

MYTHPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

Vol. 46 No. 1/2

January, 2009

Whole No. 322/323



Personal information has been redacted.

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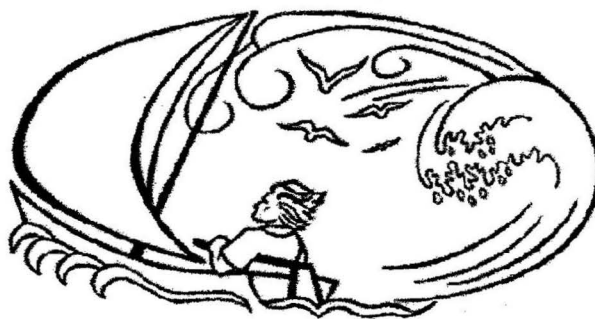
Mythcon 40

Sailing the Seas of Imagination

UCLA – DeNeve Plaza

Los Angeles, California

July 17-20, 2009



Guests of Honor

James A. Owen is the artist and writer of the noted independent comic book *Starchild*, and the young adult fantasies, *Here, There Be Dragons* and *The Search for the Red Dragon*.

Diana Pavlac Glycer, Ph.D. is a professor of English at Azusa Pacific University. She has published extensively on Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings, including contributions to *The C.S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia* and *C.S. Lewis (Four Volumes): Life, Works, and Legacy*. Her latest book, *The Company They Keep*, won the 2008 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies.

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www.mythsoc.org

Hank Wagner, Christopher Golden & Stephen R. Bissette, *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008, hardback, 546 pages, \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-312-38765-2.

Reviewed by David Emerson

It would not be difficult to argue that Neil Gaiman is one of the premier fantasy writers of our day. He is certainly prolific, and his works have gained critical acclaim as well as popularity. Wagner, Golden and Bissette have attempted to delineate, catalog, and comment on the totality of Gaiman's writings to date (and even some that have yet to be written).

The result is a hefty volume that satisfactorily achieves the authors' purpose. Divided into sections on the *Sandman* material, other comics, other graphic novels, prose novels, short stories, poems & lyrics, film/TV scripts, and miscellaneous writings, the book covers Gaiman's wide range of output in a methodical manner.

Most of the longer stories are recapped not by plot summaries, but by descriptions of the characters and settings; this frequently result in the plots being described anyway, but provides a more diverse (and to my mind, complete) viewpoint. For items that I had already read, the recaps provided a good memory jog. For stories that were new to me, most of the descriptions gave enough information to give me a sense of the story without spoiling the whole thing.

There is also a lengthy interview with Gaiman, a shorter interview with his assistant Lorraine Garland, and a multitude of quotes from Gaiman and others scattered throughout the book. Also included are two separate chunks

of color plates, containing images of book covers, photos of Neil with family and friends, a complete 4-page graphic story reprinted from *Taboo* #6, and more.

For Gaiman fans, the book is worth it for the interview alone. For scholars, the annotated-bibliography aspect of the book would be invaluable. For those who have only a limited contact with the works of Neil Gaiman, this is a reliable resource for deciding what to read next.

Ono, Fuyumi. *The Twelve Kingdoms, Volume 1: Sea of Shadow*. Los Angeles: Tokyopop, 2007 hardcover, \$16.99, ISBN 978-1598169461. 2008, paperback, \$8.99, ISBN 978-1427802576. Illustrations by Akihiro Yamada. Translated by Alexander O. Smith and Elye J. Alexander. Original in Japanese, Tokyo, Kodansha Ltd., 1992. Reviewed by Daniel Baird.

Yoko is an average high school girl attending an average private girls' high school. She does her best to please her parents, her teachers, and everyone else without drawing attention to herself. It is a bit of a shock then, when a man with knee-length golden hair suddenly appears in class, kneels before her and says, "To serve you always in utmost loyalty—that is my pledge, say that you accept." Before she, her teacher, or the other students can grasp what is happening, demons straight out of Chinese mythology begin to attack the school. The stranger tries to give her a mysterious sword so Yoko can defend herself. Surprised to find out she doesn't know how to use a sword, the stranger calls forth a demon that possesses her, then she is sent through a vortex

of light into the sea which becomes the sky in another world.

The book is sold as a "light novel" in Japan, the equivalent of teen or young adult fiction in US. It therefore is a great book to curl up to next to the fireplace in the late afternoon with a cup of hot chocolate. The first part of the book is fast paced action as the main character is flung from one situation to another. The latter part of the book slows down, giving Yoko and the reader a chance to look around and appreciate the fascinating world that Ono has created. While this book is typical in the sense that it can be read as an adolescence coming of age story, Yoko's story also takes one or two unexpected turns.

Twelve Kingdoms is Ono's first foray into the fantasy genre. Prior to this she had written horror fiction, which serves her well as she describes the utter disorientation Yoko faces when she arrives in a land reminiscent of Zhou China (circa 1122-771 BCE). Although the world is something like the historical China of the Zhou Dynasty, many of the fantastic elements such as demons and magic are drawn from an early source of Chinese mythology, *The Classic of the Mountains and Seas* [available in English, translated by Anne Birrell, London, Penguin Books, 1999]. This text, compiled in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) is a compendium of lands, seas, and the peoples and animals that populate them. It also represents early Daoist cosmology where China is a square land with a round canopy sky over the land held up by four sacred mountains. Beyond the four mountains are the inner seas beyond that the four wildernesses and beyond that the outer sea. Ono takes this basic cosmology and with some artful rearranging creates a system of twelve kingdoms, eight interconnected

lands surrounded by an inner sea and four outer kingdom islands beyond which lay the unknown seas. Like *The Classic*, Ono's lands are populated by normal people as well as the strange: demons, gods, celestials, and most importantly, unicorns. In contrast to Western mythology where unicorns are associated with virgins, Chinese (and Japanese) unicorns are associated with the emperor; in *Twelve Kingdoms*, each kingdom has a king and each king is served by a unicorn which represents his or her kingship.

Lest one think this is entirely an Asian fantasy, Ono has stated that she was also influenced by C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* and Roger Zelazny's *Nine Princes in Amber*. I have not yet read the latter, but readers will certainly see some links to Lewis' series, other than the aforementioned unicorn.

The translation for the most part is well done considering some of the terms have no conceptual counterpart in English. One can see the influence of Harry Potter with some of the words translations such as "wizard" as a general word for someone who has obtained immortality (仙人 sennin), "boggart" for demons that are able to take human shape (人妖 ninyou), or "warlock" for demonic animals that eat humans (妖魔 youma). Tokyopop is a publisher of manga and its novel translations are known for the occasional spelling or grammar problems, but the quality of this book is above average for this publisher and shouldn't be a problem for the reader. I think fantasy lovers will enjoy the world of fantasy that Ono paints. On a final note, there is an *anime* version also available, but it takes considerable liberties with the book (such as adding two extra main characters), which, in my opinion take away from the excellent writing of Ono.

Groups

For more information or to start a new group, contact
Marion Van Loo, Membership and Discussion Group Secretary
[REDACTED]

Chartered Groups

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles/Pasadena: Mydgard

Lee Speth, [REDACTED]

Oakland: C.S. Lewis Society of California

David J. Theroux, [REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

San Francisco Bay Area: Khazad-dum

Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe, [REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

March 8: Patricia Briggs' *Shapeshifter* books. Hosts: David and Berni
Bratman, [REDACTED]

COLORADO

Denver area: Fanuidhol ("Cloudy Head")

Patricia Yarrow, [REDACTED]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington & Suburbs: Knossos

Mimi Stevens, [REDACTED]

March 20: *Artemis Fowl* by Erin Colfer. Host: Bill Hussar, [REDACTED]

HAWAII

Oahu: Sammath Naur

Steve Brown, [REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

March: *A Lion Among Men* by Gregory Maguire.

ILLINOIS

Peoria: The Far Westfarthing smial

Mike Foster, [REDACTED]

IOWA

Docorah: Alfheim Doug Rossman, [REDACTED]

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge: Roke

Sally Budd, [REDACTED]

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor area: Galadhrimmin-Ennorath

Dave & Grace Lovelace, [REDACTED]

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis-St. Paul: Rivendell

David Lenander, [REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

MISSOURI

St. Louis: Imladris

Tonia O'Neal, The Tolkien Adventure Community, [REDACTED]

NEVADA

Reno: Crickhollow

Joanne Burnett, [REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

NEW YORK

New York: Heren Istarion

(The New York Tolkien Society)

Anthony Burdge & Jessica Burke, The New York Tolkien Society,

OREGON

Mid-Willamette Valley Area

Donovan Mattole, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Web [REDACTED]

Portland: Bywater Inklings

Gary Lundquist [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PENNSYLVANIA

Lancaster Area: C.S. Lewis and Friends

Neil Gussman, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Pittsburgh: Fantasy Studies Fellowship

University of Pittsburgh, Lori Campbell, U Pittsburgh, Department
of English, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia: The Columbia C.S. Lewis Society

Nina Fowler, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

WASHINGTON

Seattle: Mithlond

John D Rateliff, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee: The Burrahobbits

Jeffrey & Jan Long, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Feb. 24 *Firebird* by R. Garcia y

Roberson. Host: Sue, 7 pm.

March 24 *The Book of Knights*. Host: Sue 7 pm.

Prospective Groups

Tampa Bay: Hobbiton Paul S. Ritz, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

North Central Florida: Eryn Galen

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

INDIANA

Central Indiana: Cerin Amroth

Ellen Denham, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MISSOURI

St. Louis: The Khazad

Gary & Sylvia Hunnewell [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte: The Carolina Tolkien Society

Matt & Renita Peeler [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

OHIO

Akron David Staley [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

Special Interest Group

The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship

Carl Hostetter, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED] Newsletter, Vinyar Tengwar.

Journal, Parma Eldalamberon: Christopher Gilson, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Correspondence Group

Once Upon A Time (children's fantasy)

Laura Krentz, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Correspondence circular. Web site: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Online Discussion Groups

Mythsoc E-List Society activities and general book-related discus-
sion. Sign up: [REDACTED]

or contact Joan Marie Verba: [REDACTED]

LiveJournal Mythopoeic Society discussion forum

Society activities and general book-related discussion, Sign up:

[REDACTED] or contact Lisa

Deutsch Harrigan: [REDACTED]

TALES FROM THE PERILOUS REALM. By J.R.R. Tolkien. With illustrations by Alan Lee and an introduction by Tom Shippey. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. ISBN 9780547154114. 403 pages. \$28.00. Reviewed by Janet Croft

This collection of Tolkien's shorter works includes the texts of *Roverandom*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, *Smith of Wootton Major*, *Leaf by Niggle*, and *On Fairy-stories*. There is also an introduction by Tom Shippey, and black-and white illustrations and an afterword by Alan Lee.

Is this collection worth purchasing?

Tom Shippey's introduction is, as always, incisive and insightful, packed with quotable phrases and interesting observations placing these shorter pieces within Tolkien's *oeuvre*. He notes that even in the early *Roverandom* Tolkien is beginning to develop his skill in implying a wider world full of mystery and power just beyond the margins of the text. Shippey shows that Tolkien's fascination with survivals of the past hidden below accreted layers of folklore is well-represented in *Farmer Giles*, and how woods in Tolkien's works, including *Smith*, often represent the danger of losing your way both physically and spiritually. Shippey also makes some intriguing comments about the similarity of *Leaf by Niggle* to anxiety dreams, particularly the sort that beset academics – especially the nightmare of “*never getting finished*” (xxv) – and reminds us that the tale has two endings. But this introduction is aimed at the new reader of these works – it is a guide to how to read them, not ground-breaking new scholarship.

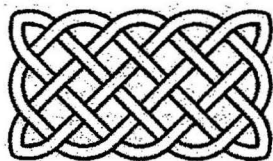
I am personally not a fan of realism in illustration of Tolkien's works; I find that a more stylized approach better suits the atmosphere of his writing. This is perhaps purely a matter of

personal taste, but I can't read the stories included in this collection without a deep longing for the original illustrations by Pauline Baynes – particularly for *Farmer Giles*, where Tolkien himself said he felt her artwork reduced his text to a commentary on the drawings. To my mind, Lee's pale, washed-out pencil drawings hardly hold a candle to Baynes' ability to convey the humor, enchantment, and melancholy of Tolkien's shorter works. That said, I found the drawing of the Man-in-the-Moon and *Roverandom* descending the spiral staircase nicely composed (40), and there's a charming hint of a sneer on the face of the old gray mare in his drawing for *Farmer Giles* (100). The headpiece for “The Sea-Bell” nicely conveys the melancholy mood of the poem (232), as does the expression on Fíriel's face at the beginning of “The Last Ship.” The star at the end of *Smith* is well-rendered as well (281). Lee does pack some deep meaning into the drawing at the end of *Leaf* – within a leaf shape, the left half is a single leaf, the right a tree, effectively conveying the almost fractal nature of the story visually; the Tree is contained in each leaf, and each leaf recalls the Tree (312). However, the drawing for “Errantry” does not appeal to me at all – it seems to totally miss the humorous parody of the poem (190); and the one for “The Stone Troll” (209) does nothing to enhance its rollicking comic rhythm. The composition of the illustration for “The Mewlips” (218) is nearly a copy of Baynes' drawing, though perhaps that is dictated by the poem itself and inevitable for any illustrator.

To return to my earlier question, is it worth purchasing this collection? All of the included works by Tolkien are readily available elsewhere. *Roverandom*, *Farmer Giles*, *Smith*, and *On Fairy-*

stories have recently appeared in excellent standalone editions with critical commentary and, when applicable, the original illustrations by Baynes or Tolkien himself. All but *Roverandom* and *Smith* are included in *The Tolkien Reader*, which is still in print, though alas only in paperback; I imagine this collection is meant to replace it in hardback. Hammond and Anderson's *Descriptive Bibliography* lists other places where these works are available as well.

If you are a fan of Alan Lee, the answer may be yes, though for most of the tales there are actually only two drawings each. If you are a Shippey completist, perhaps though as I said, the essay is aimed squarely at the new reader of these works. But for the scholar or serious reader of Tolkien, the individual volumes with commentary are a wiser expenditure, and have the advantage of including corrected texts (I did not go through the texts in this volume with a fine-tooth comb, but I did spot at least one punctuation error). Is it a good introduction for the new reader of Tolkien, looking to read something beyond *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*? Perhaps; it gathers the texts conveniently in one place, but the Baynes illustrations (and Tolkien's own illustrations for *Roverandom*) add so much to the experience that I would hate to see the first-time reader miss them. I'm afraid *Tales from the Perilous Realm* won't be on any of my gift-giving lists.



From the editor:

I am requesting your help again. I only have two reviews for the next issue. Several of you have promised me reviews, and if those come in quickly, I will be able to get the March issue out in a timely manner. I will, however, still be short reviews for April. So, please, think about writing a review of the book you have just read or the movie you have just seen.

I have received some books for review from the publisher. I cannot vouch for the worth of these books or even for whether they fit into the fantasy genre, but if anyone is interested in reading one of them, deciding whether it is worthy of review and, if so, writing a review for *Mythprint*, please contact me. I will mail the book to you.

Books available:

Never Trust a Dead Man by Vivian Vande Velde

The Unnameables by Ellen Booraem

Strange Happenings by Avi

The Monster's Ring by Bruce Coville

The Fetch by Laura Whitcomb

All of these books appear to be written for a young adult audience.

Also I have *Eager Spring* and *Night Operation* by Owen Barfield. If anyone has an expertise in Owen Barfield and would like to review these books, I will send them to you.

Ginger McElwee

Mythcon 40 Call For Papers

Mythcon XL

The 40th Annual Mythopoeic Conference

UCLA - DeNeve Plaza

Los Angeles, California

July 17-20, 2009

Conference Theme: "Sailing the Seas of Imagination"

Scholar Guest of Honor: Diana Pavlac Glyer

Author Guest of Honor: James A Owen

Call for Papers

Of special interest this year are examinations of all aspects of the creative process in the Inklings' works, and in particular, the concept of artistic community. Papers dealing with the work of the Guests of Honor, on young adult fantasy and science fiction, on artists and writers in community, and in any other aspect of the conference theme are especially encouraged. Seaborne imagery is important to much mythopoeic fantasy, especially in the motif of sailing to unknown lands.

Each paper will be given a one-hour slot to allow time for questions, but individual papers should be timed for oral presentation in 40 minutes maximum.

Two presenters who wish to give short, related papers may also share a one-hour slot. Participants are encouraged to submit papers chosen for presentation at the conference to Mythlore, the refereed journal of the Mythopoeic Society.

All papers should conform to the MLA Style Manual (2nd edition).

Please include your AV requests, or any other technical concerns you have, as all equipment **MUST** be arranged in advance.

All paper presenters must register for the full conference; please see the Mythcon 40 web page, [REDACTED], for information and rates.

Paper abstracts (250 words maximum), along with contact information, should be sent to the Papers Coordinator at the following address (e-mail is preferable) by April 15, 2009.

Sherwood Smith

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (please include "Mythcon 40" in subject header)

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

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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 \$25/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 thorough our web site (using PayPal or Discover card), or you may contact:

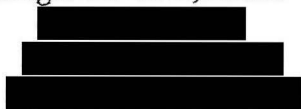
Mythopoeic Society Orders Department



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:

Ginger McElwee, Editor



The Mythopoeic Society



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