

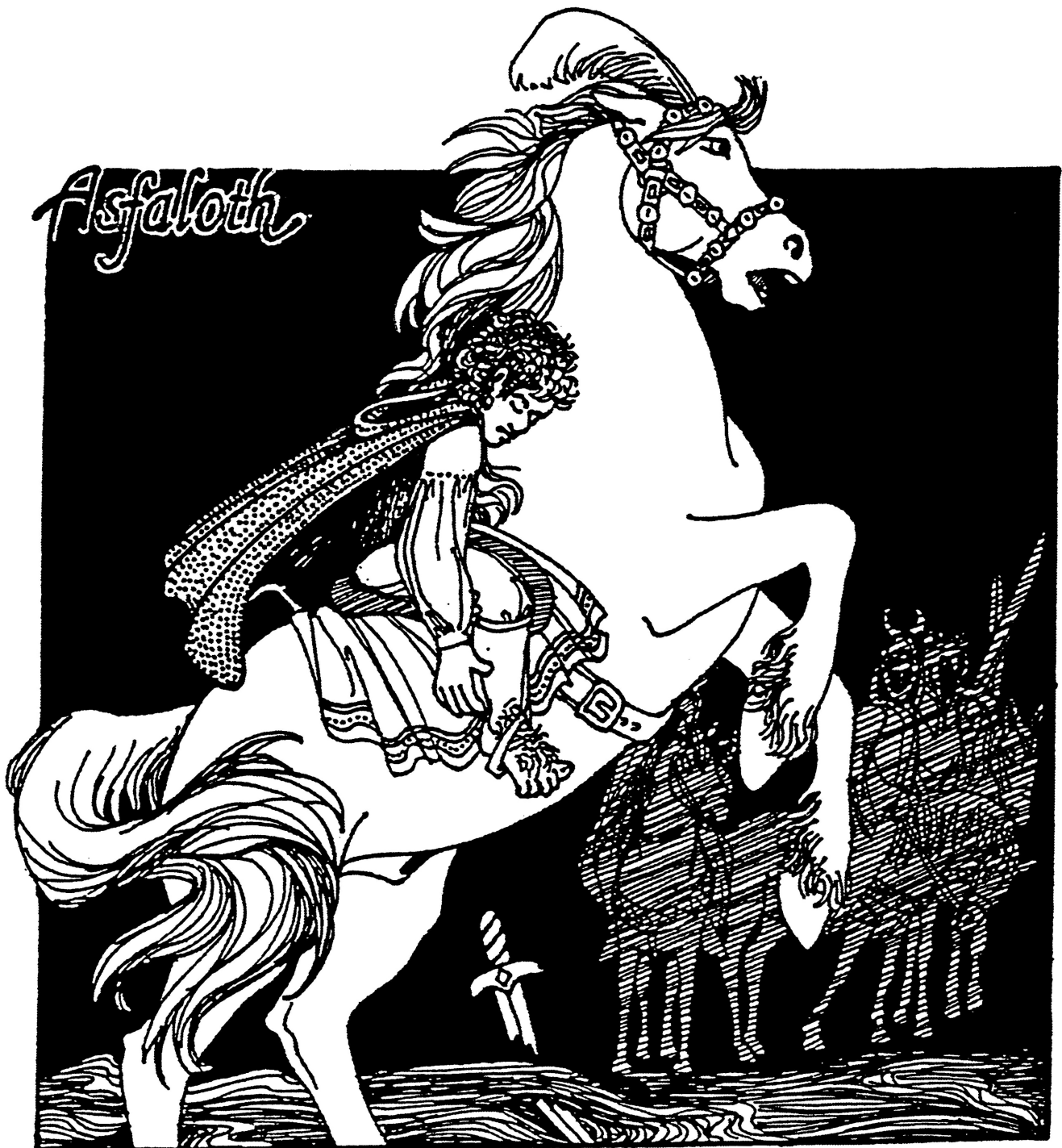
MYTHPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

Vol. 44 Nos. 6-7

June/July 2007

Whole Nos. 303-4



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Illustrations

Cover: "Asfaloth" © Sylvia Hunnewell

Editorial Address:

(Send materials for
publication, letters,
comments, etc.)

Eleanor M. Farrell, Editor

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

E-mail: [Redacted]

Subscriptions & Back Order Information:

See inside back cover

Mythopoeic Society Information:

Edith Crowe, Corresponding Secretary

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

E-mail: [Redacted]

Web site: www.mythsoc.org

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

2007 Mythopoeic Award Finalists

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, Adult Literature

Peter S. Beagle, *The Line Between* (Tachyon Publications)
Susanna Clarke, *The Ladies of Grace Adieu* (Bloomsbury USA)
Keith Donohue, *The Stolen Child* (Nan A. Talese)
Patricia A. McKillip, *Solstice Wood* (Ace Books)
Susan Palwick, *The Necessary Beggar* (Tor)
Tim Powers, *Three Days to Never* (William Morrow)

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, Children's Literature

Catherine Fisher, *Corbenic* (Greenwillow)
Nina Kiriki Hoffman, *Spirits That Walk in Shadow* (Viking)
Diana Wynne Jones, *The Pinhoe Egg* (Greenwillow)
Martine Leavitt, *Keturah and Lord Death* (Front Street)
Terry Pratchett, *Wintersmith* (HarperTeen)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies

Marjorie Burns, *Perilous Realms: Celtic and Norse in Tolkien's Middle-earth* (University of Toronto Press, 2005)
Verlyn Flieger, *Interrupted Music: The Making of Tolkien's Mythology* (Kent State University Press, 2005)
Peter Gilliver, Jeremy Marshall and Edmund Weiner, *The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond, *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Myth and Fantasy Studies

Simon Blaxland-de Lange, *Owen Barfield: Romanticism Come of Age: A Biography* (Temple Lodge, 2006)
Jerry Griswold, *The Meanings of Beauty and the Beast* (Broadview Press, 2004)
Charles Butler, *Four British Fantasts: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper* (Children's Literature Association & Scarecrow Press, 2006)
G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., *Gemstone of Paradise: The Holy Grail in Wolfram's Parzival* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
Milly Williamson, *The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy* (Wallflower, 2006)

The winners of this year's awards will be announced at the banquet during Mythcon 38 in Berkeley, California, from August 3–6, 2007. A complete list of Mythopoeic Award winners is available on the Society web site:

[REDACTED]

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

Feature Review: *The Children of Húrin*

J.R.R. TOLKIEN, ed. by Christopher Tolkien, illus. by Alan Lee. *The Children of Húrin*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. ISBN 978-0-618-89464-2, hc, 313 pp., \$26.00.

It may shock readers of this magazine less than any other when I say that this is not a book that a serious Tolkien reader *has* to have. For this is not a book that reveals unexpected new vistas to his sub-creation or reveals major new texts of which we knew nothing, as *The Silmarillion* and the “History of Middle-earth” books did. What it is, simply, is a text of the “Narn i Chîn Húrin” from *Unfinished Tales*, normalized in the way the texts in *The Silmarillion* were normalized. (In *Unfinished Tales* the third word was spelled “Hîn,” there then being a fear of mispronunciation as in “Not by the hair on my ...”) As Christopher Tolkien explains in an appendix, this was the only one of the later narrative texts of the Elder Days—later, and thus largely compatible with the *Lord of the Rings* iteration of the *legendarium*—which was both detailed enough to be read as a story and not an annalistic narrative, and full enough to be published on its own. As editor, he has used some slightly different texts where his father’s papers fragment than he did in *Unfinished Tales*, corrected some inconsistencies and problems, and papered over gaps with material from the Quenta and the Annals. He has thus made a complete story using his father’s words.

So if you know *Unfinished Tales*, you may not need this book. But you’ll surely want it: as a scholar to read how the tale can be fully reconstructed, as a collector to keep your set complete, as an appreciator of art to see Alan Lee’s excellent illustrations, and just as a reader to have the full tale without editorial intrusions.

The primary intended audience of this book, though, is readers who know little or nothing of Tolkien’s work beyond *The Lord of the Rings*,

possibly not even *The Silmarillion*. Indeed, I have seen reviews of *The Children of Húrin* that conspicuously attempt to avoid spoilers, an amusing sight given that the entire plot has been in the public hands for thirty years since a summary version—itsself, ironically, largely an editorial abbreviation of the “Narn”—appeared as chapter 21 of *The Silmarillion*.

What will such readers make of *The Children of Húrin*? First, they will find a story entirely new to them. Aragorn told the hobbits the tale of Beren and Lúthien, but of Húrin and his son Túrin no hint comes beyond a couple references to their names alone. Túrin is one of “the mighty elf-friends of old” and a warrior of great strength; and there is a allusion (misleading, as it turns out) in the poem “The Hoard” (in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*) to his encounter with a dragon.

Second, they will find a tale infinitely darker than *The Lord of the Rings*. It is a commonplace of those who would carp at Tolkien to complain that Frodo and the Fellowship get every possible break from providence. Even acts of evil—the attack of Saruman’s orcs on the party, the final treachery of Gollum—turn unexpectedly to good, and if the reader doesn’t notice this, Gandalf points it out for you. But to describe this as a flaw in the story misses two vital points. One is that Frodo’s quest is so desperate that, without every break from providence, it could never have succeeded at all. The other is that this isn’t the work of a clumsy authorial hand. Providence, fate, luck, really are looking out for Frodo. Tolkien was a Christian and believed in these things. Frodo cannot waft to the Mountain without exertion, but if he makes the supreme effort, then his fate will help him.

To see how this works and why it’s fair storytelling, read *The Children of Húrin*, where the exact opposite situation prevails. Morgoth has

placed a mighty curse on Húrin and all his kin. It is the essence of this curse that Morgoth need not reach out and zap them on individual occasions. Their luck has gone all wrong. Where for Frodo and the Fellowship, even evil deeds done to them rebound for good, for the children of Húrin even the kindest and most generous deeds rebound for evil; and Túrin's own character dooms him in the same way that Frodo's character saves him. Circumstances all go against Túrin despite all his efforts, and this story is far more explicit about the role of fate than anything Gandalf says, for Morgoth explains it all to the captive Húrin, and—in a frame of bone-chilling cruelty—binds him and makes him watch it unfold: all the sorrow that will accrue to his wife and children.

So this is a long tale—covering the entire life of Túrin, about 36 years—whereas the bulk of *The Lord of the Rings* is over in a few months, but the text is quite short. It has detailed novelistic descriptions and conversations, but it also skims over a great deal in summary. Of writings familiar to readers of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Children of Húrin* may in style most remind them of “The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen” in Appendix A, which is told at a similar level of detail and in a similar formal tone. That tale is a favorite of many readers, so perhaps this too may become a favorite, despite its formality, its references to people and events never fully explained

within the narrative, and its opening genealogical exposition, of a kind familiar to any reader of the Icelandic sagas or even Charles Dickens. Once you get into the tale, especially once Túrin sets out for Doriath in chapter 4, it flows smoothly and compellingly towards its horrifying end.

I cannot ask that Christopher Tolkien have retold the story in his own words, as some authors' sons (such as Brian Herbert) have done with their fathers' notes. Such is not his method nor his purpose. I can wish, a little wistfully, that J.R.R. Tolkien had told this tale a little more fully still, for there is much vivid writing in the earlier versions of this story in *The Book of Lost Tales* and *The Lays of Beleriand*. I can also regret that the story here tends to trail off, and that it was not possible to include the searingly compelling end of the story in “The Wanderings of Húrin” from *The War of the Jewels*. But you can read all of those, and also read this, and get an overall image of the story, blossoming in its variants, far richer than any single version, however exemplary, could give. By publishing them all as separate texts, Christopher Tolkien has offered us a mighty gift.

Reviewed by David Bratman



Mything Person

If anyone has current contact information for Christine Parker (previously of Crescent City, California), please contact Marion Van Loo, the Mythopoeic Society Membership Secretary, at [REDACTED] (or via snail mail to [REDACTED]). Christine's most recent issue of *Mythlore* was returned to us by the postal service, and we'd like to make sure she does not miss any of these exciting new papers! Thanks....

Mythcon 38: Schedule of Events

To whet your appetites, an idea of what we have planned for the conference:

Friday: Registration begins at noon. Programming starts mid-afternoon, and the dealers' room will open. Our first meal on campus will be dinner, served 6–7 PM. Then something different this year: the Procession and Opening Ceremonies will take place immediately after dinner. Instead of a speech, we will have a short dramatization from *The Fall of the Kings* by our Guests of Honor. Later in the evening, English country dancing led by dance-master Alan Winston, the opening night party, and the Bardic Circle and film program.

Saturday: Breakfast is served starting at 7 AM and ending at 9 AM, so you can stumble in at quarter to 9 and still get coffee. Programming continues all day with a break for lunch, and the dealers' room will be open. After dinner, a mixture of evening programming. Ellen Kushner will perform a one-woman show based on her Mythopoeic Fantasy Award-winning novel *Thomas the Rhymer*. On the lighter side, Lynn Maudlin and Mike Foster will present "Lord of the Ringos," the Tolkien musical that the Beatles would have written, and the Not-Ready-for-Mythcon Players will be ... not ready.

Sunday: Breakfast and daytime programming as on Saturday. Today's special highlight is the auction in mid-afternoon. Here you may purchase books, artwork, and all the other kipple you love to take home. (Donations are welcome: bring them to the Society dealers' table at Mythcon, or contact the Registrar about mailing in beforehand.) For dinner tonight, the fabulous Mythcon Banquet, after which the 2007 Mythopoeic Award winners will be announced. Evening highlights include a Guest of Honor speech by Delia Sherman, and a concert by Broceliande, who will perform the musical settings of Tolkien poems, composed by Marion

Zimmer Bradley and themselves, from their renowned album *The Starlit Jewel*.

Monday: One more breakfast, and morning programming to be concluded with the Members' Meeting, at which you can meet the Mythopoeic Society's governing Council of Stewards and ask about our policies and future plans. The Closing Ceremonies, including the singing of the traditional songs, will end by noon. There is no on-campus lunch. An afternoon walking tour of mythic Berkeley will depart at noon, stopping for lunch on legendary Telegraph Avenue. We'll visit sites depicted in several Berkeley-set fantasy novels, see historic Sixties Berkeley sites on the way, and there'll be time for shopping.

Panel discussions:

- ◆ The conference theme, "Becoming Adept: The Journey to Mastery"
- ◆ How fantasy writers achieve their own journey to mastery as writers
- ◆ How magic is interpreted in fantasy: as a craft, as a science ...
- ◆ The nature of imaginary worlds: is magic necessary to have a fantasy?
- ◆ Adolescence and young adulthood as interstitial states on the journey to mastery
- ◆ How the Inklings functioned as a writers' workshop
- ◆ The door-wardens of fantasy: how publishers, booksellers, librarians and others guide you to good reading

Other Mythcon highlights

- ◆ Readings by our Guests of Honor and other attending authors
- ◆ Ellen Kushner will present a lecture-demo on the making of her *Sound & Spirit* radio program on *The Lord of the Rings* and music
- ◆ Book discussions of Mythopoeic Award nominees and (brace yourselves) *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

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. 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).

Conference membership

Feb. 2–July 15, 2007

Mythopoeic Society members	\$75
Non-members	\$85
Registered students, age 12 and up	\$50
Children under 12	free

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

or make checks payable to The Mythopoeic Society, and mail to: Bonnie Rauscher, Registrar, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. E-mail: [REDACTED]

Room and Board

Rates are per person, for Friday dinner through Monday breakfast, including banquet, and three nights lodging. Payment must be received by July 15, 2007.

- \$275 for residence hall, double occupancy
- \$335 for residence hall, single room
- \$290 for suites, double occupancy
- \$365 for suites, single room

Online registration (using Paypal): [REDACTED]

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] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *ERYN GALEN*

B.L. McCauley, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

INDIANA

[REDACTED] *CERIN AMROTH*

Ellen Denham, E-mail: [REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]

MISSOURI

[REDACTED] *THE KHAZAD*

Gary & Sylvia Hunnewell, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], E-mail: [REDACTED]

NORTH CAROLINA

[REDACTED] *THE CAROLINA TOLKIEN SOCIETY*

Matt & Renita Peeler [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

OHIO

[REDACTED]

David Staley [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Web site: [REDACTED]

Chartered Groups

CALIFORNIA

[REDACTED] *MYDGARD*

Lee Speth, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

June: *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman

[REDACTED] *KHAZAD-DÛM*

Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. E-mail: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

June: *Swordspoint* and *The Privilege of the Sword* by Ellen Kushner

Sept: *Three Days to Never* and *Declare* by Tim Powers

December: Annual Reading & Eating Meeting

COLORADO

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

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

Web: [REDACTED]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] *KNOSSOS*

Mimi Stevens, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

June: Virgil's *Aeneid*

July: *Stories of Your Life and Others* by Ted Chiang

August: *Dracula* by Bram Stoker

HAWAII

[REDACTED] *SAMMATH NAUR*

Steve Brown, [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

June: *The Book of Lost Things* by John Connolly

July: *The King Must Die* by Mary Renault

August: *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

September: *The Stolen Child* by Keith Donohue

ILLINOIS

[REDACTED] *THE FAR WESTFARTHING SMIAL*

Mike Foster, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. E-mail: [REDACTED]

June: *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien (Ch. 22)

July: *The Silmarillion* (Ch. 23)

IOWA

[REDACTED] *ALFHEIM*

Doug Rossman, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

LOUISIANA

[REDACTED] *ROKE*

Sally Budd, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

MICHIGAN

[REDACTED] *GALADHREMMIN-ENNORATH*

Dave & Grace Lovelace, [REDACTED]

MINNESOTA

[REDACTED] *RIVENDELL*

David Lenander, [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, [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

OREGON

Donovan Mattole, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *BYWATER INKLINGS*

Gary Lundquist, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

PENNSYLVANIA

[REDACTED] *C.S. LEWIS AND FRIENDS*

Neil Gussman, [REDACTED]

[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]

June: *The Children of Hurin* by J.R.R. Tolkien

July: *The Twelve Kingdoms* by Fuyumi Ono

August: *Harry Potter VII* by J.K. Rowling

September: *The Lies of Locke Lamora* by Scott Lynch

October: *Anno Dracula* by Kim Newman

WISCONSIN

[REDACTED] *THE BURRAHOBBITS*

Jeffrey & Jan Long, [REDACTED]

Special Interest Group

THE ELVISH LINGUISTIC FELLOWSHIP

[REDACTED] Newsletter: *Vinyar Tengwar*. Carl

Hostetter, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Journal: *Parma Eldalamberon*:

Christopher Gilson, [REDACTED]

Correspondence Group

ONCE UPON A TIME (children's fantasy)

Laura Krentz, [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

Online Discussion Groups

MYTHSOC E-LIST

Society activities and general discussion. Sign up:

[REDACTED] or contact Joan

Marie Verba: [REDACTED]

COINHERENCE

Online discussion of Charles Williams

David Davis: E-mail: [REDACTED]

Book Reviews

G. RONALD MURPHY, S.J., *Gemstone of Paradise: The Holy Grail in Wolfram's Parzival*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2006. ISBN 0195306392, hc, 256 pp., \$29.95.

The previous winner of a Mythopoeic Scholarship Award (for *The Owl, the Raven and the Dove*) has brought out another fine book. After *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and *The Da Vinci Code*, it is a relief to see a serious study of the Grail story. That isn't to say that Murphy writes his book as a dry tome. He presents it as if it were a mystery, or an exploration into the unknown.

"As I walked up the marble staircase behind the director in the cathedral museum at Bamberg, I wondered if I was about to see the object that had inspired Wolfram von Eschenbach's conception of the Grail or be subject to a disappointment." (p. 1) "[The Director said] 'When I told you I only saw the twelve apostles on the sides of the object, I didn't realize that I should also look at the top. On the top are not only the rivers of Paradise depicted around the stone but also the four trees of the Garden of Paradise.' My heart leapt. Now, if only the stone would be green . . ." (p. 4) This snippet gives you a feel for Murphy's engaging writing style.

In the prologue he gives a brief answer to the question, "what is the Grail?" He mentions the two main Grail myth sources, Chrétien de Troyes and Robert de Boron, and then introduces the third major (but oft neglected) source, von Eschenbach. Wolfram's tale is very different in many ways, not the least of which is his depiction of the Grail as a stone. The remainder of Murphy's book deals with identifying and understanding the nature of this stone.

Murphy begins by introducing us to Wolfram's idea of the Grail, as opposed to the more common conception of the Grail as the cup of the Last Supper. We then learn about the medieval ideas regarding precious stones and

their effects on people. We also get a history lesson on the Crusades and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. As for Wolfram's study of *Parzival*, Murphy gives us a fairly detailed study of the frame story, all about Parzival (a Christian) and his brother (a Moslem) separated at birth. We also learn of the Fisher-King, the mysterious qualities of the Grail, and much more. Then we get an apt historical study of portable altars and their relationship to the story and to the Crusades. Murphy blends these disparate elements into a palatable soup for us to savor. But he doesn't stop with just a medieval story, he ties it in with current events in the Middle East.

I hope I haven't left you wondering, how can a single book cover all these topics and tie them together? Murphy does an excellent job weaving each of the topics covered into a unified whole at the end. Not only do you learn a lot about the various subjects, he presents them in an appealing way, and brings it altogether in a convincing fashion. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the Grail Myth.

Reviewed by Eric Rauscher



CHRISTINA SCULL AND WAYNE G. HAMMOND, *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion & Guide*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. Vol. 1, "Chronology", ISBN 0-618-39102-9, 996 pp. \$59.39. Vol. 2, "Reader's Guide", ISBN 0-618-39101-0, 1256 pp., \$50.

You may have had one of those school tests with a question amounting to: "Write down everything you know about (say) the Boer War. You have thirty minutes." Well, Tolkien's publishers set Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond a task amounting to: "Write down everything you know about Tolkien. You have ten years."

And since Scull and Hammond know just about everything there is to know about Tolkien,

the result has been not the originally intended one, nor even two, but three volumes of immense size, intellectual weight, and scholarly value. The first fruit was *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion*, winner of the 2006 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies, and reviewed here in December 2005.

Now we have the other two volumes, a chronology of Tolkien's life and a "Reader's Guide." Both will delight those experienced Tolkienists who, like Hobbits, like "to have books filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions." But it will delight them even more with the vast amount of newly uncovered, or newly correlated, material that has been salted in among its pages. And anything in these books that you already know, some other reader will not already know, and will profit by learning it.

These volumes are so large that this whole review could be spent just describing them. But there's no need for that. The volumes can be summarized very simply. The chronology is, obviously, an account of Tolkien's life in the form of entries for precise and approximate dates. The Reader's Guide is an encyclopedia, with entries for Tolkien's works and for persons, places, and things relevant to his life. It thus superficially resembles the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia* edited by Michael D.C. Drout, but in fact it is very different.

The distinctive qualities of Scull and Hammond's work lie in coverage and tone. The chronology in particular demonstrates the limitations of original sources and the amount of data that can be squeezed out of them. The bulk of it is built out of his correspondence and Oxford University records. This is thus a very business-oriented portrait of the man. He attends faculty meetings, gives lectures, writes to colleagues, and has many other legitimate calls on his time. If you wonder why he didn't spend

more time inventing Middle-earth, here's what he was doing instead. Actually, few of his manuscripts are precisely dated, and the date stamps given for what he was writing are often vague and approximate next to the precisely dated letters, though the approximate dates are grounded in careful scholarship.

The important thing to say about the Reader's Guide is that its principal subjects are Tolkien's biography and what might be called an organization of his writings, with some attention to source material and to his philosophy and opinions. It is not about the sub-creation as such. There was room in *The Lord of the Rings Reader's Companion* to discuss balrogs' wings, but there's none of that sort of thing here. A typical entry for one of Tolkien's works is for a chapter from *The Silmarillion*, a work treated chapter-by-chapter because of its complexity. There's a summary of the plot for reference purposes, but the heart of the entry is a history, by which Scull and Hammond mean a history of that thread of the story, going all the way back to the earliest mythology. Thus they tie together writings published in scattered places in a way no Tolkien scholars have systematically done before.

There are also entries for the various works as published, and here again emphasis is on composition, and, where possible, on criticism. Scull and Hammond don't devote as much relative attention to Tolkien's sources and inspirations as Drout does, though there is some; but they're much more thorough on critical response to Tolkien. Entries on "Adaptations" and "Music" are mostly written from the view of Tolkien's reaction to work of his own lifetime, and trail off rapidly on reaching works made after his death. Tolkien's influence on literature is not mentioned at all. On the other hand Tolkien criticism and fandom are discussed in full up to the present. Here Scull and Hammond can't merely pass on Tolkien's opinion, so they give us their

own opinions. Those opinions can be pretty sharp: "The present authors find with regret, however, that too many recent critics [on Tolkien] appear not to have a genuine feeling for their subject," and I can't disagree with that assessment.

But it does point out something about how a book of this sort should be used. It is so full of useful factual information, and it's written in such a neutral, judicious tone, that it's easy to forget that, as with any scholarly work, that its authors have a viewpoint of their own and that they shape the discourse by their selection.

Keeping that in mind, this is now unquestionably the first scholarly resource for information for a grasp of the organization of Tolkien's writings and for the hard facts of his life. No more fumbling around in his *Letters* or Humphrey Carpenter's biography to find out what happened when. Neither of them was designed for that purpose: the Chronology here was designed for that.

As they've proven in many previous publications, Scull and Hammond are impeccable researchers. Without reliability a book like this would be useless, even dangerous—the more so because the sources, particularly unpublished ones, are so numerous and fragmented that, apart from identifying direct quotes, there are few source notes in this book. You'll just have to rely on it. For instance, the Chronology summarizes a letter to Kenneth Sisam dated 16 March 1933. That letter is facsimile reproduced in *The Ring of Words* by Peter Gilliver *et al*, but you won't learn that fact from Scull and Hammond. There's just no room for citations like that.

So you'd better just browse through these volumes looking for new material, because it's hiding in there. Many readers will be stopped short by the first entry in the Chronology, announcing the birth of Tolkien's future wife Edith Bratt. The entry doesn't explicitly say that Edith was

illegitimate, which was known; but what's never been published before, so far as I recall, is the name of her father. There's a little more about him and the circumstances of Edith's birth in her biographical entry. So search around. There's some repetition in these volumes but a lot more nuggets buried in one spot. I learned that Jim Dundas-Grant of the Inklings was an insurance underwriter by profession, but I learned that from the Inklings entry, not from Dundas-Grant's own. The manuscript title of Tolkien's "Our dear Charles Williams" poem is published for, I think, the first time, without any fanfare.

In general I'm very pleased with the biographical and geographical entries in particular. Scull and Hammond never forget to tell us what each entry is doing in a Tolkien encyclopedia, and they also give good background on who the person was or what the place is in its own right. The entries on Tolkien's scholarship are sometimes less thorough on background and significance, but this subject is covered well by Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth*. The background in the entry on Oxford University, by contrast, is full and exemplary, and there are biographical entries for many of his students and professional colleagues. My only puzzlement is over the way some geographical entries are clustered together, while other places quite ephemeral for Tolkien studies get separate entries; similarly, various published fragments of Elvish language writing get separate entries, while anything relating to Elvish scripts is covered under "Writing systems."

It might have been better had the encyclopedia entries been grouped: writings, people, places, themes, as in Walter Hooper's *C.S. Lewis Companion & Guide* instead of in one alphabetical order. But Scull and Hammond have found Hooper's arrangement difficult to use, and a similar arrangement could have been even tougher here, especially as the articles in the Reader's

Guide are often several pages long but there are no running headwords, a felicity omitted because of the press of time in the production process.

I expect to be using this book quite a lot, and I'm writing headwords in pencil in my copy of the Reader's Guide myself. I suggest you consider doing the same, as you too should use this book quite a lot.

Reviewed by David Bratman

[Editor's Note: Despite the hefty list prices for these books, they can be purchased together for \$20 from Amazon.com. At least that's what the web site told me when I was checking prices...]



PATRICIA C. WREDE AND CAROLINE STEVERMER, *The Mislaidd Magician, or Ten Years After*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2006. ISBN 978-0-15-205548-6, hc, 328 pp., \$17.00.

The Mislaidd Magician is the third in Patricia Wrede and Caroline Stevermer's series of novels set in an alternate version of Regency England in which magic is universally known to be real. Picture some characters escaped from a Jane Austen novel or Regency romance discussing spell-casting methods in between more mundane chatter about London fashions, balls, and obnoxious relatives, and you have a pretty good idea what to expect of the series.

These novels grew out of what Wrede and Stevermer call the Letter Game: generating a story by writing letters to each other in character, without letting one's co-author know more about one's plan for the plot than the characters have so far revealed. Having tried to write a shared story in this manner, I know it is nowhere near as easy as Wrede and Stevermer make it look: if your correspondent refers casually to "the trouble you got into over that goat," you're stuck

making something of it, whether you know anything about goats or not. If elegance consists of making a difficult art look easy, these books have elegance to spare. The two authors' visions are so thoroughly harmonized that the reader hardly has the sense of two different authors at all.

The letter form seems natural in the Regency setting, a period when epistolary novels were popular. It's not very conducive to high suspense, since you always know that whatever is happening in the letters, somehow the character who's narrating has managed to get out of immediate danger into a quiet room with paper and ink. Nonetheless, Wrede and Stevermer manage to work a surprising amount of tension into the stories, partly by having letter-writers interrupt themselves and begin again as new events emerge.

It is an excellent form for ironic or comic distance, and so the novels lean toward the mock-heroic mode, undercutting the drama with wry observations about the characters' manners and follies: "Georgy snatched the *Gazette* from me and hurled it across the room. That is, she tried. As I have often observed from Thomas's attempts to do the same, newspapers do not hurl well."

But for all the mock-heroic irony, the characters do face palpable danger, and face it with truly heroic courage, even if their best spells sometimes go awry and do more to undo the enemy's garters than his fiendish plan.

Sorcery and Cecelia, the first Letter Game novel, introduced two characters of the sort who populate Jane Austen novels, marriageable girls of noble but not exalted family with a keen appreciation of the foibles and hypocrisies of those around them. Outgoing, confident Cecelia languishes in the country, while her shyer cousin Kate endures the embarrassment of being granted a "Season" in London only because it would be improper to "bring out" her younger and prettier sister before her. But Cecelia is beginning to show promise as an amateur magi-

cian, while Kate becomes accidentally caught up in a plot by two unscrupulous wizards to steal others' magical power. Romance intertwines with mystery and fantasy in a plot full of satisfying turns.

The Grand Tour took Kate and Cecelia beyond Austen territory, into a sort of *Busman's Honeymoon* plot that challenges the cousins and their bridegrooms to solve an international mystery during a pleasure trip across Europe. This second volume, in my opinion, had the best plot twists in the series, as well as the richest use of mythology.

In *The Mislaid Magician*, Kate and Cecelia have become characters almost entirely absent from Jane Austen's works: happily married women with a brood of children too young for the marriage market. Unlike many series authors, Wrede and Stevermer do not try to keep romance in the mix by introducing either a new couple to unite or a crisis in the married characters' relationships. Mystery, fantasy, and comedy dominate their latest offering.

Cecelia accompanies her husband, aide-de-camp to Lord Wellington, on a mission to the north of England to investigate the suspicious disappearance of a magician-surveyor working on the new railway lines. Railway engines have been exploding, and no one knows why; was the surveyor done away with to prevent him from learning the truth?

They discover strange interactions between the railway and the "ley lines," or currents of magical energy, that crisscross England. While ley lines occur naturally, some believe them to be bound into a prehistoric spell to protect the island. Has someone been tampering with that protective network for self-seeking ends? Does Cecelia's feckless brother-in-law, who turns up unexpectedly, have anything to do with it? Is he even smart enough to be involved in a plot against the commonwealth? Will Cecelia ever

escape the world's most boring house party at the home of a couple who seem determined to keep her from investigating the mystery?

Meanwhile, Cecelia's four children stay with Kate and her sons, where they witness additional mysteries: a tinker's cart that isn't what it seems, an impeccably dressed but unspeaking lost girl, and a prowler who can't be deterred by the strongest spells.

The children, unsentimentally and believably portrayed, provide comic relief by using magical and nonmagical means of mischief as the adults struggle to keep them safe from nefarious wizards and their own growing powers.

The plot is not as strong as in *The Grand Tour*; in my opinion, one of *The Mislaid Magician's* central mysteries was far too easy to solve. But the good humor of the story, the engaging characters, and the inventive interaction of magic and technology carry the reader through a very enjoyable ride. The ending clearly keeps the door open for further adventures of Kate, Cecelia, and their families, and I for one am looking forward to them.

Reviewed by Pauline J. Alama



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.

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