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Editorial Opening

Glen H. GoodKnight

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Editorial Opening

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In This Issue

In this issue we are beginning a new regular feature, that of a brief (editorial) introduction of the contents and the contributors. In the past we have included brief paragraph descriptions of contributors, but that practice fell by the wayside, unfortunately. This is a partial revival of that. We shan't be able to comment on everything in every issue, but we hope to do what we can to highlight items of special interest (of course, in our view *everything* in *Mythlore* is of interest). As always we invite the readers to send in their own comments about each issue. We should love to see an even more lively letters column, but we cannot print what we do not receive. Having said that, we shall now get down to the business at hand.

Patricia Reynolds, author of "Looking Forwards From the Tower" lives in England with her husband Trevor. This enterprising couple compiled the *Mythlore* subject index which appeared in the last issue. (They even indexed all artists' contributions, no small task in itself.) Patricia is also a poet, and a sample of her work appeared in *Mythic Circle* #3. The Reynolds made the trip Across The Water to attend the 18th Mythopoeic Conference at Marquette, where this paper was given.

Accompanying the paper is an illustration tied to the reference to Tolkien's article on Beowulf, "The Monsters and the Critics." Can you identify the tower's blocks? We have purposely refrained to printing a key to the tower in order to give our readers a challenge.

Also in this issue, you will find Gwyneth Hood's paper "Sauron and Dracula." An odd combination, you say? You will find it is not so when you read this fine presentation. We also have an article on Mervyn Peake by Tanya Gardiner Scott. We are pleased to print this as we receive far too few articles on fantasy writers other than Tolkien, Lewis and Williams. Matthew Fisher's paper contributes to this area with a paper comparing Maskull of David Lindsey's *A Voyage to Arcturus* with Lewis' *Ransome*.

We shall close this with some comments on the artwork in this issue. The front cover is by Sarah Beach, who also serves the Society as Treasurer and on the staff of *Mythlore*. She lives in Los Angeles and works at the LA County Law Library, filling in spare time with writing projects.

Pat Wynne makes his living as a dental technician in Fosston, MN. Since his work first began appearing in *Mythlore*, he has grown in talent and popularity. He now does artwork for several different groups. He has a wicked sense of humor (which can be seen on his "Secret Vice" (Jan. 1987) and "Beowulf" (Nov. 1987) covers for *Mythprint*. We are delighted to print his work.

Breaking a Habit

How do you pronounce the name Tolkien? For years I, like the majority of others, pronounced it TOL-keen, and cringed when heard it said otherwise. I have heard TOL-kin (as in fin), TOL-ke-in, TOL-kine (as in fine), and TOL-kun (as in fun).

Does it matter how we pronounce the great man's name; we know who is being referred to? Well, do you mind when your own name is mispronounced? Probably so. How did J.R.R. Tolkien pronounce his own name? I was told several years ago by the late C.S. Kilby, and have wanted to share it with you. I took the opportunity of confirming the pronunciation with Christopher Tolkien at the 1987 Mythopoeic Conference. The Tolkien family pronounces their name TALL-KEEN, with equal emphasis on both syllables.

It is hard to break the habit of wrong pronunciation, which in my case has had decades to engrain itself, but I am determined to try. Let's all resolve to say the name correctly. Who knows, we might succeed.

--GG

Roger Lancelyn Green, friend and biographer of C.S. Lewis, and sometime participant in the Inklings, died on October 8, 1987 at the age of 68, according to news reports. Mr. Green was the author of numerous children's retellings of familiar legends and stories, but he is best-known within the Mythopoeic Society for his book *C.S. Lewis: A Biography*, co-authored with Walter Hooper (published in 1974, and winner of the Nebula Award for Best Life Writing).
continued on page 29

Mythopoeic Core Reading List

Mythlore frequently publishes articles that presuppose the reader is already familiar with the works they discuss. This is natural, given the special nature of *Mythlore*. In order to assist some readers, the following is what might be considered a "core" mythopoeic reading list, containing the most well known and discussed works. Due to the many editions printed, only the title and original date of publication are given. Good reading!

J.R.R. Tolkien

The Hobbit (1937); "Leaf by Niggle" (1945); "On Fairy-Stories" (1945); *The Lord of the Rings*: Vol. I, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954); Vol. II, *The Two Towers* (1954); Vol. III, *The Return of the King* (1955); *The Silmarillion* (1977); *Unfinished Tales* (1980).

C.S. Lewis

Out of the Silent Planet (1938); *Perelandra* (1943); *The Hideous Strength* (1945); *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950); *Prince Caspian* (1951); *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952); *The Silver Chair* (1953); *The Horse and His Boy* (1954); *The Magician's Nephew* (1955); *The Last Battle* (1956); *Till We Have Faces* (1956).

Charles Williams

War in Heaven (1930); *Many Dimensions* (1931); *The Place of the Lion* (1931); *The Greater Trumps* (1932); *Shadows of Ecstasy* (1933); *Descent into Hell* (1937); *All Hallow's Eve* (1945); *Taliessin through Logres* (1938); and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944) (printed together in 1954).

been well documented; see Feig's book *Hitler's Death Camps* for further details.¹⁹ Peake evokes associations of the medical experiments the Nazis performed on their unwilling victims, both here and when Muzzlehatch thinks of his animals who "lived or partly lived in cells sealed from the light of day" (p. 157).

But there is more. In *1945: The Dawn Came Up Like Thunder*, Tom Pocock quotes a letter from the British actress Sybil Thorndike to her son, describing her visit, while on tour with an ENSA company, to Belsen, within days of Peake's afternoon there:

When we got through the white building, which looked so clean, there crept in on me... the most awful and depressing smell. I said, 'What's that awful smell?' The doctor said, 'That's the living children's bodies, that awful smell is...' I said, 'I'll never get this sight and smell out of me again.' We played that night in the theatre in Hamburg... but I was in a haze, a nasty, evil-smelling haze. I'll never forget this all my life.²⁰

In *Titus Alone*, Peake has used this detail of his visit to Belsen to make the death factory he creates in his novel particularly memorable.

This particular death factory is destroyed by Muzzlehatch's explosion, and Veil's death is another exorcism of evil, but Titus cannot return to live in his home as if everything were unchanged. Peake tries to ascribe this to his maturity in not needing the physical signs of Gormenghast to prove himself any more. Titus rejects his past, as symbolized by the external castle, and his last act is to leave once more, in a new direction.

In *Modern Fantasy*, Colin Manlove strenuously protests this ending:

Here, after a book-long account of Titus' longing and homesickness and guilt, and of his inability to stay sane without the reality of Gormenghast; here, after all talk of the joys of adventures over the horizon has long ceased; here after a trilogy that has so massively shown that there is neither escape nor the desire to escape from Gormenghast -- Titus turns his back. It is unacceptable, a complete and opaque denial of all that has gone before.²¹

When seen in a Holocaust context, with his new knowledge of the world, the survivor can only continue on, as in Titus the wanderer's case, thrusting himself as the living link between past and future. But the reader is left with a haunting emptiness, put into words by Muzzlehatch just after his bomb has exploded, leaving "a lot of ash in the air" (p. 251). As he says, "What is there now but a vast shambles of the heart? Filth, squalor, and a world of little men" (p. 250).

It is this world of ours, in mood, pace, the themes of freedom and identity, the preoccupation with death and the tensions between what Punter calls 'the fear of the deadly embrace of the past' and 'a fear of what progress might entail in a world which has accepted the possibility of total war'²², that Peake is portraying in *Titus Alone* -- a fantasy, 'reality pretending to be a dream'. In terms of settings, characterizations, images, the creative transformation

of details of the war, Belsen, the displaced people he encountered and the dusty ruins he saw, Peake is very much drawing on realism, 'fantasy pretending to be true'. Or, as Ezrahi puts it in *By Words Alone*, he brings the contemporary reader to a deeper awareness that 'art as a version of historical memory can provide form without fixing meaning, insight without explanation for the recovered events'.²³ In this lies Peake's strength and generic open-endedness in the fantastic-realistic crafting of *Titus Alone*.

Notes

- 1 See Lloyd Alexander, "Wishful Thinking -- Or Hopeful Dreaming", p. 143, in *Fantasists on Fantasy*, eds. Boyer & Zahorski (New York: Avon, 1984).
- 2 See Kathryn Hume, *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. xi.
- 3 See J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* (London: Unwin, 1964), p. 43.
- 4 See Mervyn Peake's *Titus Alone* (1st ed. 1959); London: Penguin, 1970). All further page references are given in the body of the text; pagination in Penguin and Methuen is identical.
- 5 See Gordon Smith, *Mervyn Peake: A Personal Memoir* (London: Gollancz, 1984), p. 110.
- 6 See David Punter, *The Literature of Terror* (London: Longman, 1980), p. 376.
- 7 See "Introduction", p. 13 to the Penguin edition of *Titus Groan*.
- 8 See Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Yale U.P., 1975), pp. 20-21; 35.
- 9 See Tom Pocock, *1945: The Dawn Came Up Like Thunder* (London: Collins, 1983), p. 142.
- 10 See Colin Manlove, *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1975), p. 215.
- 11 See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1975), p. 123.
- 12 Quoted by Robert Heverson in *Under Siege* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), p. 40.
- 13 See Hanna Levy-Hass, *Inside Belsen* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), p. 50.
- 14 Quoted in "Clara's Story" by Michael Selzer in *Deliverance Day* (New York: Lippincott Press, 1978), p. 24.
- 15 Pocock, pp. 141-142. All further references have line numbers appended to the text.
- 16 "Clara's Story", p. 27.
- 17 See Bertha Federber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), p. 123.
- 18 See Colin Greenland, "From Beowulf to Kafka: The Difficulty of *Titus Alone*, The Mervyn Peake Review 12 (Spring 1981), p. 6.
- 19 See Konniyn G. Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps* (New York & London: Holmes & Meier, 1981) for further details.
- 20 Quoted in Pocock, pp. 144-145.
- 21 Manlove, p. 256.
- 22 Punter, p. 378.
- 23 See Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi's illuminating study *By Words Alone* (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 1980), p. 4.

continued from page 3

the Society's Scholarship Award. I had the honor of spending a day and night at his home in England in 1975, and admiring his extensive book collection. The mansion is reputedly built on the ruins of the Green Knight's Castle -- from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. His learning and goodness are missed.

--GG (with thanks to David Bratman)