

# MYTHPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

Vol. 37 No. 6

June 2000

Whole No. 219



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Cover: “Mermaid” (From *Dover Electronic Clip Art*)  
 Strider’s Screening Room logo by Patrick Wynne © 1998

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See inside back cover

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Edith Crowe, Corresponding Secretary



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



# Mythopoeic Award Finalists

The members of the various committees selecting this year's Mythopoeic Award winners have voted their preliminary ballots. Here are the finalists for the 2000 awards. Winners will be announced at the Mythcon XXXI banquet in Hawaii on August 19th. Please join us!

## Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature

*Tamsin* by Peter S. Beagle  
*Elementals* by A.S. Byatt  
*Dark Cities Underground* by Lisa Goldstein  
*The Wild Swans* by Peg Kerr  
*The Book of Knights* by Yves Meynard

## Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature

*Skellig* by David Almond  
*The Folk Keeper* by Franny Billingsley  
"The Circle of Magic" series by Tamora Pierce  
(*Sandry's Book*, *Tris' Book*, *Daja's Book*, *Briar's Book*)  
*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling  
"Kingdom" series by Cynthia Voigt  
(*Elske*, *Jackaroo*, *On Fortune's Wheel*, *The Wings of a Falcon*)

## Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies

*C.S. Lewis: Writer, Dreamer & Mentor* by Lionel Adey  
*Tolkien: Man and Myth* by Joseph Pearce  
*Farmer Giles of Ham* J.R.R. Tolkien (ed. by Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull)  
*Roverandom* by J.R.R. Tolkien (ed. by Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull)

## Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies

*King Arthur in America* by Alan Lupack and Barbara Tapa Lupack  
*The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art 1840-1920* by Christine Poulson  
*Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum* by Michael Riley  
*Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* by Carole G. Silver  
*When Dreams Come True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition* by Jack Zipes

General information about the awards process, a complete list of past winners, acceptance speeches, book reviews and more can be found on the Mythopoeic Society web site at:

[www.mythsoc.org/awards.html](http://www.mythsoc.org/awards.html)

## Book Reviews

FRANNY BILLINGSLEY, *The Folk Keeper*. New York: Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 1999. ISBN 0-689-82876-4, hc, 162 pp., \$16.

One of the finalists for this year's Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature, *The Folk Keeper* rings several changes on the selkie traditions of folklore. Corinna Stonewall, the book's fiercely independent protagonist, tells the story via her written record as a "Folk Keeper," given the task of controlling the malevolent creatures who live underground and who can wreak havoc on human activities. The main targets of the Folk are crops, herds and food-related efforts such as baking or brewing, and their focus can be diverted or channeled through the Keeper's talents. Corinna differs from most Keepers—she is untrained, learning what she can from gossip and trading what she can for charms and other useful information. Even more important, she's a girl, albeit one who has disguised herself in boys' clothes to escape the drudgery of a foundling shuttled from home to home. As Corin Stonewall, she is asked to come to Cliffsend by the dying Lord Merton, who claims to have known her mother, and begins a new life at Marblehaugh Park on the rocky coasts of the Northern Isles.

Here Corinna first encounters the sea, and finds that she has a strong affinity for its tides, as well as for the seals who inhabit the waters around her new home. With the local Folk, she fares less well, as they are much more demanding and destructive than her earlier experiences suggested. Corinna had falsely claimed to have the power of the "Last Word"—an ability to make rhymes that can control the Folk; out of her depth, she attempts to learn more about the history and customs of the manor to gain some advantages over her charges.

Finian, the son of Lord Merton's widow, Lady Alicia, and an ardent sailor, befriends the young

Corin and introduces him to sailing and boatcraft, while providing some background about the isles and their inhabitants. Corinna loses some of her defensiveness as she becomes intrigued with the tales of the magical Sealfolk, as well as her own mysterious history.

The setting of *The Folk Keeper* is left deliberately vague, but is reminiscent of the isles of Scotland or Ireland, a pre-industrial setting of coaches and ferries, village fairs and manors. The Sealfolk traditions and tales will be familiar to most readers, but the Folk are quite an original creation, with none of the human characteristics given to many creatures of faery. And Corinna's own epistolary tale of attempting to find a place for herself—a familiar theme in young adult fantasy—is well-told and engaging.

*Reviewed by Eleanor M. Farrell*



ANN C. COLLEY, *Edward Lear and the Critics*. Literary Criticism in Perspective series. Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, 1993. ISBN 1-879751-80-1, hc, xiv + 120.

On the highway map of the Mythopoeic Society's tours of fantasy lies one locale not much visited by Society members: a town (and not so small a town, either) named Nonsense. Colley's book is a survey of the visitors' comments about one nineteenth-century inhabitant of that area, Edward Lear.

But perhaps I should drop that metaphor, for not all of Colley's book is about Lear's nonsense writings. The third chapter, "Lear the Artist and Musician," describes the critics' responses to Lear's lithographs, watercolors, and oil paintings—his professional work, in other words. The historical approach that Colley uses throughout shows a gradual acceptance of Lear as a good nineteenth-century artist. There is only a small

discussion of his musical settings of his nonsense poetry and of Tennyson's poems. Quite frankly, I had not realized that any of his settings had been written down, so this material was new to me. The critics seem to find it limited in various ways.

The fourth chapter, "The Letters and Journals," traces the publications of its titular works, with mainly reviewers' comments. It seems to me that one striking difference between the nonsense in the letters of Lear and Lewis Carroll is that Carroll's is always directed to children, while Lear writes his nonsense letters (or nonsense passages in letters) to adults. I do not see any critics developing the implications of this sort of distinction, with the tonal differences it implies; for the most part, the critics are involved in appreciations of Lear's personality as revealed in the letters. On the other hand, the critics of the travel journals seem to spend much of their time on historical matters, including what Lear omitted.

The fifth chapter, on "Biographers and Collectors," surveys the biographies for real advances in information, as opposed to rehashes, and oddly includes a couple of creative works among the biographies, for what they say about Lear's personality, I suppose—Auden's "Edward Lear" sonnet and Donald Bartheleme's short story "The Death of Edward Lear." The collectors of Lear's books and art get a brief discussion for their accounts of the process.

Back to the first two chapters, then. The first, "The Nonsenses," covers *A Book of Nonsense* (1846), *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany, and Alphabets* (1871), *More Nonsense, Pictures, Rhymes, Botany, &c.* (1872), and *Laughable Lyrics* (1877). The critics here seem divided between those who deny any meaning in the limericks, "The Owl and the Pussycat," and the other works; and those who find at least Lear's melancholia as influencing many of the nonsense

works. The latter group, the finders of meaning in the nonsense, include also a large number who point to the use of "they" as the forces of society in the limericks. Perhaps I should comment that my one appearance in this book is preceded by "the inevitable happened" (18). Evidently, my interpretation of one of Lear's poems in sexual terms (what is usually called a "Freudian reading") was the first—although not the last. (My note appeared in *Unicorn*, Karen Rockow's delightful if short-lived journal; but the next such treatment was in a strictly academic forum—*The Victorian Newsletter*.) The critics whose work is surveyed in this chapter include such significant names as John Ruskin (4), G.K. Chesterton (8-10), T.S. Eliot (in a lecture now lost, 9), George Orwell (13), and C.M. Bowra (14). The major names within the field of Lear studies include Angus Davidson, in his biography of Lear (11-12); Elizabeth Sewell, in *The Field of Nonsense* (13-14); Vivien Noakes, in her basic biography of Lear (16-17); Thomas Byrom, in *Nonsense and Wonder* (20); Ima Rae Hark, in two essays and a Twayne volume (22-24, 30-31); and, indeed, Ann C. Colley herself, in three articles (28-31)—she has more articles listed in other parts of the book.

The second chapter, "Lear and Nonsense Theory," surveys those writers—like Sewell, mentioned above—who, including Lear in their discussions, attempt a fairly full discourse on the topic of nonsense writing. This is a subject that I find interesting, but I will not try to trace the specifics that Colley gives. In general, the earlier critics are working from children's literature—mainly Lear and Carroll—and tend to find nonsense to be innocent and unrelated to this world; the later critics take a larger base, including writers for adults, and tend to find it less innocent and less unrelated. (For example, if one adds sixteenth-century mad songs—which have a quasi-limerick form, by the bye—and twentieth-

century Absurdist works to Lear and Carroll, what common characteristics does one end up with?—and do they reflect on life in some way? Do the mad songs and the Cheshire Cat's "We're all mad here" have some resonance? Does Lear's tendency to anthropomorphize owls, pussycats, and firetongs have any correlation to Ionesco's rhinoceros?)

For anyone who wants to study Lear or to write on Lear, Colley's book is an excellent guide to what studies have been done. It covers not only English-language writings but works in various European languages also. The secondary bibliography is arranged chronologically, which means it has to be consulted by means of the index; but otherwise it is satisfactory. (For some reason, it does not list Auden's poem; since Colley does not give the poem's title when she quotes it, a few readers may be lost.) I do not know how many members of the Mythopoeic Society will want to read through this book, but I found it a marvel and a delight—a marvel that so much has been done on Lear for it to record, and a delight in that it reveals so many others share my runcible enjoyment.

*Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher*



TAMORA PIERCE, "The Circle of Magic" series (*Sandry's Book*, *Tris' Book*, *Daja's Book*, *Briar's Book*). New York: Scholastic (hc), Point (pb), 1997-2000.

Although each book in Pierce's series centers on one of four young mages who are brought together to be educated, all four of them are equally involved in combatting evil and finding their individual talents. In the beginning, coming from very different backgrounds, none of the four fit in anywhere, because their talents are unrecognized and uncontrolled. Initially hostile, they eventually become part of one group. Each

is attached to a suitable senior mage.

Sandry is an aristocrat, with the talent of spinning and weaving. At the climax of her book, she must weave together their different magics to save their city and themselves from a magic-enhanced earthquake. Tris is of a merchant family, with the talent of controlling weather and water. Her talent is able to save the city when a rogue mage invents gunpowder and uses pirates in an attempt to seize it. Again, all four of the young mages work together. Their magics are quite unlike the conventional magic of their time. Daja has a smith's talent, Briar a gardener's talent.

I think I enjoyed *Daja's Book* most of the four. The danger of forest fire comes near home, and close also is the contrast between learning everything by rules and growing by instinctive response to what is inside one. Daja's magic is smithing, and so she controls fire. But the magics of all four young people have become mixed, as they meet one disaster after another, so Daja inadvertently makes and nearly strangles in a plant of living iron which then eats a copper bowl. Sandry has to weave them borders, to get things back under control. The author has a most ingenious imagination: the forest fire melts a glacier, which relieves a drought; Daja grows brass skin, which she can pull off and use. I have a slight quibble with that—the symbolism is part of the story, well enough, but where does the extra brass come from? I ask the question because the author is careful to point out that the iron plant must be fed nails; and a copper flower Daja makes grows because there is copper in the soil. I have more than a slight quibble with the illustrator of the book jacket. Daja is riding a horse saddled as no ridden horse ever was. The girth, instead of going under the horse's chest, just behind the front legs, is painted as going around the wide part of the horse's belly, whence it would slide off the first time the horse let out its breath.

I also enjoyed the last book in the series, *Briar's Book*, very much; it is a fine story with no quick fixes, magical or otherwise.

Magic is part of the characters' lives, but it is treated like a science. It must be studied, worked at, and applied with caution after careful experiment. Also, one's personal supply of magic is limited, and must be tended and replenished. The setting is vaguely pre-industrial, but the laboratory where a plague cure is sought has all the (magical) precautions found in a 20th-century center for disease study. Life and death issues of poverty, disease, healing, storms, and loyalties are handled from the viewpoint of the young teenage mages, whose personal bonds are together strong enough even to go into death and return. These books are set in a world where magic is part of life. Still the young people have to learn to know themselves, and their world, and their parts in it.

*Reviewed by Grace Funk*



SIMON WINCHESTER, *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*. New York: HarperCollins hardcover and paperback, 1998, ISBN 0060175966 and 006099486X, 242 p., \$22 and \$13.

Every Inklings reader knows that Tolkien was an assistant editor on the Oxford English Dictionary, but you may also know that there's more to the dictionary's story than that, and that it had been going on for decades before Tolkien arrived. This book retells part of that earlier story, recounting how the learned James Murray became the first editor and what he did. It focuses on Murray's correspondence with the volunteer readers who filled out thousands of citation slips for the dictionary, and in particular with Dr. W.C. Minor, one of the most valuable of

these readers, who also happened to be a murderer locked up in Broadmoor insane asylum. The book also tells Minor's sad, sordid history in full.

In the manner of most popular nonfiction today, Winchester uses a breezy, anecdote-filled, story-telling style, dipping into scholarly concerns only far enough to prove that they're there. A fuller and more detailed but still very readable account of Murray's work may be found in the biography *Caught in the Web of Words* by his granddaughter, K.M. Elisabeth Murray (still in print from Yale). And *The Mother Tongue* by Bill Bryson (Avon) is a popular and witty, but non-breezy, history of English that puts the dictionary in context and even mentions Tolkien.

But Winchester is no dilettante, for all the lightness of his writing. His work is serious and accurate. He describes the systematic and efficient way in which Minor went about collecting his citations. (What he could have done with a computer!) And Winchester's research debunks a long-standing myth which tripped up even Murray's biographer: that Murray, visiting Minor in the 1890s, did not know until he arrived at Broadmoor that his correspondent was an inmate. Murray already knew, we learn: it doesn't make as gripping an anecdote, but it's still a good story worth retelling.

*Reviewed by David Bratman*



You don't write because you want to say something; you write because you have something to say.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

# Activity Calendar

Matthew Winslow, Discussion Group Secretary  
17207 8th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98155  
[mwinslow@firinn.org](mailto:mwinslow@firinn.org)  
[www.mythsoc.org/actcal.html](http://www.mythsoc.org/actcal.html)

## Prospective Groups

### CALIFORNIA

*San Diego: LOTHLORIEN*  
Linda Sundstrom, [REDACTED]

### CONNECTICUT

*Southington: FANTASTIC WORLDS*  
Bill Pierce, [REDACTED]

### FLORIDA

*Tampa Bay: HOBBITON*  
Paul S. Ritz, [REDACTED]

*North Central Florida: ERYN GALEN*  
B.L. McCauley, [REDACTED]

### GEORGIA

*Atlanta area: CENTRAL ATLANTIS*  
Irv Koch, [REDACTED]

*Hoschton: SHEEP, INDEED*  
Beau Farr, [REDACTED]

### ILLINOIS

*Peoria: THE FAR WESTFARTHING SMLAL*  
Mike Foster, [REDACTED]

### MICHIGAN

Julie Bailey, [REDACTED]

### MISSOURI

*St. Louis: THE KHAZAD*  
Gary & Sylvia Hunnewell, [REDACTED]

### NORTH CAROLINA

*Asheville: THE WEST N. CAROLINA C.S. LEWIS SOCIETY*  
Don King, [REDACTED]

*Charlotte: THE CAROLINA TOLKIEN SOCIETY*  
Matt & Renita Peeler, [REDACTED]

### OHIO

#### Akron

David Staley, [REDACTED]

#### Cincinnati

Diane Joy Baker, [REDACTED]

#### Dayton-Kettering: THE PRANCING PONY

Eileen Ribbler, [REDACTED]

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Pittsburgh area

Will Vaus, [REDACTED]

#### Scranton-Wilkes-Barre area (NE PA)

Glenn Sadler, [REDACTED]

### TENNESSEE

#### Nashville: SPARE OOM

Mary & Conrad Stolzenbach, [REDACTED]

## Chartered Groups

### CALIFORNIA

#### Greater Los Angeles: NIGGLE'S PARISH

Gracia Fay Ellwood, [REDACTED]

Topic: *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien

#### Los Angeles/Pasadena: MYDGARD

Lee Speth, [REDACTED]

June: *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare

#### San Francisco Bay Area: KHAZAD-DUM

Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe, [REDACTED]

June: Guilty Pleasures

July: *Maui the Demigod* by Steven Goldsberry

August: Third Annual Mythcon Book Toss!

### COLORADO

#### Denver area: FANUIDHOL ("CLOUDY HEAD")

Patricia Yarrow, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

*Washington & Suburbs: KNOSSOS*

Mimi Stevens, [REDACTED]

June: *Tigana* by Guy Gavriel Kay

**HAWAII**

*Oahu: SAMMATH NAUR*

Steve Brown, [REDACTED]

June: *100 Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

July: *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien

**LOUISIANA**

*Baton Rouge: ROKE*

Sally Budd, [REDACTED]

**MICHIGAN**

*Ann Arbor-Flint: GALADHREMMIN-ENNORATH*

Dave & Grace Lovelace, [REDACTED]

**MINNESOTA**

*Minneapolis-St. Paul: RIVENDELL*

David Lenander, [REDACTED]

June: *The Discarded Image* by C.S. Lewis

July: *The Wrong World* by Margaret Howes

**NEVADA**

*Reno: CRICKHOLLOW*

Joanne Burnett-Bowen, [REDACTED]

June: *Over Sea, Under Stone* by Susan Cooper

July: *Possession* by A.S. Byatt

**OREGON**

*Mid-Willamette Valley Area*

Donovan Mattole, [REDACTED]

June: *The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien

July: *The Novels of Charles Williams* by Thomas Howard

**PENNSYLVANIA**

*Lancaster Area: C.S. LEWIS AND FRIENDS*

Neil Gussman, [REDACTED]

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

*Columbia: THE COLUMBIA C.S. LEWIS SOCIETY*

Nina Fowler, [REDACTED]

**WASHINGTON**

*Seattle: MITHLOND*

John James, [REDACTED]

**WISCONSIN**

*Milwaukee: THE BURRAHOBBITS*

Jeffrey & Jan Long, [REDACTED]

June: *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling

July: *The Fox Woman* by Kij Johnson

August: *Galaxy Quest* movie night

September: *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare

**Special Interest Group**

*THE ELVISH LINGUISTIC FELLOWSHIP*

Carl Hostetter, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Newsletter, *Vinyar Tengwar*. Journal,

*Parma Eldalamberon*: Christopher Gilson, [REDACTED]

**Correspondence Groups**

*BUTTERBUR'S WOODSHED (general fantasy)*

Diane Joy Baker, [REDACTED]

July: *The Mythopoeic Graphic Novel*

*ONCE UPON A TIME (children's fantasy)*

Laura Krentz, [REDACTED]

**Online Discussion Group**

*COINHERENCE*

Online discussion of Charles Williams

David Davis: [REDACTED]



## Strider's Screening Room

*Gormenghast*. A BBC-TV production. Directed by Andy Wilson; screenplay by Malcolm McKay, based on the novels by Mervyn Peake. Reviewed by David Bratman.

A television dramatization of *Gormenghast*? Despite the intensely visual nature of Mervyn Peake's books, it seems a rash enterprise to attempt to compress his massive, sprawling, complex saga into the tiny space of a TV screen and the short running time of a mini-series. But the BBC has done it. The impending broadcast aroused great anticipation, and some trepidation, in Britain before it finally appeared in February. I have now seen it, thanks to a videotape from relatives there, and have come to report to others west of the Water before BBC America brings it here on cable in June.

The series consists of four one-hour episodes, two covering *Titus Groan* and two covering *Gormenghast*. (No attempt was made to treat *Titus Alone*: as the series title suggests, the adapters considered this to be Gormenghast's story, not Titus's.) I get the impression that the adaptation has been appreciated more by viewers who are unfamiliar with the books than by devotees. The impression left upon this long-time Peake reader is of a condensation so intense that the entire story seems to be rushing by in a zippy fast-forward. This was inevitable in a time-span which required the adapters to dash through the books at an average rate of nearly five pages a minute, but considering that limitation I think they did their work fairly well. While the number of plot strands and their complexity had to be markedly reduced, the richness of the story is conveyed through flipping amongst the strands quickly and by the presence of a large number of minor characters and spear-carriers. In fact, the diverse strands come off better than the more focused plot climaxes. The feud of Flay and Swelter, the largest theme of *Titus Groan*, is dis-

posed of perfunctorily, and the summation of all the plot in the pursuit and flood at the end of *Gormenghast*, a mighty epic climax in the book, comes across as minor and pathetic, in the cheesy BBC style that fans of *Dr. Who* and other British science-fiction shows know and love. This is too bad, because the series is mostly better than that: superior in design and equal in acting and writing,

if less imaginative in camerawork, than the similar miniseries of Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*.

Besides the fast-forward effect, the only real problem with the first episode is that the paring away and diminution of the plot strands allow Steerpikie to emerge as a major character



far too quickly. The screenplay heavily emphasizes the elements of class conflict and jealousy in Steerpikie's rise: in the books he is less of a political rebel and more of an amoral animal. Peake's words have been thoroughly edited and rephrased, noticeably increasing the vulgarity, but generally maintaining the distinct ornate style of the original language. There are some changes to the plot, most notably the elimination of Sourdust and the folding of his role into Barquentine's. In one respect, the condensation seems to me to improve on the original. The tale of the Professors, their election of a Headmaster and their courtship of Irma, strikes me as the tedious part of *Gormenghast*. But reduced and tightened up in the third episode here, it's one of the highlights of the series.

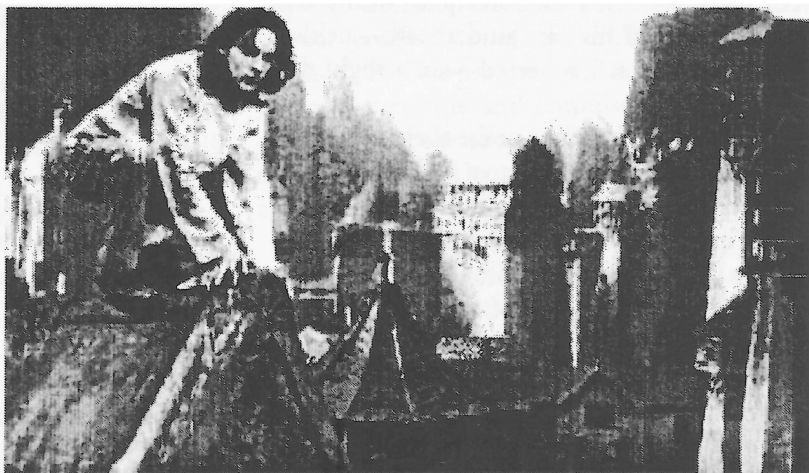
Part of what makes it the highlight is Stephen Fry's performance as Professor Bellgrove. A fine actor in all circumstances, Fry perfectly captures the ponderously comic, and generally foggy, nature of a typical Peake character. In a more



serious vein, so does Ian Richardson as the doomed Lord Groan (his given name, Sepulchrae, is not used). Richardson handles delicately what could have been an unintentionally silly descent into madness. The suave talent of Christopher Lee is squandered as the monosyllabic steward Flay, in the same way that Bela Lugosi was wasted as Igor in later Frankenstein movies, but Lee makes as much of the part as he can. He actually knew Peake, which I'm sure helped.

Those three are the biggest names in the cast, but others are equally notable, although they often speak too fast. Celia Imrie, almost unrecognizable as Gertrude beneath loads of clothes, hair, and prosthetic chins, is best in the later parts, where the Countess shows her steeliness, but is fine throughout. John Sessions as Prunesquallor captures Peake's spirit as well as Stephen Fry does, and mostly keeps a good balance between the Doctor's mania and his competence. Neve McIntosh as Fuchsia shows glimpses of a truly fey character. Warren Mitchell, best known for his 1960s role as Alf Garnett, the British original of Archie Bunker, brings his patented grumpiness to the role of Barquentine: it fits the character well, but stands a bit awkwardly without the quieter Sourdust as contrast. June Brown gives us a less dotty Nanny Slagg than Peake does, but it's a good characterization anyway. Jonathan Rhys Meyers as Steerpike has to carry most of the show, a heavy burden for a young, inexperienced actor, and his interpretation is heavy on the snide and angry, light on the grotesque, but he does pretty well. Unfortunately,

Titus, Peake's pure naif, is probably an impossible role to play, and Cameron Powrie as the young Titus tends to flail a bit: Andrew N. Robertson as the older version is slightly better. The finest acting of all comes from Lynsey Baxter and Zoë Wanamaker, who are uncannily as the twins Cora and Clarice, identical in thought and speech as well as appearance. Too bad they get killed off halfway through, though it's a memorable scene when it comes.



The true highlights of the series, however, are in the costuming and set design. Contrary to some readers' impressions, *Gormenghast* is not medieval. It's an amalgam of a wide variety of periods, centering on the early modern, and more importantly it's a creaky atavism. Christopher Hobbs, the set designer, and Odile Dicks-Mireaux, the costumer, have grasped this and conveyed it brilliantly in both concept and execution. They deserve every praiseword in the lexicon. Shots of the rooftops show the architecture as eclectic, messy, and jammed together, unlike most illustrations which make the castle too neat and stately. The interior sets are full of clutter, and in some scenes visible clouds of dust arise when anything is moved. We see everything from

ancient stonework to pristine 18th-century gardens and drawing rooms. In Fuchsia's secret hideaway, she keeps a book with Mervyn Peake illustrations—a specially welcome touch. The costumes are equally eclectic in origin, a riotous mixture of late Renaissance dress, academic robes, and 18th/19th century formal courtiers' clothing, with odd touches of more recent periods, like something akin to World War II home guard uniforms on some of the servants, and a hint of fascist regalia in Steerpike's court wear. Only the mask that Steerpike wears after his burning, and his face underneath—neither are as grotesque as I expected—are a slight disappointment.

Unfortunately I cannot praise the music. John Tavener's vocal music is too heavenly to be appropriate to Peake's grubby vision, and the sound quality was bad on my tape. Richard Rodney Bennett's incidental music is mostly irritatingly clangy, and does not always support the drama effectively.

Peake's more purist readers may wince at the abridgement and at interpretations contrary to their visions. But I stand ready to testify as one Peake devotee who believes the BBC did honor to the books, even if the result has its imperfections. For those who have wondered about the books but have never had the chance to read them, this series will give you the outline of the plot and at least part of an impression of their style, although the broader themes are a bit twisted. If this leads you to the books themselves, all the better.



## Mythcon XXXI Myth and Legend of the Pacific

August 18-21, 2000

Kilauea Military Camp

Volcano, Island of Hawai'i, Hawai'i

Guest of Honor: Steven Goldsberry

Kilauea Military Camp (KMC) is a luxurious private resort located at the edge of Kilauea Crater adjacent to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island of Hawaii. The local Society discussion group, Sammath Naur, invites everyone to help celebrate their 25th anniversary at a Mythcon focusing on Pacific Island mythology. The conference site is accessible via Hilo airport, and some direct flights are available from the mainland to the island of Hawaii.

### Registration

\$55 until June 30, 2000; \$60 at the door. Children (7-13) \$25.

### Lodging

Accommodations are cozy cabins in 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom layouts; no two are exactly alike. Attendees are encouraged to form their own cabin groups. Cost per bedroom for the 3-night stay (Friday, Saturday, Sunday):

\$240 (1-bedroom), \$148.50 (2-bedroom),  
\$118.50 (3-bedroom), \$85.50 (4-bedroom)

Banquet (Saturday evening): \$30.00

Make checks out to Mythcon 31 and send to:

Eleanor M. Farrell, Treasurer  
Mythcon 31



Please check the Mythopoeic Society web site for updates and relevant links.

# 'Caught by a Rumour'

## News and Notes

### Paper Calls: Conferences

The XIVth Medieval-Renaissance Conference University of Virginia's College at Wise (Sept. 21-23, 2000) is pleased to announce a special session on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and the Inklings. We encourage papers exploring medievalism in Tolkien, Lewis, and their colleagues, and/or the interrelationship of Tolkien's and Lewis's fiction and criticism, but will consider papers exploring other aspects of Inkling fiction and non-fiction.

Submit a brief abstract accompanied by a one-page vita by June 17 to: Kenneth J. Tiller,

[REDACTED]

This is an open conference. We invite submissions on all topics of interest to Medieval and Renaissance scholars. Keynote Address: Marijane Osborn, University of California at Davis: "Who's That Old Lady with the Pretty Spotted Pig? The Politics of Source-Hunting Ballads."

**The Medieval Artistic Community: Textual Exchanges in the Middle Ages: Saturday, October 14, 2000, Columbia University.** Keynote Address: Professor Christopher Baswell, Barnard College. The objective of this conference is to investigate the dynamics of textual interplay in the Middle Ages, particularly the deliberate authorial and artistic incorporation, adaptation, or revision of contemporary, classical, and scriptural texts/images. Graduate students and recent recipients of the Ph.D. in Art History and Architecture, Archaeology, History, History of Science, Music, Philosophy, Religion, and all literature departments are invited to submit a 250-

word abstract and cover letter indicating any audio-visual requirements by June 30, 2000: Medieval Guild, [REDACTED]

Contact: Corey Olsen [REDACTED]

**Through the Looking Glass: Feminism & Popular Culture, October 28, 2000.** The 23rd annual conference of the SUNY New Paltz Women's Studies program will address the power of popular culture and feminism; exploring the complexity of the relationship to female autonomy and power. The conference will incorporate a cross cultural and historical perspective.

We invite proposals for workshops, panels, presentation and performance pieces. We encourage performative and interactive workshops (sessions are 1.5 hours long, but other formats are available). Issues that can be explored include, but are not limited to, the nature of cultural icons, changing images of women in advertising women's fashion, the portrayal of women of color and lesbians in the media, the portrayal of women's history, and other representations of women in popular culture. Send to Conference Coordinating Committee, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Deadline June 15, 2000.

**Concerning Hobbits and Other Matters: Tolkien Across the Disciplines.** The University of St. Thomas Tolkien Conference, Thursday, April 26, 2001. We encourage presentations from many different disciplines. Our goal is to look at Tolkien from such various perspectives as those of literature, anthropology, life sciences, philosophy, geography, theology, linguistics, history, mythology, education, and more.

Scholarly papers should be based mainly on some aspect of J.R.R. Tolkien's work or life. Sessions will be scheduled for one hour and fifteen minutes and will typically include two presenters. Panel discussions among three to five scholars may focus on a specific topic related to J.R.R. Tolkien's work, or may provide a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. **Deadline: November 20, 2000.** Submit via letter, fax, e-mail, or online to: Mr. Tim Schindler, [REDACTED]

**Shell Games: Scams, frauds and deceptions (1300-1650).** April 28-29, 2001, Victoria University, University of Toronto. This multi-disciplinary conference will explore the practice of deception in late medieval and early modern cultures and ask how those who study the past can use such schemes as a vehicle to advance our understanding of the intellectual, economic, social and political climate of the period. Conference organizers invite submissions for 20 minute papers. **Deadline: 30 June 2000.** Abstracts should be no more than 150 words. Submissions should be made electronically and include a one-page C.V. to: Richard Raiswell and Mark Crane c/o Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, e-mail: [REDACTED]

### Paper Calls: Journals

*Heroic Age*, an on-line journal dedicated to the early literature, history and culture of British and Northern Europe, invites submissions for a gathering of essays on *Beowulf* for the Winter 2001 issue. Your approach should be from either an anthropological perspective or from a socially developed angle of cultural studies. Your subject could be on any aspect of the poem reflected

upon in social terms. Please send ideas, abstracts, extended essay proposals by **September 15, 2000.** to the issue editor, John M. Hill, at [REDACTED] Work from graduate students and newer scholars is especially welcome.

*The Journal of Mundane Behavior*, a new on-line inter- and cross-disciplinary journal hosted by the Department of Sociology and School for Humanities and Social Sciences at California State University, Fullerton, is devoted to the theoretical and methodological development of the study of the "unmarked"—the unnoticed, depoliticized, ordinary aspects of our everyday lives. We are issuing a continuing call for papers. We will publish three times per year (Feb/Jun/Oct) in both online and print (downloadable PDF) formats. Because our journal is explicitly inter- and cross-disciplinary and accessible to the public, we ask that authors keep discipline-specific jargon to a minimum and work to develop an analysis accessible to both academic and non-academic members of the public. We also invite undergraduates to submit work, co-written with faculty or not.

A list of suggestions as far as topics go, as well as complete submission guidelines, are available on the *JMB* web site at [REDACTED] If you have questions regarding works already under development or any other matters, please contact the Managing Editors, Scott Schaffer ([REDACTED]) or Myron Orleans ([REDACTED]).

*A Ful Noble Knyght*, a Medieval Newsletter Devoted to the Life and Art of Sir Thomas Malory, invites enthusiasts to submit short essays. *A Ful Noble Knyght* will appear three times a year and will explore the various facets of Malory's life and art. Submit all essays/inquiries to: Dr. Marc Ricciardi, [REDACTED]

*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

Membership in the Mythopoeic Society is \$5 per year, which entitles you to members' rates on publications.

### *Mythprint* Subscription Rates

	Members	Institutions and non-members
First class U.S.	\$12.00/year	\$17.00/year
Canada	\$16.50/year	\$21.50/year
Overseas surface	\$19.50/year	\$24.50/year
Overseas air	\$26.00/year	\$31.00/year

The number in the upper right corner of your mailing label is the "Whole Number" of the last issue of your subscription. Checks should be made out to the Mythopoeic Society. Foreign orderers should use U.S. funds if possible; otherwise add 15% to the current exchange rate.

The Mythopoeic Society also publishes two other magazines: *Mythlore*, a quarterly journal of Tolkien, Lewis, Williams, fantasy and mythic studies (subscription \$15/year for Society members, \$4 for a sample issue) and *The Mythic Circle*, publishing fiction, poems, etc., two times per year (\$13/year for Society members, \$6.50 for a sample issue).

Back issues of *Mythprint* are available for \$1 each (postage included). For subscriptions and back issues of Society publications, contact:

Mythopoeic Society Orders Department

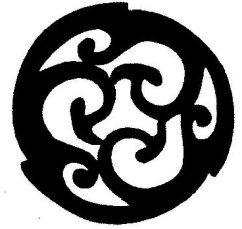
### Submissions for *Mythprint*

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





# MYTHPRINT

The Mythopoeic Society



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