluttering spites with antennae," despite his claim to have disliked them even from childhood (Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" 29–30). Fimi contends that we cannot quite take Tolkien at his word here but that he did come to reject the fairy tradition over time, and his response was to *reverse* the natural process of diminution by making his own elves ever greater and more imposing. Tolkien's elves do still diminish, but spiritually, not physically, and Fimi rightly points out that the concept of the passing or fading of his supernatural beings was present from the earliest writings (15). In early works (e.g., "The Lonely Isle," "The Cottage of Lost Play"), Tolkien's fairy beings are childlike and innocent, not yet world-weary and burdened with Blakean experience. But as Tolkien himself grew up, so did his elves. Later, as Fimi will discuss in Part III, the hobbits emerged to fill the void of childlike innocence left by the departure of fairies from the legendarium.

Fimi does readers a great service by untangling Tolkien's early references to elves, fairies, gnomes, brownies, pixies, leprawns, nymphs, and dryads (46–8). It is interesting (though unremarked by Fimi) that just such a welter of supernatural beings from such a variety of traditions would become one of Tolkien's chief complaints about C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Carpenter 224). Fimi also makes excellent points (*pace* Deborah Rogers and Randel Helms, and often *still* mistaken by critics today) about the need to treat *The Hobbit* as a children's fairy tale that grew out of Tolkien's early poetry and storytelling, rather than as a work somehow foreshadowing *The Lord of the Rings* and consciously preparing children to go on to a darker tale. Such treatments are, in Fimi's words, "a-historical" (25). At the same time, Fimi may overstate the matter a bit when she assures us that "Tolkien did not plan for *The Hobbit* to fit into his greater mythological cycle" (loc. cit.). In *The History of The Hobbit*, John Rateliff makes a tentative case to the contrary, noting references in the drafts to Beren and Lúthien, *inter alia*. It is a thorny issue, to be sure; the best answer seems to be that Tolkien probably did not know, or had not decided, what the relationship between his various stories should be.

Part II discusses Tolkien's life-long obsession with inventing languages (and alphabets to go along with them) and situates this avocation alongside the parallel development of Tolkien's elves. The key claim is that as Tolkien's early fairies evolved into the more idealized and semi-divine elves, the language(s) they spoke had to develop into more mature and idealized forms as well. In Fimi's words, "the 'divinity' of the elves and fairies would be indissolubly linked to their 'ideal' language. Tolkien's 'nonsense fairy language' would have found a morally justifiable *raison d'être*" (98). To help make the case, Fimi presents a short history of glossopeia in the primary world, detouring among Volapük, Esperanto, Novial, and even zaum, the "experimental poetic language [of the] Russian Futurists" (90).

To some extent, as in Ross Smith's *Inside Language: Linguistic and Aesthetic Theory in Tolkien*, this discussion suffers from the difficulty of making meaningful connections to Tolkien; however, Fimi does a much better job than Smith of pointing out what few connections there are, as for example in her discussions of James Joyce and Lewis Carroll (88–92). In the case of the former, Fimi has the benefit of having seen unpublished notes Tolkien made on Joyce's use of language in *Finnegan's Wake* (90). She also cites Tolkien's opinions of Esperanto and Novial (95), one of Smith's major oversights. Fimi's discussion of languages does suffer from a few misstatements, as where she asserts that Welsh is "linguistically unrelated to English and Tolkien's beloved Germanic languages" (87). Of course, this isn't quite true. As I am sure she knows, all these are Indo-European languages, and Welsh is certainly closer to English than it is to some other Indo-European languages—say, Armenian or Italian—to which it is only very distantly related. Fimi likewise misses something when she says Tolkien modeled Quenya and Sindarin on Finnish and Welsh "but only phonetically" (96). This isn't quite true either. There are documented lexical and morphological borrowings as well, particularly in the case of Quenya (see Tikka; Fisher, "From Mythopoeia").

In Part III, Fimi brings the study around to matters of race. The case for Tolkien's interest in (and envy of) nationalistic movements in other parts of Europe, as well as how and why he came first to emulate these and later to abandon them, is strongly made. Fimi does a fine job establishing context with the "scientific" theories of race promulgated in the late Victorian period and other background material relevant to the germination of Tolkien's ideas about race (132–5). These ideas would become strangely confused, as Tolkien sometimes advances the apparently racist, or at least eugenic, view that pure blood is the best blood (the case of the Númenóreans; 148); other times, that the mingling of blood leads to the better outcome (the case of the Half-elven; 151–2). Fimi discusses Tolkien's personal feelings about race as well, giving as one example his aversion to the practices of Nazi Germany (as exemplified in a draft

letter to Rütten & Loening Verlag in 1938). Fimi could have added that Tolkien's German prejudices went much further back, to circa 1915–20, as shown by entries in the Qenya Lexicon linking *kalimbo* "giant, monster, troll" with *kalimbardi* "the Germans" (Tolkien, "Qenya Lexicon" 44). "But," cautions Fimi, "we should remember here that although ideology appears to define a literary text from the outside, literature also has its own internal rules. It is the dialectic co-articulation of ideology and aesthetic form that finally produces the literary text." Moreover, "accusing Tolkien of racism would decontextualize his writings from their historical period" (157).

Fimi also includes a very strong discussion of the racial divisions in Middle-earth. She discusses three kindreds—Elves, Men, and Hobbits—each of which exhibits its own tripartite divisions (143–6). In the case of the Elves, there are the Calaquendi, the Sindar, and the Avari. The Calaquendi themselves may be further divided into three: the Vanyar, Noldor, and Teleri. Of Men, we have the three great houses—Hador, Haleth, and Bëor. Or, to take the view from a higher elevation, there are (as with the Elves) Men of Light, Men of Shadow, and Men of Darkness. And finally, the Hobbits are comprised of Fallohides, Stoors, and Harfoots, again revealing the tendency for a tripartite division. In all these cases, Tolkien associates distinct physical and mental capabilities with each "race," hinting at an underlying Victorian view. Across races, Fimi insightfully compares the functional role of the Rohirrim in the Third Age to that of the Sindar in the First (149).

Fimi concludes her book with an epilogue, in which she makes the case that the loss of Tolkien's innocent, diminutive fairies opened up a place for the emergence of the hobbits. She dates this transition to roughly the middle of the 1930s, noting that Tolkien was still planning to include his fairy poem, "Goblin Feet" (1915), in a collection intended for publication in that decade (195). I have pointed out elsewhere that Tolkien was still working on another, more substantial fairy poem, "Errantry," during the 1930s as well. It was first published in 1933 and was subsequently included—retaining the very kind of diminutive fairy imagery Tolkien claimed to detest—in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* at the very late date of 1962 (Fisher, "Parody? Pigwiggenry?"). This certainly throws some doubt on Tolkien's protests; however, it is clear that Tolkien intended the hobbits to take the imaginative place of his early Victorian fairies in Middle-earth at least. "Finally," writes Fimi, "the light-heartedness, humour and whimsy of the early fairies were transposed to the hobbits, who were conceived as 'light' fairy-tale characters from the beginning" (197). And so her study makes good on the promise of its subtitle, "From Fairies to Hobbits."

The book is beautifully designed, intelligently arranged, and written in a clear, articulate voice. Fimi's prose is like a breath of fresh air in a room too often stuffy and pedantic. In the hardcover edition, there are more typographical

errors and spelling mistakes than one would like to see in a book of this quality. Perhaps the most glaring has Tolkien delivering a lecture on the *Kalevala* to the Sundial Society in 1814 (53), about seventy-five years before he was born (this lecture has just been published in *Tolkien Studies* 7). Another error describes the Poetic Edda as the Younger, not the Elder (119). Fortunately, these two errors and many others have been corrected in the softcover edition. The index is serviceable, though incomplete in both entries and references; a conspicuous omission is the "Cottingley fairies," which you'll remember Tom Shippey singled out in his editorial. It's a pity these may not be found in Fimi's index in either the hardback or paperbound editions, in spite of explicit discussion in the book (29, 36, 38, 121). Worse, a number of the references are off by a page or two (a sign that the index was prepared before the layout was finalized).

But lest I seem overly critical, let me hasten to note that such small defects do little to mar the overall quality and value of this work. Dimitra Fimi's *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits* is a clear, thorough, well-argued study of what has been a key lacuna in Tolkien studies. It will be especially welcome to students and general admirers of Tolkien's writings, to whom most of the background material will be unfamiliar. For even the most experienced Tolkien scholars, the book stands as a model of how scholarly studies of Tolkien should be approached and carried out. In addition, Fimi's research opens the door to new questions and deeper inquiries. (For example: I'd like to see more rigorous investigation into exactly when and why Tolkien abandoned "elfs," "elfin," and "elfish" for "elves," "elven," "elvish.") The strength of Fimi's thesis and her skill in marshalling the evidence to support it—traversing the entire legendarium and its many satellite writings to do so—has earned her the 2010 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies. The same care and skill should justly earn her a place on the bookshelves of scholars and fans alike.

—Jason Fisher

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CHARLES WILLIAMS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. Suzanne Bray and Richard Sturch, eds. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-0565-3. xi + 149 pp. $52.99.

This volume collects the papers presented on Williams at a 2008 conference of the Charles Williams Society, at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, over three days. The content is, in general, very good; the papers are substantial. The titular emphasis on Williams's contemporaries appears in six of the nine papers. Since Williams is one of the Mythopoeic Society's major interests, all of the material is of value. But I will start with four essays in which Williams' contemporaries are also of specific interest to this Society; next, two discussions of *The Place of the Lion*; then, the other three essays in the book; and finally some brief comments on editorial problems.

Flora Liénard's "Charles Williams' City against J.R.R. Tolkien's 'Green World'" is a fairly obvious topic, but she develops it satisfactorily for such a broad topic. (She had written a thesis comparing Tolkien's "Green World" and Shakespeare's woodlands.) She mentions Hobbiton as an anomaly in her contrasting thesis; she does not investigate, as Verlyn Flieger has, the inconsistencies in Tolkien's ecological vision. Liénard does a fairly thorough survey of Williams's use of nature—e.g., including the chorus of the play in *Descent into Hell*—although she gets the great image of the archetypal forest with clearings from Anne Ridler's introduction to *The Image of the City*, not from its context in *The Image of Beatrice*.

Richard Jeffery's "C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams and *Paradise Lost*" describes the difference between Lewis and Williams in these terms:

> a mind [Lewis's] usually in very close agreement with Williams but seeing things in a very different spirit, analytic rather than unifying, likely to over-simplify, but sometimes more penetrating, sometimes perhaps one could say heading straight towards God instead of standing and seeing Him in almost all directions at once. (85)

Jeffrey, as his title suggests, is primarily interested in Williams and Lewis as critics of Milton. Given Lewis's dedication of *A Preface to "Paradise Lost"* to Williams, this is no surprise; but Jeffrey points to five places where Lewis clearly (and presumably intentionally) disagrees with Williams's *early* Miltonic discussion in *The English Poetic Mind*. One example (because it is confusingly cited) will do for all five. In *The English Poetic Mind*, Williams writes that God, Satan, and Adam all talk mainly about themselves (Adam with a shift after the Fall). Lewis has a lengthy passage (quoted by Jeffrey) in which he contrasts Adam's variety of topics, not just after the Fall, with Satan's monomania. (This discussion may be confusing to the reader because the quotation from Williams's book is footnoted as to Lewis's book; cf. p. 89, n. 21.)

Suzanne Bray's "Dorothy L. Sayers: Disciple and Interpreter of Charles Williams" is, quite frankly, the best essay on the intellectual and spiritual relationship between Williams and Sayers that we have. (Barbara Reynold's two biographical volumes on Sayers have almost all of what Bray says, but of course they are not focused exclusively on this topic.) Bray's treatment of Sayers's original insights into Williams's writings include (1) the restrained tone of *Many Dimensions* being due to emphasis on justice; (2) the relationship between Lord Arglay and Chloe being based on equality, a balance of separate abilities; and (3) the use of Chloe at the end being part of Williams's "commonplace people" as spiritual agents.

Gavin Ashenden's "Charles Williams and Owen Barfield" treats the two men's world views as parallel in four ways and very different in a fifth. Rather than try to condense the essay into a paragraph, perhaps two specifics can suggests its tenor:

> Barfield's mentor, Rudolph Steiner, and Williams's mentor, Arthur Waite, were both involved with the growing theosophical movement. Both would also move beyond the contours of theosophy; but in different directions. Steiner […] accept[ed] provisionally that [the Theosophists'] dallying with the Hindu east acted as a way of alerting Europe to the gaps in its understanding of spirituality in the numbing face of materialism. A.E. Waite reconstructed a neo-Rosicrucianism [that gave Williams] an

> esoteric, hermetically influenced Christian orthodoxy. It had a number of elements in common with Steiner's and Barfield's 'neo-Christianity'[…]. (55)

(I realize that some on the Williams-related Coinherence web-discussion group consider Waite to be secretly anti-Christian, but Ashenden—as in his book *Charles Williams: Alchemy and Integration*—considers him orthodox. Unless the discussants produce a documented, convincing essay or book, Ashenden wins without contest.)

The other discussion is part of the contrast between the men:

> In *Saving the Appearances* Barfield commits himself to the position that the mind precedes matter […]. The concomitant of this view is that the Fall was a fall of spirit into matter. […] [But] the mutual interdependence of the polarities of spirit and matter were for Williams, at the head of theological and aesthetic hierarchy. (64, 66)

That is, the coinherence of matter and spirit would not allow for a separate Fall of one aspect.

And now for the two treatments of *The Place of the Lion*. These are not general introductions, such as the one published in Thomas Howard's *Novels of Charles Williams*; they are specialized studies about the book. L.S.B. McCaull's "'A Woman Named Damaris': Pseudo-Dionysius' Celestial Hierarchy in *The Place of the Lion*" begins by pointing out that the *De Angelis* by Marcellus Victorinus of Bologna, cited in Williams's book, is actually Williams's invention. McCaull discusses this type of background detail in Williams's work, praising some but faulting one ("the Master in Byzantion"). He identifies Williams's probable actual sources (suggested in the essay's subtitle) and Williams's invention (the serpent in the archetypal beasts). Much of the essay is concerned with the combining of Platonic Ideas, Angelic Orders, and Neoplatonic theurgy. (Despite the titular emphasis on Damaris, she receives only three or four brief mentions—five sentences—but McCoull does identify her with the Damaris of Acts 17:34 and explains the similarity.)

Robert Louis Abrahamson's "*Est in Re Veritas*: Models for Sacramental Reading in *The Place of the Lion*" is more popular than McCaull's essay but still specialized reading. He defines "sacramental reading" in terms of Sayers's *The Mind of the Maker*: in this case, "the words of a text are a kind of incarnation of the idea that lies behind the words" (130). The good reader is interested in both the outward and visible form and the inward spiritual grace (not that Abrahamson is that explicit). After defining his basic term, he goes through the characters in the novel, treating them (for the most part) as analogous to types of readers. "Berringer is like the scholarly and critical material surrounding a text" (132).

Mrs. Portman (the housekeeper) is a sentimental reader. Mrs. Rackbotham is a proofreader. Dr. Rackbotham is a type of academic, scholarly reader, finding knowledge but no wisdom. Quentin Sabor is the student who is uninterested in or adverse to reading certain texts. Foster and Dora Wilmot are ideologues, reading only to advance their cause. Damaris Tighe begins as one who reads only for his or her own advancement; through a mentor or tutor, he or she may become a real reader (Abrahanson is not quite this thorough in his analogy). Mr. Tighe is the devotional reader. Richardson has no analogy to readership. Anthony Durrant is the type of reader who is "centered on [his] relationship with the text" (140); when he considers ideas (the meaning), he checks them against the text. Abrahamson ends with applications of sacramental reading to actually life.

Three essays remain. Grevel Lindop (who is described in Richard Sturch's preface as "surely" working on the "definitive biography" of Williams) begins with a survey on the titular topic of Williams and his contemporaries. He is interested in the poetic influences on Williams, mainly late Victorian, and in the literary circles of which Williams was a member—one around Hugh Evelyn Lee, for example, that met twice a month for twenty years. Lindop discusses the Williams-T.S. Eliot acquaintanceship, with its ambivalences, at some length. Also in Lindop's survey is W.H. Auden's rather one-sided admiration of Williams. Lindop's list of fictional presentations of Williams is only four books long (pp. 13-15), but it has two not in David Bratman's list (*Mythprint*, Jan. 2010, p. 11). (Bratman's list of Charles Williamses is longer, but he is not restricting himself to writings contemporary to Williams's lifetime.) Neither Lindop nor Bratman list an early novel by A.N. Wilson, set at the beginning of World War II, about a female Anglo-Catholic publisher who gave literary parties, attended by Williams, Lewis, and T.S. Eliot. (This is from a comment by Christopher Fry in an interview—Raymond H. Thompson, "Taliesin's Successors: Interviews with Authors of Modern Arthurian Literature," available on the internet.) Perhaps the attendees are just mentioned, not really fictionalized.

"From a Publisher's Point of View: Charles Williams's Role in Publishing Kierkegaard in English," by Michael J. Paulus, Jr., does deal with Williams's contemporaries—the man underwriting the publications and the translators. While the fact is interesting that Oxford University Press was not paying to publish the books (not much different from the "subventions" that pay for publishing some scholarly books today), the main interest is Williams as publisher, carrying on professional correspondence. (As often with Williams, he manages to cause the underwriter to think they are deeply *simpatico*—in this case, on Kierkegaard.)

Paul Blair's "Charles Williams, Dante, and Recent Catholic Theologians" compares Williams's treatment of marital love as sacramental with that of three

more recent theologians, without any claim of influence from Williams. The three are John Paul II, Cardinal Scola, and Cardinal Ouellet. (A long, substantial footnote summarizes the Biblical sources for treating God's and mankind's relationship as spousal love.) Blair finds the theologians more precise in their language than Williams, but much of value in Williams. "What is immature in the *Outlines of Romantic Theology* is mature in *The Figure of Beatrice*" (49)—hence Dante comes in.

Finally, some comments on the problems with the volume—basically, little proofreading and almost no editorial consistency are present. The footnotes and the Works Cited in Lindop's essay often repeat the same bibliographic information (the publisher, the date). Ashenden's essay has the title of one essay at least twice italicized, as if it were an independent publication, and a work by Stephen Thorson does not appear in the Works Cited. In Liénard's essay, an essay by Charles Huttar is never given a name and is cited only by the anthology in which it appears—alphabetized under the editor's name. In Jeffrey's essay, as said above, a paragraph by Williams is credited in the footnote to Lewis. In several essays, book titles are missing their italics, and there are many minor proofreading errors.

In short: interesting and often valuable content, often marred by poor presentation in the mechanics.

—Joe R. Christopher

In the Land of Invented Languages: Esperanto Rock Stars, Klingon Poets, Loglan Lovers, and the Mad Dreamers who Tried to Build a Perfect Language. Arika Okrent. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2009. 342pp. $26.00. ISBN 978-0-385-52788-0.

At first glance, Arika Okrent's *In the Land of Invented Languages* (*ILIL*) seems a long overdue gift to conlang (constructed language) enthusiasts and their burgeoning field. Till now, only Umberto Eco's *Search for the Perfect Language* (1995) and Marina Yaguello's *Lunatic Lovers of Language* (1991) have provided anything like detailed surveys, and while Eco ignored what he calls "fictitious languages," Yaguello's treatment is primarily of the earliest examples. Reportedly five years in the making, *ILIL* makes for a chic-looking volume, its jacket promising a "lively, informative, insightful examination of artificial

languages" written by a young Ph.D. who herself holds a first-level certification in Klingon. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes difficult to tell whether *ILIL* is a wolf in sheep's clothing or the opposite. Its original subtitle (changed to *Adventures in Linguistic Creativity, Madness, and Genius* in the 2010 paperback edition), wacky artwork, and endorsement reviews make it clear that *ILIL* is intended to provide a cheeky look at a quirky subject, and in that respect, at least, it fully delivers. Written in the first-person, *ILIL* offers a combination of anecdotes, research, and assessments, loosely arranged and presented as a single line of inquiry. Witty, opinionated, and occasionally vulgar, the book is intended above all to amuse, frequently through mockery, and should be approached with caution by anyone with an earnest regard for its subject matter.

Through twenty-six chapters, *ILIL* considers the phenomenon of deliberate language creation, especially the creation of languages intended to improve upon natural ones. It is a process Okrent entitles "The History of Failure" in Chapter Two, a rubric that also sums up her thesis and orients her treatment of the language inventors themselves. The appendices to *ILIL* list some five hundred such languages and their designers, as well as a small number of sample passages and resources. For the most part, however, *ILIL* is dedicated to exploring only six of them, and the emphasis of its treatment is on the humorously tragic. Ranging from John Wilkins (Philosophical Language) through William Bliss (Blissymbolics) to John Brown (Loglan), *ILIL* details the eccentricities, neuroses, and missteps of artificial language's "mad dreamers" over the last three hundred and fifty years or so, encouraging the reader not only to see them all as failures, but also to wonder whether the failure lay with the language or the inventor. Technical analysis of the languages is secondary; they are assessed primarily in the context of the inventors' own claims and intentions, such as L.L. Zamenhof's desire that Esperanto become a lingua franca of peace, and Suzette Haden Elgin's wish for Láadan to express a distinctly female experience. Interspersed amidst the various biographies are some interesting factoids, including the existence of "native" Esperanto speakers (those taught from infancy by fluent parents), and Winston Churchill's advocacy for Basic English.

Serving as a tour bus of sorts about the land of invented languages is Okrent's own study of Klingon, anecdotes about which begin and end the book. The choice seems calculated, as the innermost chapters reveal she is actually more studied and proficient in Esperanto. Taking care to announce that she is not a follower of the *Star Trek* franchise, Okrent justifies the choice of languages thus:

> [T]he lessons the Klingon phenomenon can teach us about how language does and doesn't work (trust me on this), can be fully appreciated only in the context of the long, strange history of language invention, a history

> that encompasses more than nine hundred languages created over the last nine hundred years, a history of human ambition, ingenuity, and struggle that, in a way, culminates with Klingon. (10)

By the time *ILIL* reaches J.R.R. Tolkien and the artistic conlangs in the final chapter, the emphasis is no longer on failure—Quenya, Klingon, and P@x'áãokxáã were not intended to be spoken in the primary world, and so cannot be considered flops. Instead, the stress switches entirely to weirdness, characterizing Tolkien's linguistic creativity more as an embarrassing obsession than a passion, and, of course, shooting the small handful of Klingon-speaking fish in a barrel. *ILIL* ends with Okrent realizing she has a kind of sympathy for conlangers, but it sounds apologetic, and more than a little extorted by the expertise she witnesses at a language creation conference in 2007. "I'm not a language creation artist," she writes. "But I *can* still be a language creation art appreciator, which itself takes a certain amount of work and background knowledge" (290).

Though the casual attitude of *ILIL* provides much insurance against serious criticism, there are still areas where the book may be considered flawed. At the forefront is its haphazard treatment of language itself, something owed primarily to Okrent's conflicted style of presentation. Though clearly an expert on language—or aspects of it—the author portrays herself as an outsider looking in, effectively trying to elevate a journalistic candor and immunity upon a scholar's authority and insight. The result is something more cannibalistic than informative, especially with its constant emphasis on the social awkwardness of the people involved. *ILIL* often reads like a book of researched gossip, and therein seems a reflex of Simon Winchester's two best-selling telltales on the Oxford English Dictionary and its compilers, *The Professor and the Madman* (1998) and *The Meaning of Everything* (2003).

In addition to a rather disjointed structure (many chapters appear to have been written to stand alone as articles), *ILIL*'s focus seems capricious. Treatment of its material flits among technical, historical, and theoretical elements, and strewn throughout are Okrent's opinionated soliloquies. Just when *ILIL* is poised to establish a truly interesting context for its analyses, such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in Chapter 18, it reverts to cheek—as if, so to speak, to save face. The book doesn't firmly distinguish among constructed languages, reconstructed languages, auxiliary languages, revived languages, private languages, universal languages, and fictional languages (not to mention the difference between fictive and discursive uses of language). When Chapter 11 juxtaposes a consideration of Esperanto's failure with Modern Hebrew's success, the comparison seems one of apples and oranges, just as it is when the revival of Hebrew is compared with efforts to promote Irish, Hawaiian, and Maori

(languages which, unlike Hebrew, have never ceased to be spoken in the vernacular). The author would have found a better denominator in Revived Cornish, whose movement is replete with the sort of schismatic infighting *ILIL* most enjoys. Also ignored are mythical and spiritual claims for language, some of which conflict with *ILIL*'s chronology. The poem *Alvíssmál* in the Old Norse–Icelandic *Edda* comes to mind, which is at least twelve hundred years old, and appears to present words from the languages of elves, dwarfs, the various races of gods, and men. There is also the Enochian language, reportedly revealed by an angel to John Dee and Edward Kelley in 1581 and used for occult purposes since. Are these 'invented' languages? *ILIL* does not mention them. The inventedness of natural languages is also overlooked (consider standardization, neologism, and terminology, as well as the influences of poetic usage and translation). Furthermore, Okrent is mistaken when she claims there are no languages or writing systems in the world that use imagistic symbolism (184); speakers of Naxi, a Tibeto-Berman language, employ such a script in documenting their ancient stories.

Though *ILIL* claims that artistic (including fictional-world) conlangs represent the final phase of the invented language movement, its treatment is a mere postscript to the rest of the book, and includes no theoretical content. Borges's *Ficciones* goes unmentioned, and the information on Tolkien is tired, amateurish, and misleading (the bibliography lists only Humphrey Carpenter's biography). Okrent presents "The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy" as the end-all of Tolkien's linguistic labors (282), and alludes only to the languages of the Elves. No attention is given to the massive and longstanding scholarly tradition separating interest in the languages of Middle-earth from the *Star Trek* fandom that upholds Klingon, nor does *ILIL* touch upon any of the reasons why conlangs have become an indispensable feature of secondary worlds. Where every fantasy and sci-fi franchise now comes with its own language(s), this disregard on the part of the author is inexcusable, and simply means the land of invented languages is left waiting for a more dedicated gazetteer.

—Harley J. Sims

MILLENNIAL MYTHMAKING: ESSAYS ON THE POWER OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY LITERATURE, FILMS AND GAMES John Perlich & David Whitt, eds. Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., 2010. x + 202 pp. $39.95. ISBN 978-0-7864-4562-2.

I AM A GRADUATE STUDENT OF MYTHOLOGY, AND a book whose titles include the phrases "Millennial Mythmaking" and "The Power of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, Films and Games" invokes for me a fair amount of curiosity and expectation. Joseph Campbell declared in his interview with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, that there is no point in mythologizing any component of contemporary culture because there is too much change in the mythic landscape (qtd in Perlich and Whitt 194). To understand the goal the editors have for this volume, it is essential to understand what "mythology" is. Following Campbell's theories, "mythology" is here used as the stories and rituals of humanity that operate on a fundamental, archetypal level, driving us while simultaneously being driven by us. "Mythology" is not the stories of ancient polytheistic peoples to be studied in literature classes, nor is it a compendium of fantasies or untruths, but something deeper that operates throughout all facets of culture.

The editors, John Perlich and David Whitt, declare from the outset of the volume that they hope to offer a new exploration of contemporary culture and mythology, and how the two are interrelated. They make the assumption that the reader is already familiar with Campbell, the Campbellian definition of mythology, and the model of the monomyth. Derived from James Joyce, Campbell uses the monomyth to describe what he considers the "prime myth," associated with the archetypal hero's journey, which he outlined in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Since its publication, *Hero* has come under scrutiny for its validity to the entire spectrum of human myth while simultaneously becoming the dominant model for literary analysis and story writing. Approaching the essays in *Millennial Mythmaking* does not require familiarity with *Hero*, but it does help with understanding the positions of the authors as they approach their respective mythologies. Furthermore, as a teaching tool, *Millennial Mythmaking* is suited best for late beginner to late intermediate students of myth, but it can also serve as an introductory segue between popular culture and mythological studies.

There are three sections to the book, each including three essays aligned to the section's theme. Part one, "Contrasting Colors" attempts to present Campbell's theories through the mode of comparison and contrast. All three essays are successful in achieving the comparison they are trying to make, but the portions focused on Campbell are forced and a distraction that pulls the reader's attention away from the author's insight. Although Campbell's theories are based on cross-cultural comparison, conscious comparison/contrast that

places the story over the theory does not do his theories justice. The section title is also misleading since only one essay discusses color: the first essay, "Sorting Heroic Choices: Green and Red in the Harry Potter Septology" (Kirstin Cronn-Mills and Jessica Samens), which looks closely at red and green imagery in the Harry Potter mythos. Both colors are essential to Harry's growth as a hero—and to the continued marketing of the series—and the most prominent examples appear at crucial intervals when Harry needs to make an adventure-changing choice. The strength of this article is its analysis of the binaries of red versus green, and not Campbell's monomyth, which really distracts from the rest of the essay.

Similarly, the exploration of the Wicked Witch of the West in the second essay, "The Complexity of Evil in Modern Mythology: The Evolution of the Wicked Witch of the West" (Jason Edwards and Brian Klosa), looks at how this figure has changed from the original movie release of *The Wizard of Oz* to the modern book and theater phenomenon, *Wicked.* This essay shows that, through the re-visioning of this character from villain to ambiguous hero, the issue of good versus evil in modern mythology has also undergone an ambiguous transformation, meaning that the traditional delineations between the two are not really black and white. In keeping with the theme of comparison, the last essay in the section, "Polysemous Myth: Incongruity in *Planet of the Apes*" (Richard Besel and Reneé Smith Besel), explores the polysemous, or multi-faced, theme that has emerged as a popular model in myth and literature, creating hero stories where the hero is not the loner of Campbell's model but, rather, is assisted by very close friends without whom he or she would fail in the quest. This is reflected in the two *Planet of the Apes* films. Both the 1968 and 2001 versions tell the story that is relevant to their respective time by highlighting pressing contemporary issues.

The second part, "New Champions," utilizes the monomyth more successfully than the essays in the previous section, but seeks to propose a new model for female heroes. The three figures explored in this section are Chihiro, hero of Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, Madame Sousa, hero of the French animated film *The Triplets of Belleville*, and Ofelia, hero of Guillermo del Toro's fairy tale *Pan's Labyrinth*. All three female heroes go on a journey of their own epic proportions, which translates nicely to analysis under the monomyth model. As a point of criticism, all three authors observe that the analysis Campbell offers overlooks females, and that they do not undergo the same journey as males; however, all three essays analyze the stories under the same paradigm, still suggesting that a female has to undergo the male journey in order to have a comparable hero's journey pointing to an archetypal nature of Campbell's assertions. As a point of strength, "The Odyssey of Madame Sousa: A Heroine's Quest in *The Triplets of Belleville*" (David Whitt) not only compares the journey of

Madame Sousa with Homer's journey of Odysseus, amplifying the mythic narrative, but also elaborates an atypical heroine: an elderly woman. Throughout mythology, the elderly are expected to have already traveled the journey and that it is the goal of the young. Similarly, women are expected to live a different paradigm, leaving the journey aspect to the men. The fact that Madame Sousa is an elderly woman speaks to the contemporary situation in the West, where the age limits are higher than ever before with older people holding jobs well past "retirement" age.

Finally, the essays in part three, "No Boundaries," explore the relationship between everyday life and technology, and how this relationship shapes our approach to contemporary mythology. The first of these essays, "Actors and Their Mythic Heroes: from the Doctor to Captain Kirk" (Djoymi Baker) considers the relationship between actors and the television characters they portray to suggest that, in the age of television, they are remembered for their previous roles as much as their new, thus inviting the two characters to meld together. Specifically, the author looks at *Heroes* and the intergenerational history is creates for itself with *Star Trek* and *Dr. Who.* The other two essays regard cyborg myths. "Running Free in Angelina Jolie's Virtual Body: The Myth of the New Frontier and Gender Liberation in *Second Life*" (Ellen Gorsevski) discusses the cultural myths created and communicated through the virtual community *Second Life*, especially as to how these myths pertain to women. It points out that the mythic paradigm of cyber space is similar to that of Manifest Destiny in the Old West, in which men are the heroes and conquerors and women are supplementary to their journey. This is further exacerbated by the gender bias in the information technology community. "So Where Do I Go From Here? *Ghost in the Shell* and Imagining Cyborg Mythology for the New Millennium" (Jay Scott Chipman) utilizes the Japanese manga/anime of the same name to explore cyborg myths and their impact on the imagination. The author posits a cyborg's "creature-journey" (in lieu of a hero's journey) of liberation from the confines of human control and transformation into another being, independent and self-actualized. Cyborg myths are meant to help us cope with the rapid changes in technology and our own merger with it.

In conclusion, the editors hope that this book conveys that myth is essential and is found everywhere an individual deems relevant, and demonstrate this by looking at select artifacts of contemporary popular culture. From this perspective, they are a success, which makes this volume valuable to the discourse of mythological and fantasy literature studies. However, for the serious mythologist, this volume falls short. While the discourse is valuable, several of the sources chosen are too dated, some being nearly ten years old. Some of them still maintain a popular following today, but others have already exited the scene, thus distancing the reader from the ultimate goal of the book.

Finally, the title suggests to me that the book should be about the myths of the Millennials, the generation that came of age around the turn of the century; yet, many of the myths expressed in this book are the myths of the generation just before the millennium.

—Priscilla Hobbs

MIDDLE-EARTH MINSTREL: ESSAYS ON MUSIC IN TOLKIEN. Bradford Lee Eden, editor. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010. ISBN: 9780786448142

Bradford Lee Eden's *Middle-earth Minstrel* begins by recognizing what Eden sees as a glaring error in Tolkien scholarship: while music and musical allusions arguably play a large role in Tolkien's presentation and creation of Middle-earth, and throughout his work in general, precious little scholarly or critical attention has been paid to their roles and functions. This collection seeks to remedy that glaring oversight and provide some insight into Tolkien's use of music and musical themes, as well as a look at music that has since been influenced by Tolkien's work. Eden's efforts are clearly a labor of love in the strictest sense; one has the impression from the introduction that Eden has a passion for both Tolkien and music, and would have gladly compiled this book with or without funding. Eleven essays delve into the topic of music and Tolkien, taking different approaches from different disciplines, and all speak to the importance of music within Middle-earth and Tolkien's life in general. What results is a useful book on many levels, containing a few stellar pieces of scholarship, a great deal of fascinating textual criticism, and a ringing testimony to the importance of music for Tolkien and for many of the scholars themselves.

The essays draw upon a wide array of disciplines—ranging from linguistics to educational pedagogy and back again. They include studies of Tolkien's relationship with contemporary music of his day, Old English alliterative poetry reflected in the songs of the Rohirrim, music theory as a representation of free will in *The Silmarillion*, and the relationship between the medieval *Sir Orfeo* and Tolkien's "Lay of Lúthien." Much of the scholarship is

well researched, well written, and—often more importantly—interesting. Some pieces are truly excellent, and elevate the collection considerably.

The book is strong right out of the gate. Jason Fisher's analysis of Rohirric verse, "Horns of Dawn: The Tradition of Alliterative Verse in Rohan" is quite fine and sets a clear tone for the kind of work contained therein. Fisher carefully examines Tolkien's influences for Rohan, various traditions of Old English and Germanic alliterative poetry, and the connections between languages both real and fictional. What is even more delightful than his scholarship itself is that he somehow manages to do it all without losing a reader who admittedly knew nothing about Germanic alliterative verse or the Saxon kingdom of Mercia until she had finished the essay. While there are many outstanding pieces in *Middle-earth Minstrel*, Fisher's piece stood out and one could not ask for a stronger opening than "Horns of Dawn."

Another fine contribution is Eden's own "Strains of Elvish Song and Voices: Victorian Medievalism, Music, and Tolkien." It is equally lovely and deeply true to the theme of the collection. It goes a long way to situating Tolkien amongst other medievalist-influenced writers of the Victorian period, or rather, showing how he continues their earlier works and was shaped by the medievalism they all share. Without dwelling on it overly much, Eden deftly shows how Tolkien was deliberately out-of-step with his literary contemporaries, and yet, still squarely amongst other writers who shared his backwards gaze.

Last, but by no means least, is Peter Wilkin's "Æfre me strongode longað: Songs of Exile in the Mortal Realms." This is a stellar piece of scholarship, and beyond that, a true joy to read as he unpacks and unfolds his theory. Wilkin clearly and succinctly examines the difference between the songs of Elves and Men, and how each works within various parts of Tolkien's story. He teases out excellent overtones in both, finding religious allusions without over-playing Tolkien's Catholic orientation. He moves deftly between what death and longing mean in different contexts, how they function for Elves and Men, and he plays them off one another as he considers the songs of each race. He looks at poetry as the reaction to the problem of death, and the means of transmitting a longing for something more, both within Middle-earth and in our own world. The essay is restrained and lovely, and it is almost a disappointment to find that it has finished, much like a good song. It is a fine example of textual criticism and engagement, and proves an outstanding contribution not only to the book itself, but to the field in general.

Unfortunately, for all the excellent essays in the collection, there are some that do not quite live up to the promise of the book. It seems that some contributors struggled with the theme, leaving one questioning just what, exactly, the essay had to do with music beyond a reference to it in the title. Darielle Richards's "J.R.R. Tolkien: A Fortunate Rhythm" appears more a piece

on Tolkien's method and a Jungian study of his process as a writer than a serious reflection on music within his world or said process. It is, to be sure, quite interesting, but its relevance to the collection seems entirely strained. John R. Holmes's "'Inside a Song': Tolkien's Phonaesthetics" is written in an utterly engaging style with touches of wry humor, but the material is exceptionally dense. Linguistics are most certainly on point in a collection centering around music, but the terminology in the piece is daunting and loaded with the jargon of the discipline—perhaps an unavoidable result of linguistics writing, but still difficult for one not well-versed in the field, despite Holmes's many efforts to make the material accessible. Anthony S. Burdge's study of a Manhattan performance artist named Thoth, whose history and Tolkien-influenced inspirations he details in "Performance Art in a Tunnel: A Musical Sub-creator in the Tradition of Tolkien," felt somewhat incomplete and the tone was biographic, making it stand somewhat awkwardly amongst the more theoretical pieces in the collection. For as interesting as the subject was, it felt hastily included, tacked on at the end, and somewhat mystical in places, in stark contrast to the rest of the book.

Lastly, David Bratman's "Liquid Tolkien: Music, Tolkien, Middle-earth, and More Music" is a marvelous survey of Tolkien-inspired music, nearly staggeringly vast. Bratman clearly knows what he is about, and speaks the nuances of classical music with razor-sharp precision. However, for all that he has a supreme command of the field and writes about music with a keen passion and refinement, his attitude towards Howard Shore's well known film score prove an unfortunately consistent distraction. Bratman's critiques of Shore's work are arguably justified and sharp. He understands the failings of Shore's work as a symphonic piece, and his point about the Celtic-inspired music being inappropriate to the Shire, inspired as it was by the English Midlands, is justifiable. Despite his good points, the critiques are also too-often repeated to the point where they struck this reader as ongoing complaints, and by the time Bratman comes around to actually talking about the score itself, his disdain for Shore's "uninspired hackwork" (146) become exceedingly grating. It is an unfortunate detraction from what is otherwise a fantastic piece of work, and one cannot help but wish that perhaps the editorial pen might had been slightly more ruthless.

Overall, Eden's *Middle-earth Minstrel* is readable, well researched, and a strong contribution to the field of Tolkien studies. The works contained feel fresh and interesting, and even where the essays sometimes miss the mark regarding the theme of the collection, they are still useful in their own rights. The two essays by Fisher and Wilkins alone are worth the price of admission, and Bratman's discography makes this book highly useful for anyone interested in the intersection of Tolkien and music, whether that intersection lays within the

boundaries of Tolkien's world, or square within our own. Eden's collection is worthwhile reading, and neatly achieves his aim of filling the musical gap in Tolkien scholarship.

—Emily A. Moniz

HARRY POTTER & IMAGINATION: THE WAY BETWEEN TWO WORLDS. Travis Prinzi. Allentown, PA: Zossima Press, 2009. vi + 312 pp. $15.00. 978-0-9822385-1-6.

Travis Prinzi's *Harry Potter & Imagination* will be of interest to *Mythlore* readers for his insightful discussion of how J.K. Rowling fits into the mythopoeic tradition of George MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Madeleine L'Engle and for his analysis of myth and Faerie in the Harry Potter series as vehicles for understanding and transforming our own primary world. As his subtitle, "The Way Between Two Words," suggests, Prinzi is concerned with how the Harry Potter books as fairy stories (in Tolkien's sense from "On Fairy-stories") belong to that "Pot of Soup" or "Cauldron of Story" of mythic narratives, and thereby allow Rowling to reflect upon truth, faith, and heroism and to comment upon racial, gender, and political injustice in the Western World of the early twenty-first century. Prinzi synthesizes much of the Harry Potter criticism published to date, focusing particularly on how the publication of books 5-7 of the series have recast many of the issues explored in earlier studies published before *The Order of the Phoenix*. Although the book at times resembles the somewhat informal musings Prinzi writes on his blog "The Hog's Head" more than an academic treatise, it nonetheless will help frame some of the debate surrounding Rowling's place in the canon of mythopoeic literature, and will hopefully pave the way for future serious studies on the bestselling series.

The book is comprised of a series of mediations on Harry Potter that are loosely structured into three sections: Harry Potter and Faerie, Harry Potter as the self-sacrificing hero (and other archetypes), and Harry Potter as a "political

fairy tale." The first part details how the Harry Potter books stand in relation to the works of Tolkien, Lewis, and other fantasists who regard the fairy tale as the embodiment of a truth deeper than that of science or the Enlightenment. Prinzi carefully reflects upon Rowling's comments on her readings of Lewis and Tolkien, seeking to understand what legacy she has inherited from both authors and how, despite her professed struggles with religious faith, the Harry Potter series does have much in common with the Christian fantasy of the Narnia books or even *The Lord of the Rings*. Here Prinzi looks at Harry Potter in terms of Tolkien's formula for fairy-stories (seeing eucatastrophe in Harry's return to life in *The Deathly Hallows*) and demonstrates how it fits in where the world of Faerie bumps up against the everyday "muggle" world of Britain. It is in this luminal space between two worlds—a space perfectly embodied by King's Cross railway station with all its significance in the Harry Potter series—that Prinzi discerns the Christ-like self-sacrifice in Harry's actions. Citing Michael Ward's recent landmark study of the medieval planetary imagery underlying the Narnia series, Prinzi offers a fascinating perspective on the Christmas and Good Friday/Easter timeframe in the Harry Potter books, suggesting that they are not merely locked into the cycles of the academic calendar as many have suggested. In this section Prinizi also makes some unlikely pairings of Rowling with other fantasists—for example, the parallels between the horror elements in Harry Potter and the Mythos of H.P. Lovecraft.

Prinzi next turns his attention to the central characters of the Harry Potter series, placing them into the context of Carl Jung's (and Joseph Campbell's) archetypes of the hero, the shadow, the anima/aminus, the mentor, the shapeshifter, and others. This section offers some cogent analysis of the character types in Rowling's fiction and seeks to call into question some of the more simplistic categories into which Harry and the others have been lumped. For instance, Prinzi shows how Harry evolves from the innocent hero of Books 1-4 into the angry young man of the latter books, but still rises like a phoenix (another key image in the series) to become the hero in the end. The analysis of Voldemort as Harry's shadow, Dumbledore's flaws, and Snape's complex motivations will benefit future critics as they trace the evolution of those figures throughout the series.

The final section provides a broad assessment of the social commentary embedded in the Harry Potter books, and suggests that the moral and mythic superstructure of the series enables Rowling to reflect upon social improvement, the proper role of the government, and cultural "metanarratives" of prejudice and intolerance. He uses Rowling's quotation of Plutarch from her 2008 Harvard commencement address to sum up how the fairy tale can be an agent of social change: "What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality." Prinzi suggests that Rowling's apparently contradictory views on social change embrace both an

activist moral vision that advocates gradual social melioration (associated with the Fabian Society) and a more libertarian view that people should freely choose to change the world and not rely on the government to rectify wrongs. Prinzi further discusses the Wizarding World's maltreatment of women, and especially their virtual enslavement of other magical creatures, including a lengthy meditation upon what Mythopoeic Press author Kathryn McDaniel terms the "Elfin Mystique" of the house elves ("The Elfin Mystique: Fantasy and Feminism in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series" in *Past Watchful Dragons: Fantasy and Faith in the Works of C.S. Lewis*). He concludes by placing Harry, Ron, and Hermione into the company of Frodo, Sam, Aslan, and the Pevensies as heroes who self-sacrificing love can fight evil both in our world and on the cosmological plane.

Harry Potter & Imagination does leave the reader wanting some further explorations of the mythopoeic dimensions of Rowling's series, but it marks an important step in the development of serious critical attention to the popular books. Prinzi's bibliographic citations to interviews and web-based articles about Rowling are useful for researchers seeking statements in those ephemeral sources, but will quickly become dated. Still, this work is a valuable checklist of Harry Potter criticism up to 2009.

—David D. Oberhelman

FASTITOCALON: STUDIES IN FANTASTICISM ANCIENT TO MODERN: IMMORTALS AND THE UNDEAD. 1.1 (2010). Eds. Thomas Honneger and Fanfan Chen. Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.. 978-3-86821-218-1. 92 pp. Pbk. €15. (While published in Germany, the language of publication is English.)

This new annual was founded by the editors to remedy what they saw as "the lack of a journal that aims at promoting a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of fantasticism across the ages" (1). Each issue is intended to explore a particular theme or an important author in this area, which they do not define explicitly but consider to include topics such as the supernatural, the transcendental, and the monstrous, and authors such as Hoffmann, Poe, Tolkien, de Maupassant, and Dunsany. While it remains to be seen if future issues will

fulfill this perceived need or further clarify their definition of fantasticism, this first issue, on immortals and immortality, is an impressive start.

Dirk Vanderbeke's "The Vampire Strikes Back: On the History of a Nightwalker" starts with a quite informative study of the vampire of European folklore beginning with medieval sources, and shows how the traditional characteristics of the folkloric revenant were very selectively adapted (and sometimes transformed into their exact opposites) in 18th and 19th century literature, then went through a further metamorphosis, primarily led by Hollywood, in the 20th century. I found his generational analysis of Stoker's Dracula quite intriguing:

> a 500 year old terrorist child with […] a sexuality which is based on biting and sucking. The very old and the very young merge in the vampire, and together they battle the middle generation. It is, to some extent, the inversion of a common motif of the fairy tale, in which the specially gifted child with the help of some wise old man or woman, overcomes an evil opponent from the generation of the parents—that is, the two powerless generations unite against the presently dominant age group. Now the mature generation is under siege […]. (13)

The third section, on twentieth century vampires, particularly on film, is by no means exhaustive; while Vanderbeke touches on Coppola's *Dracula*, *The Lost Boys*, and *Interview with the Vampire*, he skips over such gems as the 1979 Frank Langella *Dracula*, the touchstone of my generation of swooning high school girls, and the entire subgenre of comedy vampire films like *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, *Transylvania 6-5000*, or *Love at First Bite*. And in the print medium, while the Stephanie Myers *Twilight* series gets a nod, it is by no means entirely typical of recent and current vampire literature, which ranges as far from her *oeuvre* in different directions as the sad-sack Earl of A. Lee Martinez's *Gil's All-Fright Diner* and the teetotalling Black Ribboners of Terry Pratchett's Ankh-Morpork. Still, this is an excellent survey breaking the vampire image down handily into three major time periods, and for a scholarly paper displays quite refreshing touches of wry wit and humor.

Eugenio M. Olivares Merino's "The (Medi)Evil Dead: Revenants and Vampires in Twelfth Century English Literature" limits its subject to the dead who return bodily to cause harm to the living—that is, more precisely, *revenants*. Olivares Merino starts with the influence of the Norse invasions, via both the terror of the invasions themselves and the folk tales the Norse brought with them about walking corpses that must be killed by decapitation and the stake. (In an interesting case of turnabout, a recent dig at Oxford turned up a mass grave of Viking invaders killed—and decapitated—by the English sometime around 1000 AD; see Keys.) The author puts a sort of *terminus ad quo* to the concept of the

revenant exclusively as a physical walking copse through a brief aside on *Hamlet*, pointing out that by Shakespeare's time it was quite conventional that a ghost on stage, though played by a flesh-and-blood actor, could only be "seen" by certain characters and was otherwise insubstantial (27). Olivares Merino then retells the stories of several 12th century revenants—not vampires, because at this time blood-drinking was not automatically associated with the walking dead in England (Hamlet's "Now could I drink hot blood" referring to a witches' sabbat, not vampirism), but corpses walking for their own several reasons and needing to be put to rest through specific, and sometimes quite locally limited, techniques. The paper is to be continued, with additional examples demonstrating a shift in the nature of the revenant towards vampirism, in part two of this volume.

Siobhán Ní Chonaill's paper on William Godwin's *St Leon* focuses on the implications of immortality that are explored in this novel – political, moral, social, economic, religious, interpersonal, and so on. While Ní Chonaill does not bring up this comparison, the cold rejection of the "domestic affections" (47) by the title character struck me as the polar opposite of the charming warmth of the immortal couple Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,* who escape a similar alienation by sharing their immortality. But what struck me as particularly interesting, especially in the light of William Stoddard's essay in this issue of *Mythlore*, is the intersection of art, fame, and immortality Godwin explores in this novel. Given immortality and perfect memory, is there a need to attach one's name to a work of art? And indeed, can the work rise from the level of craft to true art without the added pathos of the inescapable death of the artist? Ní Chonaill points out, in reference to St Leon penning his memoirs, that "[a]s an immortal, the usual motivations or inducements for attaching one's name to an enduring […] text are irrelevant. St Leon does not need his name to live on after his death as he is himself immortal" (47). The author's conclusion reinforces for us, as readers of Rowling, that an immortality reserved exclusively for one person is soul-deadening and corrupting, while an immortality shared, like that of Tolkien's elves, can lead to great beauty and wisdom—and yet paradoxically it can be "at once the culmination of rational life and yet incompatible with a rational life" (52).

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu seems to have shared with J.R.R. Tolkien a tendency to revisit and rework favorite stories over the course of a lifetime of writing. In Françoise Dupeyron-Lafay's "Victorian Gothic Fiction as a Ghost: Immortality and the Undead in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864)," the author closely examines the changes between the 1838 "Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess," an intermediate version with minor changes retitled "The Murdered Cousin" (1851), and the final substantial revision of the material in the 1864 novel *Uncle Silas*. The treatment of the story over nearly

thirty years becomes progressively more "elusive, ambiguous, uncanny and disturbing"; even the title becomes "more enigmatic" and "misleading," while the style leaves behind some of the excesses of the Gothic and takes a more "symbolic approach that intensifies the sense of the uncanny" (56). Indeed, the passages Dupeyron-Lafay chooses for closer study evoke a chilling sense that the living are always under the immortal gaze of a spirit-world just out of sight and not always benign.

The final paper in this issue is of particular interest to our readers, and it is certainly worth seeking out, as its approach is somewhat different from treatments of the subject seen before (building in particular on Tom Shippey's paper on wraiths). Amy Amendt-Raduege writes in "Better Off Dead: The Lesson of the Ringwraiths" about the wraiths being neither alive nor dead, but "*caught in the process of dying*" (71), trapped forever in a fate of their own choice while they gradually lose "[f]ace, form and freedom—the very foundations of what it means to be human" (74-5) as the "great zero" (an apt turn of phrase) of the One Ring sucks away their individual names, their physical bodies, and their free will. She makes the important point that "Ultimately, what makes the Nazgûl so frightening is not that they might kill us […] but the very real possibility that *we might end up like them*"; and indeed, like other revenants, "the first and most terrifying motivation of the undead is a terrible compulsion to create more undead," as we see in the Witch-king's threat to Éowyn and the action of the Morgul-knife on Frodo (79).

Douglas A. Anderson ends this issue with several pages of "Notes on Neglected Fantasists," providing a few paragraphs each on seven different American and European writers active from the early 1800s through 1994. Those interested in the study of vampire tales (particularly those presented on stage), ghost stories, or supernatural/detective story hybrids might find some useful leads to follow up on here. It looks like this will be a recurring feature of *Fastitocalon*.

The table of contents for the second half of this volume is available at the journal's website at http://fastitocalon.kolbitar.de/ and looks equally enticing, with articles on immortality in science fiction and in oriental manuscript illustrations, and on the undead in Victorian literature and Terry Pratchett's Discworld. The second volume, due out in 2011, will deal with Europe as "the cradle of modern fantastic literature." All in all, this is a journal that looks like it will publish much of interest to *Mythlore*'s readers, though it is perhaps closer in its mission to *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. The quality of the articles in this first issue was good, and it was especially refreshing to encounter a bit of humor and playfulness in Vanderbeke's article.

—Janet Brennan Croft

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Theodor Seuss Geisel [*sic*]. Donald E. Pease. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. "Lives and Legacy" Series. xiv + 178 pp. $19.95. ISBN 978-0-19-532302-3.

Ah, Dr. Seuss. Every knows his lines: "A person's a person no matter how small" (*Horton Hears a Who*); "And the turtles, of course . . . all the turtles are free / As turtles and, maybe, all creatures should be" (*Yertle the Turtle*, orig. ellipsis)—as well as less morally intended statements: "I do not like green eggs and ham! / I do not like them, Sam-I-Am!" (*Green Eggs and Ham*).

Since Theodor Geisel died in 1991, a number of books, M.A. theses, and articles have been published about him—in fact, the first book appeared in 1988. Pease's book is intended to be relatively short, biographical, more concerned with content than artistry; but it reprints (in black and white) forty-seven of Dr. Seuss's drawings and offers some analysis of the poems and stories—particularly of plot patterns. Pease has used well Seuss's archive at the University of California at San Diego—often cited in the endnotes.

The book begins with Geisel's rough voyage back across the Atlantic in 1936 (via ship, of course), returning from a visit to Germany, when he began jotting notes that resulted in *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1937), his first book for children. Pease reads this partly in terms of Geisel's home town, Springfield, Massachusetts, since that has its Mulberry Street, but also in terms of Geisel's family—a fact-minded father (in the poem) and a fantasy-encouraging mother (not in the book). (The facts and fantasies in the early days were in terms of Geisel's drawings of zoo animals.)

When Geisel published the poem, he already had a background of writing, art, and humor. Due to the pre-World War I anti-German sentiments, while he was nine years old, kids threw stones at him as he was walking to and from school. By the time he was in high school, he was compensating by playing the jokester—appearing in a minstrel show he wrote, and providing art and jokes for the weekly school newspaper. After the war, the family business—a brewery—was closed during Prohibition, and the family's financial status fell.

Geisel continued this role at Dartmouth College. When, in his senior year, he was barred from contributing to the Dartmouth humor magazine (and was removed as editor) for an alcoholic party during Prohibition, Geisel began contributing under pseudonyms, including that of his middle name, Seuss (not yet Dr. Seuss). After Dartmouith, he attended Oxford University (Lincoln College) for one year. Pease mentions Geisel attending a "class on Anglo-Saxon for beginners" in 1925-26. Tolkien was elected to the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professorship of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford on 21 July 1925. Tolkien taught at both Leeds and Oxford during the Michaelmas Term (October-December). Obviously "Anglo-Saxon for beginners" was not a job for a professor, but it would be nice to think that Geisel attended some of the new professor's lectures. (Pease, of course, does not digress onto such matters.)

Geisel met his first wife, Marian Palmer, at Oxford (she was an American). She encouraged his life as an artist, and after their marriage they collaborated on all of his work until her first attack of Guillain-Barré syndrome in 1954. (After that he seems to have feared depending on her because she might get ill again and not be able to help him. Instead, a few years later, he put her in charge of the Beginners' Books series that he had started with *The Cat in the Hat*, dealing with the other authors and their works.)

The period of Geisel's first marriage was the best part of his career. He had begun as a cartoonist and gag-man, appearing in (first) *Saturday Evening Post* and (soon) regularly in *Judge*, a humor magazine something like *The New Yorker* in the period. It was in *Judge* that "Dr." was first added to "Seuss." After their marriage, Geisel chanced upon a commercial job, producing "Quick, Henry, the Flit!" cartoons for the Flit Product Division of Standard Oil, in the years 1928-1938, 1940-1941. His sales to magazines went up with his commercial recognition. The children's books were at first side-lines, although appearing once every year—the Mulberry Street rhyme and then, in 1938, *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* and, in 1939, *The King's Stilts*—both in prose with clear morals. The adult-aimed *Seven Lady Godivas* (also 1939), like *The King's Stilts*, had poor sales. But then in 1940 came *Horton Hatches an Egg*. Pease indicates that it was Helen who got Horton out of the tree and who wrote the climactic couplet.

In 1941 came World War II—and Geisel's commercial writing was put on hold. He drew political cartoons for *PM*, and, volunteering for the Army in

1943 at the age of 39, he was assigned to a Hollywood-centered Information and Education Division, making newsreels for the armed services, which included animated cartoons. (He managed to end up behind German lines in Europe for a few days, but he was not at the front to fight.) Helen provided their primary income during the war by writing books for Disney and Golden Books.

Then, after the war, after a brief scattering of efforts, Geisel turned to children's books. Pease writes of a Springfield cycle of three new books that related to *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street.* Eight books, in toto, appeared between 1947 and 1956, including *Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose* (1948), which Pease sees as one of the two tied (indirectly) to war.

Pease sets up a complicated pattern in the early '50s. He reports, correctly, that Geisel did not give up advertising and movies, along with children's books, until 1953, after the failure of a movie that was reshaped by producers. In 1954 came Helen's illness. *If I Ran the Circus* (1956), the last of the Springfield cycle, Pease says, is the first of Seuss's children's books to have "an adult onlooker as a participant" in the fantasy. And, then, in 1957 came *The Cat in the Hat.* Pease provides an elaborate discussion of the book, comparing and contrasting it to Geisel's previous work; but for this Society it is enough to say that the Cat in the Hat is a trickster figure.

The next years went well for Geisel. He published seven books for older children, including *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957), *Yertle the Turtle* (1958), and *The Sneetches* (1961); and such books for younger readers as *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960) and for pre-readers *Hop on Pop* (1963). But in 1964 Helen's Guillain-Barré syndrome returned, and she committed suicide in 1967.

Geisel remarried the next year, and Audrey—who divorced in order to marry him, and who brought her two daughters with her—proved even better than Helen at their finances, but she *may* have helped cause a shift by telling him that he wrote for humanity, not just for children. Pease points to the adults who influence the resolutions of the new books: the Once-ler in *The Lorax* (1971), the old man's song in *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* (1973), the grandfather in the unresolved *Butter Battle Book* (1984), and the narrator in *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* (1990). This increased use of the significant adult is prepared for by Pease's earlier comment on *If I Ran the Circus.*

One flaw in Pease's book, at this point, is that he limits "Dr. Seuss" to the books bearing that name. (Probably Pease simply did not have space to give to the others because of the Life and Legacy word restrictions.) Geisel also wrote (but did not illustrate) thirteen books under the name of Theo. LeSieg and one book under the name of Rosetta Stone. But another one of these non-Seuss books is important here: the anonymous *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1952), two years before *If I Ran the Circus. Gerald McBoing Boing* first appeared as a U.P.A. cartoon in 1950, winning an Academy Award—which brings it back to four years before *If I*

Ran the Circus. Pease mentions this film briefly (90), but not its book version (with Mel Crawford's illustrations based on the animated cartoon's style). The verse begins:

> This is the story of Gerald McCloy
> And the strange thing that happened to that little boy.
> They say it all started when Gerald was two—
> That's the age boys start talking—least, most of them do.
> Well, when he started talking, you know what he said?
> He didn't talk words—he went *Boing boing!* instead.

Gerald goes through one rejection after another, and then, when he's ready to hop a freight train, he is stopped by a man with a white moustache and white hair, with a three-bar xylophone, who owns "the Bong-bong-bong Radio Station" (obviously NBC, given NBC's use of three tones). The adult hires him to be a one-person sound-effects provider for radio shows. Success follows. But the point is that the resolution is provided by an adult—an adult *ex machina*, so to speak. Geisel had started moving in that direction before Helen's first attack of Guillain-Barré syndrome.

The book by Pease is, given its intent to be a fairly short introduction to Geisel's life and legacy, well done. He mentions the "authoritative" biography, *Dr. Seuss and Mr. Geisel*, by Judith and Neal Morgan (1995); they are cited sixty-seven times in the endnotes. He quotes from Geisel's writings about children's literature, which reveal different types of didactic intent. Perhaps the humor could have been treated more fully, but humor is notoriously difficult to discuss; at least Pease shows that it began as a defense mechanism, as a disguise. In the early years of writing, it was perhaps a commercial device (as in the offerings to *Judge*). But it also became an ingrained habit at some point. No doubt it is hard to say fully what the humor became. Also, this reviewer would have liked to have known more about Geisel's membership in the Lutheran Church—how often did he go as an adult? But Pease's book is very good for its length, with a satisfactory index at the back; it accomplishes its purposes.

—Joe R. Christopher

About the Reviewers

Joe R. Christopher is Professor *emeritus* of English at Tarleton State University, Stephenville TX. He has published two books (one in collaboration) on C.S. Lewis, published one chapbook of Tolkienian verse, been an assistant editor of *Truths Breathed Through Silver: The Inklings' Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy* (ed. Jonathan B. Himes, Cambridge Scholars, 2008), and edited three books and one issue of a journal. He also has published essays on Lewis, Tolkien, Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers, Anthony Boucher, Ellery Queen, John Dickson Carr, various fantasy and science fiction writers—as well as such standard authors as the Pearl Poet, Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Tennyson, and John Heath-Stubbs—and over 100 poems. He had one play—a farce about a vampire—produced at his university.

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