

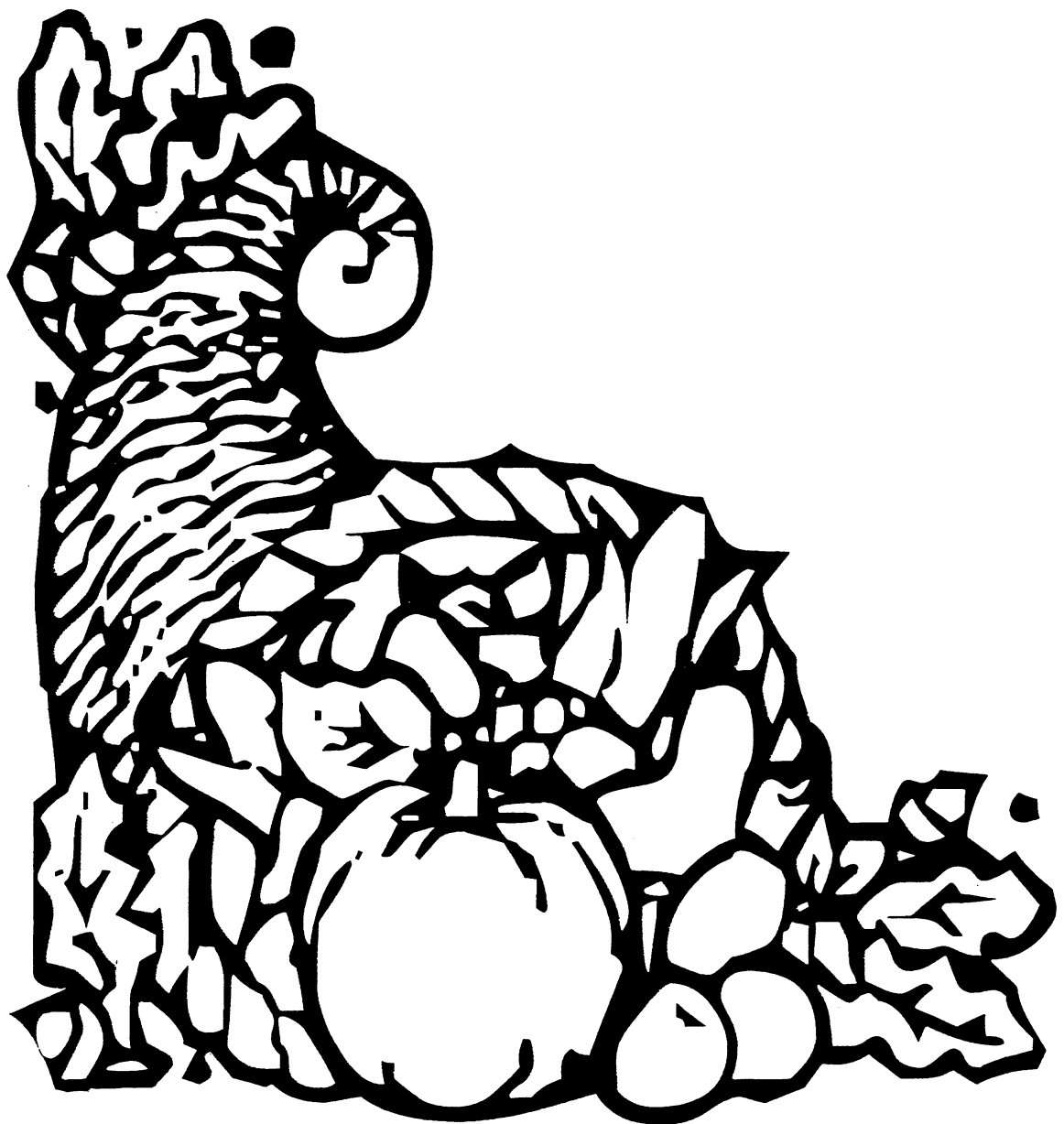
MYTHPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

Vol. 43 Nos. 10-11

October/November 2006

Whole Nos. 295-6



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"Butterbur's Woodshed" logo by Kevin Farrell © 2006 (p. 9)

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DEADLINES for receiving material for each issue of *Mythprint* are the 1st of the preceding month (eg, December 1st for the January issue).

The 38th Annual Mythopoeic Conference

Mythcon XXXVIII

Theme: "Becoming Adept: The Journey to Mastery"

Clark Kerr Conference Center

Berkeley, California, August 3-6, 2007

Guests of Honor: Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman

Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman are both Mythopoeic Fantasy Award winning authors for their novels *Thomas the Rhymer* and *The Porcelain Dove* respectively. Both have new novels appearing in 2006, Kushner's *The Privilege of the Sword* and Sherman's *Changeling*. Kushner's public radio series *Sound & Spirit* is a renowned weekly program "exploring the human spirit through music and ideas." Both have made great contributions to the mythopoeic and interstitial arts, and we are proud to welcome them to Mythcon 38.

The Mythopoeic Society discusses myth, fantasy and imaginative literature in discussion groups across the U.S. and on the internet, in newsletters and scholarly books and journals, and at its annual Mythopoeic Conference (Mythcon). Inspired by the scholarly discussions and writings of the 1930s Oxford University group The Inklings (including C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams), the Society began in California in 1967.

The conference will feature the usual blend of the scholarly (papers, panels, keynote addresses, presentation of the Mythopoeic Awards) and seasoned Mythcon traditions (auction, costume presentation, banquet, Golfimbul, the Not-Ready-for-Mythcon Players). A **Call for Papers** will be forthcoming: contributions by academics, independent scholars, and students will be welcome on the works of the Inklings and our Guests of Honor, on the conference theme, and on other topics in myth and fantasy studies. The Clark Kerr Campus of the University of California will be the setting. Its charming Spanish courtyards, arcades, and fountains have been the setting for three previous Mythcons, in 1988, 1995, and 2001.

Conference membership (initial rates):

- * \$50 for Mythopoeic Society members
- * \$60 for non-members
- * \$40 for registered students, age 12 and up
- * Children under 12 free

Make checks payable to The Mythopoeic Society, and mail to:

Bonnie Rauscher, Registrar



If you are uncertain of your Society membership status, please contact our Membership Secretary, Marion Van Loo, at [REDACTED]

PayPal registration will be available later. Room and board rates will be announced in early 2007.

Book Reviews

HILARI BELL, *The Prophecy*. New York: Eos/HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 006059943x, hc, 208 pp., \$15.99.

I have grown to like the writing of Hilari Bell, who takes interesting viewpoints in her fantasy novels.

In this new book, the son and heir of a warrior king is a young boy much more suited to being a teacher or clerk. He has no aptitude for combat, and the arms instructor is at best a bully, unsuited to teaching. Ever since the death of his mother, young Perryn has tried to find a solution to the problem facing the kingdom, a dragon which causes such havoc that the country is ill-prepared to fend off attacks by the barbarians on the border. Perryn has searched in the kingdom's archives, without his father's knowledge, and found what he hopes is a solution: a prophecy which explains how to slay a dragon. All he needs is to find a true bard, a unicorn and an ancient lost sword. Unfortunately, his father thinks the whole thing is a load of rubbish. To make matters worse, the arms instructor is more than the simple bully he seems, far more dangerous both to Perryn and the kingdom.

The quest to find the key elements of the prophecy, and then to find out how to use them to slay a dragon, includes elements of humor and serious adventure, with a prissy and not-very-brave unicorn, a seemingly dishonest bard, and a magical sword that is not quite what one expects. This is all set against the serious problems that Perryn faces, including facing down the beast that helped cause the death of his own mother. Overall, a good story, and one that I can recommend for younger teens.

Reviewed by Nick Smith



DIANA WYNNE JONES, *The Pinhoe Egg*. New York: Greenwillow, 2006. ISBN 0-06-113124-5, hc, 515 pp., \$17.99.

It's fun to watch Jones exploring the universes of Chrestomanci, a character in a multiverse pretty clearly not intended by her as a series, but one which has kept drawing her back for almost 30 years. It is now a year past the events of the first book, *Charmed Lives* (1977), when young Cat Chant reluctantly found himself installed as the Chrestomanci-eventually-to-be. In the interval, there have been the events of "Warlock at the Wheel" (1984), when one of the magicians deprived of his magic at the end of the first book tries to turn to a life of crime instead; *The Magicians of Caprona* (1980), when Chrestomanci intervenes in an Italian feud and brings back Tonino, an individually ungifted magician with a gift for cooperative magic, for a visit; *Witch Week* (1982), when Chrestomanci intervenes in a world where magic is banned, the ban being enforced by an inquisition; "The Sage of Theare" (1982), when Chrestomanci helps the Sage grow into his world; "Stealer of Souls" (2000), when Cat and Tonino save the soul of the dying ex-Chrestomanci, Gideon de Witt, from being stolen; and "Carol Oneir's Hundredth Dream" (1986), when the daughter of one of Chrestomanci's old schoolfriends finds herself unable to dream any more stories. (The four short stories were collected together in 2000 in *Mixed Magics*, which was also the original publication of "Stealer of Souls"). *Witch Week* and "The Sage of Theare" could be set earlier or later in the sequence (the only clear indicator is that both are later than *Charmed Lives*), but I'm guessing from the publication dates that Jones thought of them as later than *Caprona*, but not much later. And there are two volumes of prequel, *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, (1988), set in the boyhood of "our" Chrestomanci; and

2005's *Conrad's Fate*, set shortly after.

As the new book opens, back in the “present,” Chrestomanci is just about to return from the continent after taking Tonino home, and there is mischief going on—and another feud of magic-working families—in the nearby villages. The protagonists are a pair of self-doubting enchanters, Cat, who is still coming to terms with himself as a Chrestomanci-to-be (and finds he's taken on more responsibility than he realized when he feels drawn to the titular egg and sets about trying to hatch it—it turns out a baby griffin needs a lot of TLC); and Marianne Pinhoe, who thinks she has a somewhat similar position of authority coming up as Gammer to the Pinhoe witches. As it turns out, Marianne is an enchanter, not a witch—as in other stories in the sequence, Jones enjoys coming up with more and more varieties of what kinds of different talents could be lumped under the general heading of “magic.” Christomanci's son Roger, who is not a powerful magician, has a gift for commerce. Marianne's brother Joe, a disappointment to the Pinhoes, has a gift for combining machinery with “dwimmer” magic. Dwimmer, an archaic word for magic, was used by Tolkien to describe the black arts of the Nazgûl, but here, as the herbalist Jason Yeldham explains, dwimmer “means that a person is in touch with the life in everything,” whether it is his wife Irene cleaning dull paint off tiles to release the bright ceramic colors, or Joe using the stuffed body of a dead ferret to power a flying machine built out of two bicycles and a lot of bits and pieces of junk. (One of the funniest scenes in the story is when Joe and Roger, peddling madly, fly overhead, while all the bits and pieces they've removed from the castle to complete the contraption complain mournfully, “I belong to Chrestomanci Castle.”)

Comedy in this case goes with some melancholy, as the feud grows out of a tragic, long history of attempts to repress magic (rather like the

somber world of *Witch Week*, with magic in both stories symbolizing imagination, under attack by the unimaginative as “evil”). Even Chrestomanci's powers cannot undo all the harm done, although much is restored. But Marianne's lost grandfather cannot be restored to ordinary life after his long exile, and her grandmother cannot survive the after-effects of the evils she has done in trying to keep magic under cover. The mixture of emotions in the story is balanced mostly to comedy, but the shiftings between comedy and sadness are subtle and impressive. With *Conrad's Fate*, Greenwillow began putting the label “A Chrestomanci Book” on these volumes, and reprinted all the earlier titles. The new book meets the high standard Jones has set herself.

Reviewed by Ruth Berman



PATRICIA A. MCKILLIP, *Harrowing the Dragon*. New York: Ace Books, 2005. ISBN 0441013600, hc, 320 pp., \$23.95.

To fans of Patricia A. McKillip's fantasy novels, this anthology of her short stories from the 1980s and 1990s probably needs no recommendation. But to those who have not yet sampled her magic brew, *Harrowing the Dragon* offers a good introduction to McKillip's rich imagination and lush, poetic style.

McKillip excels in creating dreamlike landscapes full of allusive images, in which words become solid facts and the truths of the heart take tangible shape. In one of the best tales in the collection, “Fellowship of the Dragon,” five warrior women ride into a land of sorcery to rescue the queen's lover from a dragon. They find the greatest dangers to their quest not in fiery breath and deadly claws, but in this dream-land's capacity to lure them with their deepest desires. In “Lady of the Skulls,” desire is once again a

deadly riddle, as a mysterious woman is compelled to keep a fortress where adventurers must choose the most precious treasure or die of their wrong choices.

There is humor, too, usually of a gentle variety. One of Dorothy Parker's epigrams lamented that her lover offered her a "perfect rose," but never a "perfect limousine." The troll in McKillip's "A Troll and Two Roses" would never long for anything so mundane. He stumbles into a romantic adventure in the form of a knight holding a marvelous treasure, a perfect rose which is actually his bewitched lady. Having "a weakness for beautiful things," the troll decides to add the rose to his collection, and pursues it in both its forms as single-mindedly as Galahad pursued the Grail, but with rather less finesse. Though greedy and monstrously lacking in tact, the troll somehow emerges as one of McKillip's most winning characters.

McKillip writes beautifully about music, and so it was no surprise to find "A Matter of Music" among the best stories in the collection. In three realms with an unsettled, bloody history, bards are so revered that wars have been started over them and the loss of a kingdom consoled by the bestowal of one. Into these conflicts, a young bard drawn by her heritage and a prince in search of his estranged wife venture across a troubled boundary, knowing that their quest may stir the embers of war. McKillip's inventive descriptions of fictional instruments like the cothone, with a different pipe for each emotion, give voice and texture to the imaginary world she creates.

A number of the stories are re-imagined fairy tales: in "The Snow Queen," the icy end of the world becomes a metaphor for a married couple's estrangement; "The Lion and the Lark" draws on one of the lesser-known analogs of "Beauty and the Beast"; and "Toad" sets the record straight about the so-called frog prince.

Sadly, there are no stories in the collection

from the 1970s, the period of McKillip's remarkable *Riddlemaster* trilogy and *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld*, novels with tighter plots and a higher pitch of emotional intensity than her later, more stylistically polished works. I for one would love to see what short stories she may have written in that early period. To my tastes, in McKillip's recent work, art has overwhelmed heart, and the direction of the story can be too easily forgotten amid the flow of gorgeous descriptions, striking metaphors, and sophisticated wordplay. But to others' tastes, this sacrifice of passion for polish may be a bargain worth making. I would venture to guess that McKillip's gradual shift to more "literary," less emotionally charged storytelling may account for her increasing prestige among academics. At any rate, this anthology, poised between the freshness of McKillip's early works and the sophistication of her current output, contains much to please both sorts of readers, and I strongly recommend it to all lovers of mythopoeic fantasy.

Reviewed by Pauline J. Alama



MADELEINE E. ROBINS, *Point of Honour*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2005. ISBN 0-812-57049-9, pb, 347 pp., \$6.99.

MADELEINE E. ROBINS, *Petty Treason*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2006. ISBN 0-765-34306-1, pb, 319 pp., \$6.99.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a Fallen Woman of good family must, soon or late, descend to whoredom. Indeed, a maidservant or seamstress might eke out her wages with casual prostitution, but a gentlewoman of damaged virtue is often so lacking in resources that dedicated harlotry is her necessary fate." These are the opening lines of *Point of Honour*, the first of the books featuring Sarah Tolerance. Agent of

Inquiry. As suggested by these remarks, Sarah is a Fallen Woman of good family. She has not, however, resorted to selling herself sexually. She has created a new path: she is a detective in a society which has no such official role.

Madeleine E. Robins treats us to an English Regency that never was. Mad King George is unfit to rule, as in our own time line, but the regent in his stead is not his son, the Prince of Wales, but his wife, Queen Charlotte. That is not absolutely key to the plot, but it does establish that this is not our world, and that is what is key. The Sarah Tolerance books fit the subgenre of fantasy that is fantasy of place: no supernatural powers or events take place. They are set in our world, but they're not. In that way, they fit in with Ellen Kushner's *Swordspoint* and its companions.

As a young girl, Sarah Brereton fell in love with her brother's fencing tutor and ran off with him, ruining her in the eyes of society. Her lover taught her skill with the sword, among other things, and they stayed together until his death, although they never married. Now in her late twenties, Sarah has created a new identity as Sarah Tolerance, Agent of Inquiry. She applies the sharpness of both her mind and her blade to cases brought to her. Because of the uniqueness of her experience, she is equally at home in whorehouses and palaces, dressed in gowns or men's clothing.

In the first book, *Point of Honour*, she is engaged to retrieve a fan which is tied to the political futures of a nobleman. She goes above and beyond the call of duty. She may have lost her honor as a woman, but not her integrity or honor as a human being. Sarah does the right thing, disregarding personal cost.

Petty Treason follows closely after *Point of Honour*. Here, our protagonist is asked to investigate the mysterious death of an unsavory French expatriate. England is at war with

Napoleon and France, so this could lead in a variety of directions.

These books are fun with sharp, witty writing and keenly imagined characters. Sarah Tolerance is a woman who takes the worst life throws at her and manages to walk through it with her head held high. These books should appeal to fans of Jane Austen and Georgette Heyer, but Robins goes into territory those ladies never covered, and she unfurls it with a blend of compassion, dignity, and humor. If you're looking for something to read after you've devoured the latest Ellen Kushner (*The Privilege of the Sword*), you'll be happy with these.

Reviewed by Berni Phillips Bratman



Activity Calendar

Marion VanLoo
Membership & Discussion Group Secretary

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Prospective Groups

CALIFORNIA

[REDACTED] *LOTHLORIEN*
Linda Sundstrom, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

FLORIDA

[REDACTED] *HOBBITON*
Paul S. Ritz, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *ERYN GALEN*
B.L. McCauley, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

INDIANA

[REDACTED] *CERIN AMROTH*
Ellen Denham, E-mail: [REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]

Chartered Groups

CALIFORNIA

[REDACTED] *MYDGARD*
Lee Speth, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
October: *Clemency Pogue, Fairy Killer* by J.T. Petty
[REDACTED] *KHAZAD-DUM*
Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]
October: *Hallowed Hunt* by Lois McMaster Bujold
November: *The Strange Adventures of Rangergirl* by
Tim Pratt
December: Annual Reading & Eating Meeting

COLORADO

[REDACTED] *FANUIDHOL ("CLOUDY HEAD")*

Patricia Yarrow, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[REDACTED] *KNOSSOS*
Mimi Stevens, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]
October: *Rough Magicke* by John Houghton

HAWAII

[REDACTED] *SAMMATH NAUR*
Steve Brown, [REDACTED] E-
mail: [REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]
October: *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova
Nov: *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Neffenegger

ILLINOIS

[REDACTED] *THE FAR WESTFARTHING SMIAL*
Mike Foster, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

IOWA

[REDACTED] *ALFHEIM*
Doug Rossman, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

LOUISIANA

[REDACTED] *ROKE*
Sally Budd, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MICHIGAN

[REDACTED] *GALADHREMMIN-ENNORATH*
Dave & Grace Lovelace, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MINNESOTA

[REDACTED] *RIVENDELL*
David Lenander, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]

NEVADA

[REDACTED] *CRICKHOLLOW*
Joanne Burnett, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

NEW YORK

[REDACTED] *HEREN ISTARION*
(*THE NEW YORK TOLKIEN SOCIETY*)
Anthony Burdge & Jessica Burke, The New York
Tolkien Society, [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

OREGON

[REDACTED]
Donovan Mattole, [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

October: *The Silver Trumpet* by Owen Barfield
November: *Till We Have Faces* by C.S. Lewis
December: Group viewing of movie, *Apocalypto*, and
annual Christmas dessert

January: *Albion: The Origins of the English*
Imagination by Peter Ackroyd

February: *The Power and the Glory* by Graham
Greene

March: *Children of God* by Maria Doria Russell

PENNSYLVANIA

[REDACTED] *C.S. LEWIS AND FRIENDS*
Neil Gussman, [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

SOUTH CAROLINA

[REDACTED] *THE COLUMBIA C.S. LEWIS SOCIETY*
Nina Fowler, [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

WASHINGTON

[REDACTED] *MITHLOND*
Matthew Winslow, [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

WISCONSIN

[REDACTED] *THE BURRAHOBBITS*
Jeffrey & Jan Long, [REDACTED]

Special Interest Group

THE ELVISH LINGUISTIC FELLOWSHIP

Carl Hostetter, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Newsletter, *Vinyar Tengwar*. Journal, *Parma*
Eldalamberon: Christopher Gilson, [REDACTED]

Correspondence Group

ONCE UPON A TIME (children's fantasy)

Laura Krentz, [REDACTED]

Correspondence circular. Web: [REDACTED]

Online Discussion Groups

MYTHSOC E-LIST

Society activities and general book-related discussion.

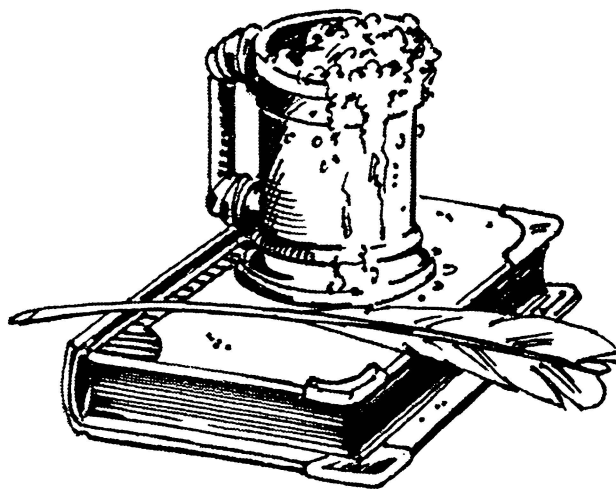
Sign up: [REDACTED] or contact

Joan Marie Verba: [REDACTED]

COINHERENCE

Online discussion of Charles Williams

David Davis: E-mail: [REDACTED]



Book Review: Tolkien Scholarship

ROBERT EAGLESTONE, ED. *Reading The Lord of the Rings: New Writings on Tolkien's Classic*. London & New York: Continuum, 2006. ISBN 0-8264-8460-3, tp, 214 pp., \$24.95.

Early rumor had it that this collection of critical essays on Tolkien was going to be another book like *This Far Land* edited by Robert Giddings, a collection of ignorant bashings whose greatest value would lie in being cited years afterwards as examples of critics who don't get it. But though there's a good supply of "not getting it" in here, this book is considerably more interesting than its predecessor.

Robert Eaglestone, who studies postmodern literature at the University of London, laments that contemporary critical theories have been too little applied to Tolkien. So he has assembled this team of scholars, mostly British academics like himself (and a few Americans) to stuff aspects of Tolkien's work into square postmodernist holes and see whether it fits.

Michael Drout, one of the Americans, leads off by complaining that most writers on Tolkien are too hagiographical, by which he means that they take Tolkien's statements in his published letters at face value. Drout would like to see scholars resist the temptation to quote Tolkien's letters at all. Fortunately most of his colleagues here ignore that advice. Drout has a point, as it's a fallacy to use an author's intent as evidence of his achievement, and for various reasons authors are not always reliable guides to their own intent. But sensible critics turn first to authors' comments on their own work as a starting point, a ruler to measure the achievement against and an assurance that one is interpreting the work reasonably and not getting totally the wrong end of the stick. In a footnote, Drout himself condemns such wacky practices as folk-etymology (critics who interpret Tolkien's names on the basis of what the word sounds like to them), but that is

what happens when theory-bedazzled critics don't understand what manner of author they're dealing with because they haven't read his letters.

The clumsiest misreading of Tolkien in this book comes from editor Eaglestone in his essay on invisibility. While trying to cram the Ring's power into a metaphor for personal separation as opposed to community, he manages to make Peter Jackson's error of misreading the synecdoche "The Eye of Sauron" as meaning that Sauron is physically only an eye, and even more idiotically misreads Frodo's offer of the Ring to Galadriel as "revenge and enactment of his power as Ringbearer over her." (After she renounces the temptation she's described as "shrunkened," you see, so it must be Frodo who shrunk her.) Any reader that walleyed shouldn't be let loose near a critical forum.

But this essay is balanced by a quite insightful one by Adam Roberts on the One Ring itself. The Ring, an unadorned band of gold, physically resembles a wedding ring, and Roberts asks why Tolkien should use such an object as a symbol of ultimate evil, particularly as he had no aversion to or fear of marriage. (See? Always start with the author's biography, and you won't be led off on obvious but totally wrong tracks.) Very gently, always cautioning that he is not postulating an all-encompassing allegory or metaphor, Roberts suggests that Tolkien sees the binding power of the Ring "as embodying a sort of malign anti-marriage, the photographic negative, as it were, of a blessed sacrament." He even suggests that there is significance in the fact that Tom Bombadil, the only character over whom the Ring can have no power, is a happily married man.

A more interesting wrongheaded essay than Eaglestone's is Esther Saxey's on the dread topic of homoeroticism. Saxey insists that she's not out to prove that Frodo and Sam, specifically,

are a homosexual couple, but notes that every possible homosexual pairing in *The Lord of the Rings* has been drafted by one fanwriter or another, so she stoutly asserts “they are potentially *all* lovers.” Well, yes, if you totally ignore what their author is likely to have thought about the subject, they have that potential. But this is unfalsifiable. They’re potentially anything. For all we know, they could be closet sports fans who secretly stage boxing matches whenever we’re not looking, as one negligible book on Tolkien actually postulated. Saxey’s mistake comes when she tries to find evidence in the text to support her thesis. First mistaking stereotypical homosexual trappings for homoeroticism, and then mistaking innocent congruency for the trappings, she supplies a glorious bouquet of hopeless misreadings, right down to a catalog of Tolkien’s uses of the word “queer.” (Needless to say, she believes that the word “love” can only mean one thing.) Most of the examples point directly at Frodo and Sam, so Saxey has to keep repeating that she’s not accusing them of being homosexual partners any more than any other two characters, which should have been a hint that she’s up the wrong tree.

Just as Eaglestone should have read Roberts’ essay before writing his own, Saxey should have read Scott Kleinman on servility, as he correctly reads Sam’s love for Frodo as a servant’s love for a kind master and asks some uncomfortable questions about where this comes from: for Sam does not begin the story as Frodo’s personal manservant, and by the end of the quest they should be equals, for social caste is irrelevant to crawling through Mordor. Kleinman also nicely contrasts Théoden’s and Denethor’s styles of leadership. But his outstanding point is where he gets the word “love” right: he observes that Eowyn mistakes her love for Aragorn as a great captain into a phantom romantic love. Had Kleinman read Saxey’s essay, he could have

pointed out that Saxey makes the same kind of mistake as Éowyn does.

Saxey should also have read Jennifer Neville on women. Neville almost, but never quite, falls into the trap of whining about the insignificance of female characters in the novel, and contents herself with following the wise side of Drout’s advice, arguing that Tolkien inherited a critical view of the insignificance of women in Anglo-Saxon culture which is now held to be factually wrong. But Neville really shows that she has her head on straight when she points out that if Tolkien hadn’t accepted that view, and had not made Éowyn such a powerless figure in Théoden’s court, her subsequent heroism would not be so outstanding.

Holly A. Crocker on masculinity reinforces Neville’s point that the hobbits, though male, are remarkably weak and feminized for the heroes of a heroic war tale. (Neither cites Melanie Rawls’s definitive *Mythlore* article on the subject.) She makes some nice points about the good and bad sides of masculinity, but her article is weakened by her apparent confusion between men, the sex, and Men, the race.

Barry Langford on the subject of time contrasts Tolkien’s slow unfolding with the hurry-up style of Jackson’s films, and is intelligent but less than clear on Tolkien’s evocation of the depths of time. Sue Zlosnik ably discusses echoes of 19th century Gothic fiction, especially *Dracula*, in *The Lord of the Rings* but feels obliged to distance herself from the text by informing us, and repeating it in case we’ve forgotten, that she’s only read the book twice and may never do so again. Simon Malpas, somewhat murkier than other contributors, uses writings of Martin Heidegger to frame his discussion of Tolkien’s use of home and homelessness.

The book’s last section contains two essays on works influenced by Tolkien. Barry Atkins writes on video games. He properly understands

the appeal of games to players as a way to put themselves into the story, but is skeptical of boosters' claims that video games are somehow unique in this, and critical of the actual aesthetic value of many such games. Roz Kaveney, the only independent scholar in the book, examines Tolkien-influenced fiction. Kaveney showed irritation at Tolkien in her contributions to *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, but here she turns her caustic eye on Tolkien imitations. She coolly analyzes Michael Moorcock's hot-headed criticisms of Tolkien and points out that Moorcock's fiction does not always follow his own advice. A favorable section on Le Guin's Earthsea depicts her as affected by, but fundamentally very different from, Tolkien. Then Kaveney turns to genuinely imitative epics by Brooks, Eddings,

Donaldson, Goodkind, and others. Apparently having read acres of this stuff, she sweepingly and entertainingly notes their distinctive characters, their weaknesses and their occasional strengths. (Tad Williams comes off best.)

Each chapter has separate notes at the back of the book, which are followed by a separate bibliography for each chapter—a very awkward organization. An unsigned guide to Tolkien secondary literature is of mixed quality. The index is pathetic.

Reviewed by David Bratman



Mything Person

Kenneth J. Reckford
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

If anyone has current contact information for this “lost” Mythopoeic Society member, please contact our Membership Secretary, Marion Vanloo, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] We'd like to send him his copy of *Mythlore*....

'Caught by a Rumour':

News and Notes

Calls for Papers

The 10th annual meeting of The C.S. Lewis & Inklings Society will be held at Hardin-Simmons University (Abilene, Texas), March 23-24, 2007. Keynote speakers are Thomas Howard, Rolland Hein, David Neuhouser, and Kerry Dearborn. Also, following the banquet on Friday night, the HSU Theatre Department will stage Charles Williams's brief play, *The House by the Stable*.

Send 200-word proposals (reading time, 15 minutes) on the conference theme or other topics dealing with the ideas or artistry of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, or related authors (George McDonald, G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy Sayers, etc.) to: Dr. Keith Waddle, [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Participants must register for the conference and be members of CSLIS. The deadline for 200-word proposals is January 17, 2007. CSLIS is a very student-friendly conference; undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to submit papers. Conference web site: [REDACTED]

The Departments of English and Religious Studies of St. Francis College and the Northeast Tolkien Society, Heren Istarion, will co-sponsor a conference, "*The Silmarillion: Themes, Narratives, Comparative Studies*" on April 20-22, 2007. The event will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1977 publication of *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien. The conference will be held at St. Francis College in downtown Brooklyn, New York ([REDACTED])

The program will focus on the entire body of

mythic narrative collectively known as "the Silmarillion," in all the different versions of its parts written throughout Tolkien's life. A wide range of interrelated subjects connected to the *Silmarillion* will be discussed. We invite proposals on the following topics:

- The formation of the *Silmarillion*: its composition, worldview and languages
- Themes and narratives of the *Silmarillion*; comparative studies
- *The Silmarillion* in context: the relation of Tolkien's myth to the work of other Inklings
- Interdisciplinary approaches to all of the above topics

Proposals should be submitted as 1-page abstracts for 20-minute papers or as 8-10 page papers. We welcome proposals for complete panels as well as individual presentations. Preference will be given to proposals on the topics given above.

Proposals should be submitted January 22, 2007 by e-mail to BOTH of the e-mail addresses below or by regular mail to [REDACTED]

Information on registration and the conference website will be announced shortly.

2007 JRRT Publication: *The Children Of Húrin*

Houghton Mifflin has acquired US rights to publish the first complete book by J.R.R. Tolkien since the posthumous *Silmarillion* in 1977. HarperCollins UK acquired the project from The Tolkien Estate in a world rights deal.

Presented for the first time as a fully continuous and standalone story, the epic tale of *The Children of Húrin* will reunite fans of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* with Elves and Men, dragons and Dwarves, and the rich landscape and characters unique to Tolkien.

The Children of Húrin, begun in 1918, was one of three "Great Tales" J.R.R. Tolkien worked on throughout his life, though he never realized his ambition to see it published. Though familiar to many fans from extracts and references within other Tolkien books, it has long been assumed that the story would forever remain an "unfinished tale." Now reconstructed by Christopher Tolkien, painstakingly editing together the complete work from his father's many drafts, this book is the culmination of a tireless thirty-year endeavor by him to bring J.R.R. Tolkien's vast body of unpublished work to a wide audience.

Christopher Tolkien said: "It has seemed to me for a long time that there was a good case for presenting my father's long version of the legend of the Children of Húrin as an independent work, between its own covers, with a minimum of editorial presence, and above all in continuous narrative without gaps or interruptions, if this could be done without distortion or invention, despite the unfinished state in which he left some parts of it."

Having drawn the distinctive maps for the original *The Lord of the Rings* more than 50 years ago, Christopher Tolkien has also created a detailed new map for this book. In addition, it will include a jacket and color paintings by Alan Lee, illustrator of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* Centenary Edition.

The Lord of the Rings was already acclaimed worldwide as the most popular book of the 20th Century before the blockbuster films in 2001-3 broke new ground and inspired millions more to read J.R.R. Tolkien's books—an additional 50

million copies were sold, leaving new fans wanting more. *The Children of Húrin* will be published by HarperCollins UK in April 2007, and on the same day in the United States by Houghton Mifflin.

Victoria Barnsley, CEO and Publisher of HarperCollins Publishers UK said: "This epic story of adventure, tragedy, fellowship and heroism stands as one of the finest expressions of J.R.R. Tolkien's skills as a storyteller. With a narrative as dramatic and powerful as anything contained within *The Lord of the Rings*, it can now be read and enjoyed as Tolkien originally intended, and will doubtless be a revelation for millions of fans around the world." Janet Silver, Vice President and Publisher of Houghton Mifflin, said, "As J.R.R. Tolkien's original American publisher, dating back to *The Hobbit*, we are extremely proud to be bringing this project to Tolkien's devoted readership in the United States. Christopher Tolkien has done a great service in realizing his father's vision for *The Children of Húrin*."

Tolkien Web Site News

Richard West sends this report on some new Tolkien-related web sites:

There is a new site being built as a "Tolkien Collector's Guide" at [REDACTED]. I learned of it this week when Jeremy Edmonds, the webmaster, had the courtesy to e-mail me to ask for permission to display the tables of contents of back issues of *Orcrist* (no problem) and to scan in thumbnail sketches of the covers. We're hoping to add full text of *Orcrist* to our website for the Tolkien & Fantasy Society in due course.

David Berberick is conducting a survey of Tolkien fans at [REDACTED]. You might take a look and see if you'd be interested in filling out the survey.

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

Mythopoeic Society Web Site:

www.mythsoc.org

Membership and Subscriptions

Mythopoeic Society membership: \$20/year includes a subscription (postage extra for non-U.S. addresses) to *Mythprint*; basic membership \$10/year without newsletter; either entitles you to members' rates on publications and other benefits.

Postage and Non-member Subscription Rates

	Members	Institutions and non-members
First class U.S.	included	\$20/year
Canada (air)	\$7/year additional for postage	\$27/year
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The Mythopoeic Society also publishes two other magazines: *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* (subscription \$18/year for Society members, \$4 for a sample issue) and *The Mythic Circle*, an annual magazine publishing fiction, poems, etc. (\$8/issue).

Subscriptions and back issues of Society publications may be purchased directly through our web site (using PayPal or Discover card), or you may contact:

Mythopoeic Society Orders Department



Submissions for *Mythprint*

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

Mythprint

Eleanor M. Farrell, Editor



E-mail: 



The Mythopoeic Society



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