

MYTHOPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of The Mythopoeic Society

Vol. 18, No. 5

May, 1981

Whole No. 12

NEWS NOTES

NEW FANTASY BOOKS: BRIEFLY NOTED

THE ATLAS OF MIDDLE-EARTH by Karen Fonstad. Houghton Mifflin. \$14.95 224 pp. 8 1/2 " by 11 ". 115 two-color maps of Middle-Earth, all annotated and cross-referenced. The maps detail not only the lands of Middle-Earth, but also routes, highways, sites, troop dispositions, and other information.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Houghton Mifflin's first edition of LORD OF THE RINGS, they are publishing a special collector's 3 volume set of LOTR. This Anniversary Edition is bound in a dark blue leather-like material with silver stampings. \$50.00.

TOLKIEN AND THE SILMARILS by Randel Helms. Houghton Mifflin. \$10.95. hardcover.

From the H-M press release:

The noted Tolkien scholar turns his talents to THE SILMARILLION, core of Tolkien's imaginative writing, and gives us a lucid analysis of Tolkien's own best-loved and most profound work. "The construction of elaborate and consistent mythology... rather occupies the mind," Tolkien wrote his English publisher, "and the Silmarils are in my heart."

In a clear, imaginative prose, Professor Helms describes the sources of THE SILMARILLION, both the classical and Biblical, its major themes and its separate parts. He explains its complex relationship with Tolkien's other major works, THE HOBBIT and THE LORD OF THE RINGS, showing how it underlies them both. In a special afterword on UNFINISHED TALES, Helms addresses questions raised by this brand new work and, in so doing, illuminates the entire Tolkien canon. Tolkien fans will find this new study original and provocative.

MYTHELLANY is planning to have its first issue out in May. Advance orders are \$2 and should be sent to Lee Speth,

EXCALIBUR

Film Review by Todd French

During "Excalibur", director John Boorman's entrancing interpretation of the Authurian legends, Nicol Williamson's Merlin states: "A great god comes to drive out the many gods. The spirits of the woods and streams grow silent." It is this lament for the suppression of pagan magic that Merlin represents, by the advent of Christianity, that characterizes Boorman's extravagent film, making it a work of continual magic. And it is through Merlin's eyes, that we see this Wagnerian epitaph for the passing of magic.

Boorman covers the legend from Arthur's birth to his death, encompassing the romance between Lancelot and Guenevere, the quest for the Grail, and the struggle between Arthur and his evil son-nephew, Mordred. And with the power of the sword-master, Merlin, Arthur hurls through the narrative with a burnished fury.

The film begins with the siege in the forests of Tintagel between Uther Pendragon and the Duke of Cornwall. To the ominous strains of Wagner's "Gotterdamerrung", we are thrust into the barbarism of Boorman's Dark Ages: through the fire-wreathed forest we see hordes of armour-clad men hacking and butchering indiscriminately. A brutal cacophany made more so because of the dull armour and the helmet pieces the knights wear: the helmets resemble the faces of beasts, bearing metallic snouts and beaks. The external beastiality of men killing men has not been so eloquently evoke since Eisenstein's visual discription of the Teutonic Knights in "Alexander Nevsky." The scene has the chaotic nightmarish edge of a Bosch painting, and we are not sure who is killing who until the savage Pendragon rides out of the carnage, demanding the sword Excalibur from Merlin. But the sword is more than a blade, and becomes a symbol of all the enigmatic and terrifying forces

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of nature, a part of what Boorman's Merlin calls, "The Dragon". It is the all encompassing force of nature (see Lucas' "The Force") "whose scales are the bark of trees...whose claws are the forks of lightning..." The very environment itself also seems to shape the armour of Arthur's knights from their moon-gleaming plates to their more genial animal features. Armour also serves as an externalization of character in Boorman's film. Looking into a visor is tantamount to peering into their soul: Lancelot bears the grail-symbol on his armour, a symbol of his single-minded spiritual chivalry; Mordred wears golden armour and a golden mask to suggest his pretended demi-god virtue.

The quest for the Grail is no less an attempt by Arthur and his knights to regain reconciliation with the forces of nature. Early in the film, King Uther voices the belief of "one land, one king." In a fit of anger, Arthur drives the sword Excalibur into the earth after finding the illegal lovers, Lancelot and Guenevere. This leads Lancelot to cry, "The land is without a king." The quest, as seen by Boorman, is the attempt at the reconciliation with the secular and natural forces.

In fashioning his film, Boorman is every bit the cinematic wizard as Merlin. Oceanic forests, mist-shrouded woods, and green fields register with staggering force. It is nearly impossible not to be consumed by the visual splendor that is rampant throughout the narrative, as well as the impressive performances; from his beginning as the rustic boy-king to the regal, agonized ruler, Nigel Terry is superb as Arthur; Helen Mirren, as the treacherous Morgana who sires the evil Mordred and leads the Quest Knights to the deaths, performs with a flamboyant demonic power; Paul Geoffrey as the saintly Perceval who replenishes the land by answering the riddle of the Grail, is appropriately virtuous; but it is Nicol Williamson as Merlin who gives the most accomplished performance. Whether delivering his dialogue with prophetic portentousness, or acting with misleading buffoonery, he is a constant joy to behold, and when he is off the screen, he is sorely missed.

The battle scenes themselves, notably the mist-shrouded confrontation between Arthur and Mordred, are kinetically charged affairs: they are not ballets of death, but wheezing primordial death waltzes. The few special effects that are employed are dazzling, and they are there to add to the story, and not for the sake of themselves. The entire film has an unearthly magical sheen: from the knights' armour to the castles that gleam with a silvery light, certainly not hewn of dull stone. "Excalibur" seems to be a studied replication of legend, and it shows in every frame, and honors should be given to cinematographer Alex Thomson. There is such an abundance of

visual wonder in "Excalibur", that even its most grisly moments, such as Perceval's discovery of the slain Quest Knights, has a ravaged, bleak beauty as in a Breughel painting. Like the burnished armour of Arthur's knights, it gleams with an iridescent majesty, and it is difficult not to walk away from the film feeling the immense power of legend. From the first scene of the Lady in the Lake's hand rising out of the water clutching the mystical blade to the final image of the dying king sailing into the sunset, "Excalibur" is a brilliant example of cinematic magic.

EXCALIBUR

Notes by Lisa Cowan

Conceived and produced by John Boorman (ZARDOZ, and THE HERETIC- The Exorcist 2), EXCALIBUR is a picture he has wanted to make for over ten years. The recent re-interest in Fantasy films convinced Orion Pictures and Warner Brothers to finance the movie filmed at the Nation Film Studios in County Wicklow, Ireland.

EXCALIBUR is the life story of Arthur from his conception to his death. The sword Excalibur, and the sorcerer Merlin play vital roles throughout the film. Merlin, played by Nicol Williamson, is closely patterned after Gandalf.

John Boorman is a great admirer of J.R.R. Tolkien. In 1970, he began preproduction work on a live action LORD OF THE RINGS. The project died when the studio realized the awesome scope, and the cost of such a film. Boorman describes his Camelot as closely related to Middle-Earth. The time period of the movie is that of T.H. White's book, with characters in full armour, and chivalry in full bloom.

Mythprint welcomes any additional reviews and comments on this film or any other fantasy film coming out.

Renewal Time

Is the number in the upper right hand corner of your label a 12? If so, then it is time for you to renew your subscription to MYTHPRINT. THIS issue will be your last one, if we do not receive your renewal soon.

The rates are as follows: \$4 for 12 issues (one year) in the USA and Canada, \$6.50 else-where. Please add \$1.80 for first class delivery, if desired. Checks should be payable to The Mythopoeic Society, and may be paid in US or the equivalent UK or Canadian funds.

Please send your renewal to: Mythprint, [REDACTED]
And include a mailing label for quick identification.

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award

The five nominees for the 1981 M.F.A. are: LION OF IRELAND: THE LEGEND OF BRIAN BORU by Morgan Llwyelyn; THE GREY MANE OF MORNING by Joy Chant; THE WOUNDED LAND by Stephen R. Donaldson; THE BEGINNING PLACE by Ursula K. Leguin; UNFINISHED TALES by J.R.R. Tolkien; plus "No Award". Votes must be postmarked by July 20, 1981. Send your votes to: George Colvin, [REDACTED]

Those members who have not voted by mail, may do so at the Mythopoeic Conference in August. The work receiving the most votes, providing the total number of votes is more than 10% of the current Society membership, shall be announced at the Conference. If there are not a sufficient number of votes, no award will be given.

The Council of Stewards shall choose the recipient of the Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for a work which in their judgement is an important nonfiction scholarly work on Tolkien, Lewis, and/or Williams published within the three years preceding the year of the award. Member suggestions for this award are solicited. Suggestions for the M.S.A. should be sent as soon as possible to the Recording Secretary: George Colvin, [REDACTED]

Society Elections 1981

In accordance with changes in the Provisions of the California Non-Profit Corporation Code which went into effect in 1979, there shall be a Ballot Election for the electable offices of the Council of Stewards every three years. The next such election shall be in 1981, with the terms of office to begin on January 1, 1982.

Nominations to the Council of Stewards may be made by a supporting petition of at least 33 of the current members or by action of the Council of Stewards.

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MYTHPRINT is the monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion, and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams.

The address for all mail concerning MYTHPRINT is [REDACTED]

Subscription, including membership in the Society is \$4 for 12 issues (one year) in the USA and Canada, \$6.50 elsewhere. Please add \$1.80 for first class delivery, if desired. Checks should be payable to The Mythopoeic Society, and may be paid in US or the equivalent UK or Canadian funds. Submissions of news, reviews, discussion group reports, letters, and art work are always wanted. Classified ads will be accepted at a later date.

Nominations shall be closed 120 days before the date of the election.

The qualifying nominees shall be announced in the October 1981 issues of MYTHLORE and MYTHPRINT. The deadline for postmarked ballots shall be December 1, 1981. The deadline for receipt of supporting petitions shall be July 8, 1981, and shall be sent to the Recording Secretary: George Colvin, [REDACTED]

The positions are: Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Manager of the Orders Department, Member-at-Large, Editor of MYTHLORE, Editor of MYTHPRINT, Editor of MYTHELLANY, and Editor of PARMA ELDALAMBERON.

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Deadline for Activity Calendar is the first of the month preceding the month of publication, i.e. June issue information will be due the 1st of May. July issue information will be due the 1st of June. Thank You.

CALIFORNIA: [REDACTED]

AVALON

Kim Lucien, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

KHAZAD-DUM

Pat Witham, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

CALIFORNIA: [REDACTED]

MYDGARD

Dolores Espinosa, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

*May 9, 1981 (Saturday), 2:30 PM

THE SNOW QUEEN and THE SWAMP KING'S DAUGHTER by Hans Christian Anderson At Gracia Fay Elwood's, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

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The Mythopoeic Society also publishes MYTHLORE, a quarterly journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, General Fantasy and Mythic Studies. Subscription is \$10 per year from Lee Speth, [REDACTED]. Checks payable to The Mythopoeic Society.

--STAFF--

EDITOR: David Bratman
MANAGING EDITOR: Lisa Deutsch
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Sallijan Snyder
COMPUTER WIZARD: Harold Harrigan
TEXT EDITOR: UCSD Pascal 2.0
MASCOT: "The Widget"

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[REDACTED]: NARGOTHROND

Lisa Cowan, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

*May 30, 1981 (Saturday), 8 PM

The Uses of Magic in Middle-Earth, and
The Istari and other Wizards in Fantasy.

*June 27, 1981 (Saturday) 8 PM

Beren and Luthien - chapter from THE
SILMARILLION (They will play a tape of
Christopher Tolkien reading Beren and
Luthien prior to the discussion)
Contact Lisa Cowan for locations of
meetings.

[REDACTED]: DESOLATION OF SMAUG

Meg Garrett, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] CAIR PARAVEL

Scott Norton, [REDACTED]

*May 9, 1981 (Saturday), 8 PM

THE MAGIC CUP by Andrew M. Greeley
At Dennis & Robin Hunt's, [REDACTED]

*June 13, 1981 (Saturday), 8 PM

THE WOUNDED LAND by Stephen R.
Donaldson, at Kriss & Colleen White's
Contact Scott Norton for directions.

[REDACTED] LOTHLORIEN

Anne Wilson, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

*May 16, 1981 (Saturday), 8 PM

"Moles in Literature" (DUNCTON WOOD
by William Horwood, Contact Anne
Wilson for location.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[REDACTED]: KNOSSOS

Charles Butler, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

HAWAII

[REDACTED] SAMMATH NAUR

Stephen L. Brown, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

*May 3, 1981 (Sunday)

THE LORD OF THE RINGS by
J.R.R. Tolkien

*June 7, 1981 (Sunday)

HAUNTED WOMAN by David Lindsay

All meetings start at 2 PM and are
located at: Ken Burtness, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

ILLINOIS

[REDACTED] MINAS AERON

Renee Arwen Alper [REDACTED]

MICHIGAN

[REDACTED] GALADHREMMIN ENNORATH

Please contact their secretary:
Dave & Grace Lovelace [REDACTED]

MINNESOTA

[REDACTED] RIVENDELL

David Lenander, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

*May topic - Tolkien

*June topic - TENTATIVE - Mick Levy
on Fairies, based on his research
for his dissertation.

NEVADA

[REDACTED] CRICKHOLLOW

Joanne Burnett, [REDACTED]

OREGON

[REDACTED] TOLKIEN SOCIETY OF MARSHALL

Marshall High School, [REDACTED]

WASHINGTON

[REDACTED] EREBOR

James Wallace and Ginger Johnson, [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

MythCon XII will be at Mills
College in Oakland, California on Aug. 7-
10, 1981. The theme is "A Festival of
Faerie". The Guests of Honour are Joe R.
Christopher and Elizabeth M. Pope.
Memberships are \$15. The room rates are
\$39 per person per day, and include
meals. Memberships and requests for
information should be sent to: MythCon
XII, c/o Diana L. Paxson, [REDACTED]



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