

mythPRINT



**Quarterly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society with Book
Reviews, Short Articles, Event Information, and More!**

VOL. 52 NO. 4

WINTER 2015

WHOLE NO. 375

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Finduilas Noticing Túrin. By Ebe Kastein.

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Reviews, discussion group reports, news items, letters, art work, notes or short articles, and other submissions for *Mythprint* are always welcome. In return for printed pieces, contributors who are not already subscribers will receive an electronic copy of the issue in which the item appears. Contributors who are already subscribers will not receive an additional copy. Please contact the editor for details on format, or send materials to (and please note the address change):

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The Mythopoeic Society also publishes two other magazines: *Mythlore* (subscription \$25/year for U.S. Society members) and *The Mythic Circle*, an annual magazine publishing fiction, poems, etc. (\$8/issue for U.S. addresses). Subscriptions and back issues of Society publications may be purchased directly through our web site (using PayPal or Discover card), or you may contact:

Mythopoeic Society Orders Department

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Visit The Mythopoeic Society online at www.mythsoc.org.

Mythprint is the quarterly 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 discussion groups.

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FACES OF MYTHOLOGY: ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND MODERN

The theme of the 47th annual Mythopoeic Conference is inspired by the 60th anniversary of C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces* and *The Last Battle*; this year we focus on the mythology that has shaped and "given faces" to so many of our beloved characters, ranging from the myths of the Ancient Greeks to the legends of the Middle Ages and even to the modern mythology of the American Southwest.

Similarly, this mythological influence is also evident in the works of many of our favorite mythopoeic authors, from J.R.R. Tolkien to J.K. Rowling, from Ursula K. Le Guin to Alan Garner, and many, many more.

The committee is proud to announce the location of Mythcon 47 at the Omni Colonnade Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. You can already register for the conference, so please do so before prices go up!

Room & Board prices will go out soon, so please check our website, mythcon.org, regularly. See you there!

MYTHCON 47 CALL FOR PAPERS

Inspired by the 60th anniversary of C.S. Lewis's *Till*

MYTHCON 47: FACES OF MYTHOLOGY

Omni Colonnade Hotel,
San Antonio, TX

August 5 - 8, 2016

We Have Faces and *The Last Battle*, this year's theme focuses on the mythology that has shaped and "given faces" to so many of our beloved characters, ranging from the myths of the Ancient Greeks to the legends of the Middle Ages and even to the modern mythology of the American Southwest. Similarly, this mythological influence is also evident in the works of

many of our favorite mythopoeic authors, from J.R.R. Tolkien to J.K. Rowling, from Ursula K. Le Guin to Alan Garner, and many, many more.

Papers dealing with the conference theme are especially encouraged. We also welcome papers focusing on the work and interests of the Inklings (especially J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams), of our Guests of Honor, and other fantasy authors and themes. Papers from a variety of critical perspectives and disciplines are welcome. Papers from graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged; we offer an award for "Best Student Paper." See details here: www.mythsoc.org/student-paper.

Each paper is generally given a one-hour slot to allow time for questions, but individual papers should be timed for oral presentation in 40 minutes maximum. Participants are encouraged to submit papers chosen for presentation at the conference to Mythlore,

Author Guest of Honor: Midori Snyder

Midori Snyder is the author of nine books for children and adults, published in English, French, Dutch, and Italian. She won the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award in Adult Literature for *The Innamorati*, a novel inspired by early Roman myth and the Italian "Commedia dell'Arte" tradition. Other novels include *The Flight of Michael McBride*, *Soulstring*, *The Oran Trilogy: New Moon, Sadar's Keep, and Beldan's Fire*, *Hannah's Garden*, and *Except the Queen*. Her short stories have appeared in numerous publications;

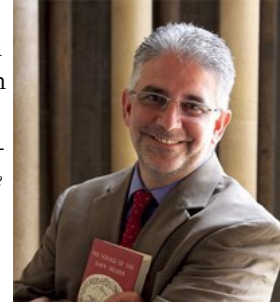


her nonfiction has appeared in *Realms of Fantasy* and other magazines, and in essay collections including *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Women Writers Explore Their Favorite Fairy Tales*.

Scholar Guest of Honor: Andrew Lazo

Andrew Lazo co-edited *Mere Christians: Inspiring Stories of Encounters with C.S. Lewis* and has contributed articles and reviews on C.S. Lewis and other

Inklings to several books and journals, including *Mythlore*. More recently, he transcribed and edited the landmark "Early Prose Joy," which has definitively corrected the accepted dating of Lewis's conversion to Theism. Lazo regularly speaks in Houston and around the country and has taught Lewis in both Oxford and Cambridge. He also teaches English and a course on Lewis at Houston Christian High School and is currently researching and writing a book on *Till We Have Faces*. This is his first appearance at Mythcon.



the refereed journal of the Mythopoeic Society. **Paper abstracts of no more than 300 words, along with contact information, should be sent to the Papers Coordinator at the address below (e-mail preferred) by May 1, 2016.** Please include your A/V requirements and the projected time needed for your presentation. You will be notified if your paper is accepted after that date.

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.

All paper presenters must register for the conference; please see the Mythcon 47 web page for information and rates.

Jason Fisher
Mythcon 47 Papers Coordinator

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: MYTHOPOEIC SOCIETY COMMUNICATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA STEWARD

Megan Abrahamson is stepping down from the Social Media Stewardship (but will remain as Editor of *Mythprint*), the Mythopoeic Society looks for a new social media expert.

The major portion of this Steward position consists of managing (and preferably expanding) our social media accounts. The Communications/Social Media Steward coordinates with the various department heads and others to collect and publish news, information and publicity about Society activities. This must be provided on a regular basis to keep the Society's social media presence fresh and active. Currently we have accounts on Facebook (a page and a group) and Twitter that would require regular tending; we also have Society accounts at Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Goodreads, Flickr, and our Yahoo discussion group.

The Communications/Social Media Steward also answers queries about the Society in various forms: sometimes by email but mostly through our presence in a variety of social media. When appropriate, the Communications/Social Media Steward refers the query (and/or person asking) to another person, the MythSoc Yahoo discussion list, or elsewhere on the Internet. The Communications/Social Media Steward



is often people's first contact with the Society, and requires someone with excellent communication skills and great tact.

The Communications/Social Media Steward is a member of the Council of Stewards, the governing Board of the Society. This requires attendance (within reason) at quarterly meetings. Three are via conference call, and one is held at the annual Mythopoeic Conference. All Stewards are expected to contribute to overall governance with information, analysis, and meeting participation.

If you are interested in serving, please contact Janet Brennan Croft (mythlore@mythsoc.org) or Gerry Holmes (secretary@mythsoc.org).

TOLKIEN, LEWIS, AND THE POST-MODERN AS EVIL?

By Shannyn Jordan

Postmodernism and moral relativity are often used to describe culture today. However, to those who survived the Second World War, hints of a cultural shift in the direction of postmodernism were not seen as encouraging. J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis in their fantasy texts sometimes used a postmodern worldview as the first symptoms of corruption and evil—Lewis making this a conscious statement and Tolkien seeding the idea throughout his texts. Both Tolkien and Lewis survived the First World War only to watch a descent into the next. Nazi Germany began as an ideology—the first postmodern ideology.

Postmodernism debates the nature of moral absolutes and whether or not they exist. Morality in a post-modern ideology comes from cultural surroundings and not human conscience. In Nazi Germany, morality became dictated by tribal ideals otherwise known as the concept of “volk.” Sociological law was established with morality based on race. C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien lived in the Modernist age which incorporated elements of romanticism and materialistic rationalism. Modernism held that anything that was not provable through human senses or scientific reasoning could not be real. However, Tolkien and Lewis anticipated the logical conclusion of Modernism to be more dangerous than Modernism itself.

In the rejection of the spiritual nature of man and the basis for genuine morality man would then turn to fashioning his own reality where the individual is the

arbiter of truth. Postmodernism would attempt to compensate for the resulting anarchy by raising the cultural group to the forefront instead of the individual. Morality and identity would then be derived from the culture—but all cultures are different. If both social and ethnic culture designated morality, then morality would be different for different individuals of different groups—again resulting in fragmentation. If truth is relative, then how is evil defined? If evil is relative then should it or can it be stopped? Both Lewis and Tolkien negotiate this conundrum throughout their novels.

Clive Staples Lewis and John Ronald Raul Tolkien were friends and comrades of the pen, sometimes sitting down together to invent their worlds with input from the other, so it makes sense that their works would contain similar ideas. C.S. Lewis explicated on the Christian worldview and the threats it faced from secular ideologies. His works of fiction, however, gave flesh to the ideas he put forth in his non-fiction books, the most known of these being *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Lewis' characters were allegorical—fictional representations of real individuals, cultures, and worldviews. His characters battled many representations of evil throughout the seven volumes, always achieving victory and enlightenment at the end for all involved, except in his last volume. The evils of occupation, exploitation, wars, unbelief, pride, and tyranny all trembled under the paws of Aslan the great Lion and the children whom he appointed defenders and rulers over his land. Yet, a hundred years of winter and a thousand years of occupation were not evil enough to loose the final wrath of the Lion. The schemes of a silly little ape and a ginger cat surpassed even the White Witch, who was in previous texts symbolic of the devil incarnate.

There are no great battles or ceremonies in *The Last Battle*, no victory to be had and no coronations at Cair Paravel. Of the seven in the series it is the darkest. The Calormenes invade Narnia without a struggle with their occupation mentioned in the space of a paragraph. The setting of the story itself is rather ambiguous, reflecting the blurring of the lines between good and evil, Aslan and Tash. Narnia falls to itself. How could an entire world end over the antics of an ape and a donkey dressed as a lion? The events leading up to the coming of Aslan seem light and even petty compared to the great evil wrought by the Witch and

her minions eons ago, yet it is those antics that ultimately destroy Narnia, a feat the Witch could never do. Centuries had passed since the last appearance of Aslan and Narnians had allowed his name to pass into legend, something to scare the kittens with when they misbehaved. They know that he “is not a tame lion,” but have long since forgotten what that meant, using the phrase as a mental excuse for all doubts over the evils entering the world. When an imposter is paraded in front of them they have no real basis for challenging him because they no longer know what truth is.

The king desperately tries to reunite his people and expose the hoax, but is frustrated when he finds his people compartmentalized and unable to see the truth even with it showing its donkey muzzle in their faces. In the small battle that follows the Narnians can't seem to define what side they belong to: the king's, the imposter's, or their own. They've lost the ability to see in black and white so they stumble around in the twilight with no foundation for their actions. Narnia is not redeemed through blood or battle for the corruption is too prolific, but destroyed and reborn to a greater and incorruptible glory.

The Last Battle is Narnia's book of Revelation, but it is also a prediction from Lewis on the dangers he saw in a totally relativistic postmodern worldview for the primary world.

Lewis was not alone in these sentiments. Tolkien also por-

trayed the descent into evil in his books due to the difficulty of postmodernism. Sauron's deceptions of the kings in Númenor and of the elves in the creating of the rings of power are also examples of the trend. Sauron worked to dissolve the boundaries between good and evil, making them indistinguishable from each other and therefore impossible to fight against. The men of Númenor lost their land to a battle against good that they perceived as evil though Sauron's lies: “And [Sauron] was crafty well skilled to gain by subtlety when force might not avail. Therefore, he humbled himself before Ar-Pharazôn and smoothed his tongue and men wondered for all that he said seemed fair and wise.”

In *The Lord of the Rings* the lines between good and evil have blurred for those fighting the evil that spreads from Mordor. Many have lost hope and no longer know how to recognize good when it comes to them. It is only through choosing a definitive side and fighting the darkness that Middle-earth can be saved. Many of the characters' hopelessness stems from a

They know that he “is not a tame lion,” but have long since forgotten what that meant, using the phrase as a mental excuse for all doubts over the evils entering the world.

loss of epistemological foundation, as they don't know how to identify, or if they even can identify truth. The Third Age is not the end for Middle-earth as was the case in *The Last Battle* and so there is a solution to the darkness: embrace of absolute truth and the rejection of moral/cultural relativism: "Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves: and another among Men. It is a man's part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house."

Perhaps the most vivid example in Tolkien's works of the descent into evil is Saruman. It is important to understand that when Saruman speaks of joining with Sauron he is suggesting joining with one of his own kind; again the wizards are for the wizards. Gandalf, Saruman, Sauron and even the Balrog are all of the Maiar, though they hold varying degrees of power. Saruman spent many hundreds of years locked in his tower studying the lore of the great rings and viewing the world from afar in his palantir—more than enough time for Sauron to shape his vision. However, Saruman is not merely deceived but becomes the evil he thought he was fighting against: "The time of the elves is over but our time is at hand: the world of men, which we must rule. But we must have power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see." Saruman's treachery is not only to Middle-earth but to himself. He has deluded himself into believing that he can wield the One Ring. Saruman is at this point no longer simply misguided or foolish, but has given himself over to evil and ultimately to his fate. It was his rejection of absolute dividing lines between good and evil that began his descent, as "there would not be any real change in our designs, only in our means."

Other characters in *The Lord of the Rings* exhibit this trend. Sauron contrived a dark reality for Denethor through the palantir sending him into despair and cementing his madness. Boromir was led by the Ring into fantasies of power bestowed through the kingly gift. In each instance truth and the identity of evil are the first to dissolve and, unless something changes in the life of the character, he falls into the evil he once fought.

Tolkien and Lewis wrote from a Christian worldview with absolute truth—antithetic to postmodernism. Those characters that reject absolutes like Saruman and the creatures of Narnia spin their own pseudo-realities as part of their descent into evil and madness. Saruman convinced himself that he could work with but not become his enemy—when in

reality he had become a puppet of Sauron. The creatures of Narnia lost the ability to discern good from evil because of their rejection of objective truth, resulting in the death of their civilization. The rejection of an absolute barrier between right and wrong, good and evil, is the rejection of the hope to overcome evil—because in complacency, Tolkien's and Lewis' characters become what they sought to defeat.

REVIEWS

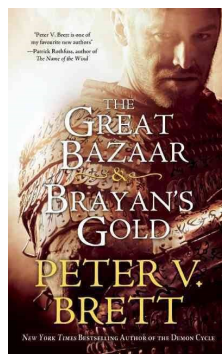
PETER V. BRETT. *The Great Bazaar and Brayan's Gold: Stories from The Demon Cycle Series*. Tachyon, 2015. 192 pp. \$11.43.

Reviewed by Kazia Estrada.

Peter V. Brett has again provided his readers a fast-paced and exciting ride with Arlen in these compendium texts. As we follow Arlen up through the snowy passes in *Brayan's Gold* not once does it seem fathomable to put this book down for a break; we trudge onward with him through the deepest snows as with bated breath we wait for the coming bandits, treacherous messengers, or, worse yet, One Arm; never knowing who will strike first. Yet within all the action-packed story line there is a compelling analysis of human nature and one's sense of duty, an analysis that we have watched develop and grow sense we first met Arlen in *The Warded Man*.

This selection of short stories provides answers to some of Arlen's back story, adventures lost on the editing board, or never before written. As such, these tales provide a more complete understanding of Arlen. Though if the reader has already read the first tales in the series they will well know the psychological battles that Arlen faces, especially concerning his Father. *The Great Bazaar*, however, delves into this struggle more fully for the audience, allowing us to see what motivates Arlen and drives him onward to greatness. Whether or not this will come back to haunt our hero is yet to be seen. But within the context of the tale it affords a compelling insight into our main character and allows us to see weakness and strength in Arlen's warded façade.

As always, Brett weaves an intoxicating tale. Both *Brayan's Gold* and *The Great Bazaar* are fun reads. The detailed world is as strongly fashioned through scenery as it is through history and language—which is so nice in our culture of copy-and-paste fantasies. Brett has given us a breath of fresh air in this new yet familiar world, a world that he has carefully crafted and cultivated since his first novel in the series. Yet all these tales tie together so seamlessly that it is easy to forget that these two tales are just short stories within the series and not novels of their



own. Despite this knowledge I constantly found myself turning the page, wanting more.

Gail Carriger. *Prudence (The Custard Protocol Book One)*. Orbit, 2015. 368 pp. \$16.09 (Hardcover). Reviewed by Robin Jones.

In a world where vampires, werewolves and other supernatural creatures are freely integrated into Victorian society, *Prudence* is a delightful Gothic romp from Britain to India by dirigible. Our plucky heroine, Prudence, captains the dirigible the *Spotted Custard*, given to her by her dotting and excitable vampire father Lord Akeldama. The trip is purportedly to let London settle down after Prudence has caused a slight scandal, as well as provide an educational experience for Prudence and her dear friend Primrose, both young ladies of prominent social standing. In actuality it is a business venture to the wilds of India to procure a special and precious cargo—a new kind of tea. Together with a colorful crew and many setbacks (including a scandalous shortage of milk and proper undergarments), Prudence is set to take the world, or at least India, by storm.

Prudence is the first book in a sequel series to Gail Carriger's previous quintet, *The Parasol Protectorate*, but the book is very accessible as a stand-alone novel. The premise is fairly simple, but unique several delightful ways. The integrated nature of supernatural society is one of these ways, as there are no hidden mystical societies here. Vampires and werewolves may be rather scandalous to the conservative set, but they are generally treated as every-day occurrences. Werewolves are considered slightly more scandalous, considering their rougher nature and inclination towards shapeshifting (very hard on a proper wardrobe).

Nevertheless both are prominent Society figures, and the vampires in particular are considered highly stylish and take pains to propagate this notion. Another pleasant nuance to Carriger's world is the fact that the vampire and werewolf societies are not at war with on another. They may not like each other, but this dislike is purveyed more through aristocratic snobbery than through open warfare.

In addition to the supernatural elements of Carriger's society, there is another element, alluded to earlier by the mention of dirigibles. *Prudence* is also a steampunk novel, wherein the advancement of science went for steam power rather than coal or oil. This aesthetic provides for one of the most prominent devices in the story—Prudence's private dirigible, painted like a ladybug and

fondly christened the *Spotted Custard*, on account of the fact that the paint job is spotted, and custard is Prudence's favorite food. There are a great deal of interesting tidbits for those interested in fantastical engineering, and the methodology and gadgetry utilized in flying a dirigible makes for some fascinating reading, though it is not so technical as to be completely unreadable for those not of a technical mindset.

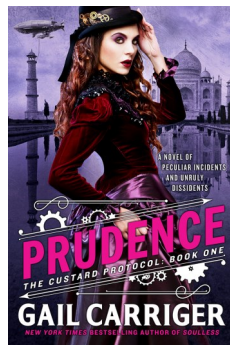
There is a considerable amount of worldbuilding that has gone into Carriger's world. From the varied laws Queen Victoria has instituted to protect supernatural citizens, to the internal politics of werewolf and vampire societies, and the policies she has invented that handle native supernatural elements under British rule, it completes a very nuanced view of this society. As the book is set in the Imperialist age of British society, from the point of view of the conquering side, there are some potentially problematic opinions expressed in regards to India. Carriger does try to handle it in a diplomatic manner while staying true to her characters and manages to pull it off admirably.

In short, *Prudence* is a delightfully funny Gothic steampunk adventure, which pays its dues to all the genres it purportedly represents. The Gothic novel is satisfied by the mystery, and the horror elements inherent in having supernatural beings living side-by-side to a more mundane society. The steampunk angle is well-fleshed-out while not too technical, with gadgetry galore, though not too much as to detract from the story itself. The adventure is rather obvious, as a major plot point, with comedic and romantic elements to satisfy all comers.

Janet Brennan Croft, ed. *Baptism of Fire, The Birth of the Modern British Fantastic in World War I*. Mythopoeic Press, 2015. 326 pp. \$19.95. Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller.

Baptism of Fire is a fascinating collection of academic articles that explore the impact that the European wars have had on many famous British fantasy writers, including many of the Inklings (Tolkien, Lewis, Barfield), and also Lord Dunsany, Sylvia Townsend Warner, E.R.R. Eddison, T.H. White, and others. It is fair to say that the former soldiers have been a lot more successful in literature than the average peacenik, but they have paid a price for this as explored in the articles presented here. Their soldier characters have also paid a price as well. Many have read along for these tales of bravado.

To their advantage, the soldiers have already faced

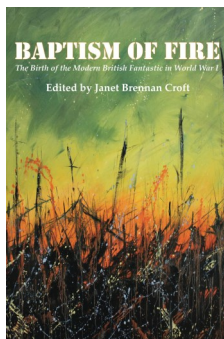


worse and more daunting things than the struggle for literary stardom. They are likely to be more strategic. They might have a better game plan and be willing to give up more. They are also likely to have more supporters who have also already given up a great deal for their country. They are less likely to be pushovers than pacifists who still have dreams of a world at peace and are afraid of being hypocrites. The soldier also has history on his side. The former soldier is also more likely to have lived more adventures that would fit into traditional epic fantasy than the pacifist. Young readers might also prefer these types of adventures. As shown in *Baptism of Fire* they also had emotional problems that they could explore in artistic and literary terms. For example, Frodo and some others, including the authors, experience “shell shock” and PTSD.

A lot of subjects come up in this evaluation of the impact of war on this literary age. The book has history, tradition, psychology, but also hope. Some of the characters described in these articles also dream of a world without war. Especially relevant to this might be the last essay by Ashley Pfeiffer about T.H. White and King Arthur, with the essay pointing out that the author was a rare writer who was not a soldier. *The Once and Future King* had to wait a generation to be collected after being composed between 1938-1941, but it also criticized the English War Movement. One should remember that the books explored were written about wars that England did not start.

There is a lot here for those interested in the Tolkien and Inklings. The first one hundred pages of the book are about J.R.R. Tolkien, and more than the first half of the book about the Inklings. Missing however is a thorough discussion of World War II. This is particularly sad regarding J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* which was likely received by many as a Post War book in the sense that it warned against nuclear weapons for some. Though not necessarily conceived as such (it was written between 1937-1949), one should remember that Mordor was a land of ash and slag, the Ring was forged in a fiery volcano, and the wise and powerful were terrified to use it. If the Ring fell into the hands of Sauron the whole world might become burnt up like Mordor. The Ring is a weapon that needed to be destroyed rather than used for the benefit of all. This sounds a lot like the Global Nuclear Disarmament Movement. *LOTR* was a book about an earlier time mostly, and J.R.R. Tolkien was not in uniform in WWII, but his sons Michael and Christopher were.

It seems at times though that the collection might be dishonest in trying to describe these authors as having pacifistic notions. They have won many competitions to



get to these literary heights. Maybe their fans would like them to win the battle of them and their fans as being the ones who have pacifist concerns. The world, times, and concerns have changed since World War II. Most of the assembled were injured in war and returned to society to do research, art, and writing. It should however not be forgotten that they wrote some great things that helped motivate the troops who were willing to sacrifice everything. C.S. Lewis complained that the English school systems were turning out men without

chests and they needed Narnia. G.K. Chesterton showed off this heaving chest. Tolkien, a very sad writer, depicted an enemy that was incapable of redemption. Their heroes were sometimes fighting for a dream, as were these writers, but that came second to necessity. They, like many others, would thank God that we won. The winners write most of the histories, but the wars continue. The book posits that maybe the best peace activist is a former soldier, but that also is not fully explored. It is not clear how we can get past the impasse of a world at war and a society with violence, but these books are about the courage to stand up to the world. It is hard to know if one is part of the problem. The authors described do try to send a warning, but it might be received usually by a sadness as deep as Tolkien’s.

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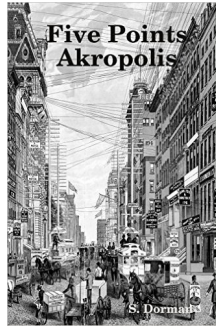
S. DORMAN. *Five Points Akropolis*. 2014. 230pp. \$29.99 (HARDCOVER). Reviewed by Jennifer Grace.

What happens when time travel meets natural phenomenon in an alternate history? Answer: *Five Points Akropolis*, a recent novel written by S. Dorman. You may recall an earlier review printed in *Mythprint* for her *Gott’s Monster*. In that work, reviewer Francesca Forrest describes Dorman as having an “expanded mind.” I would have to agree with this statement.

Dorman has succeeded at re-materializing the old industrialized northeast Ohio into the alternate history of Five Points Akropolis. There is no formula here. She is writing to an audience who is not afraid to travel new territory. Her character James Priam, used in the novel as a vehicle for truth and irony, explains it best when he says: “It would be good if we could help blind people to see again, don’t you think?” From Priam, we can understand the complex messages of the novel.

In Akropolis of the year 1900, young grave digger Willie finds a strange girl in his tool crib. She is plagued with silence. Where she came from is unknown to the reader throughout most of the novel. Willie believes that she is a ghoul—a ghostly shell of a person. Or perhaps even a zombie of sorts. Unknown as her origins are,

there is no doubt that she is of multiple worlds as are many of Dorman's characters. The difference is that the girl is tied to something supernatural while the others seem to be simply recipients of it. In the novel several time periods and groups of societies are collided together into a single place of existence. It is the Five Points. Different as they are from each other, they are also the same. They become so by way of their connections with one another. Through this technique, we see what it is that makes us human--the eternal things.

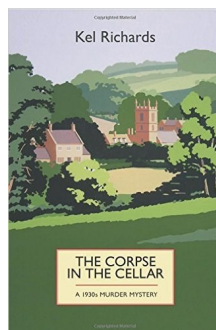


The novel begins from the perspective of the girl, but the author has adopted the same timeless omniscient point of view that has surfaced from her earlier works. The narrator glides in and out of society; in and out of consciousness; in and out of stagnant reality. It is not uncommon for the narrator to travel from earth to space and back again, sometimes to a different place or time, sometimes to a different character. The author is clever in her approach. From the richest parts of the human soul to the more empirical, and often beautiful, landscape there is no ground left uncovered, no boundary unseen. Consider the first line of the second chapter as example: "The girl knew nothing of dwarf-wanderer Pluto's completion of his steeply inclined and eccentric orbit around the sun."

Five Points Akropolis is unique, refreshing, well written, and stylistic. If cliché and suspense such as one might find in a formulaic novel is what you are looking for then I beseech you to read this to change your mind. If, on the other hand, you are in search of a solitary experience, if you enjoy originality in literature, then search no more, you've found it! The novel is written for the reader who is not afraid to travel to new places during the reading experience. This novel is a journey. The novel's themes becomes most clear as they expand within the reader. Dorman has an "expanded mind," yes; but, most significant is how she is able to bring her readers to new places within their own minds. That is a rare find in literature today.

Kel Richards. *The Corpse in the Cellar: a 1930s Murder Mystery, and The Country House Murders: a 1930s Murder Mystery.* Marylebone House, 2015. 240 pp. \$6.38. Reviewed by David Bratman.

C.S. Lewis as detective? Yes, it's true; or, rather, it's fictional. The fad for enlisting real people, preferably deceased authors, as amateur



sleuths in mystery novels has reached the Inklings. Kel Richards, an Australian radio broadcaster and crime novelist, and also the author of a translation of the Bible into Australian vernacular, is undertaking a series of classic "cozy" 1930s-style murder mysteries with "Jack" Lewis interweaving detecting with conversations about mere Christianity. The British publisher is an imprint of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, so the apologetics are intended as the real point.

The narrator is a fictional character named Tom Morris, a former student of Lewis's at Oxford who in the first book accompanies Jack and his brother Warren on a walking tour in the summer of 1933 in a fictional area somewhere in England. Reference to nearby Cambridgeshire at the start of the first book implies we're in East Anglia, but the presence of moors and seaside cliffs later on in the second book, which is set in the same area a year later, make me more doubtful.

Tom is an atheist, and, in breaks between bouts of detecting, Lewis responds to his skepticism about the value of religion, in the first book, and Christian beliefs about death and immortality, in the second. Richards is highly adept at condensing Lewis's apologetics and casting them into dialogue form that makes believable Lewisian exchanges. His understanding of and ability to convey the basic points of Lewis's thinking are actually superior to those of some non-fiction writers of Lewis apologetics manqué; I name no names.

Richards is also clearly familiar with Lewis's biography and the breadth of Lewis's oeuvre, filtering facts from these in unobtrusively. For instance, in the second book, in answer to Tom's question as to what he thinks Hell is like, Lewis outlines the concept of *The Great Divorce*, a book he wouldn't write for another dozen years. Of course Richards says nothing about that book, leaving it to the reader to recognize it. Nor is there an explanation of an allusion showing that Lewis in this book has read Tolkien's yet-unpublished *The Hobbit*.

This is all delightful and should be most satisfactory to Lewis fans. The problem is that these conversations don't mesh with the conventions of the "cozy" 1930s-style murder mystery. They function as digressions from the plot, even in the second book where Tom himself is the chief suspect, so a discussion of the fate of the soul after death should be of considerable interest to a man facing a possible capital murder charge and fretting terribly about it. Based as they are on Lewis's apologetics, the conversations seem a little airy for the circumstances.

More serious is the way that Lewis can discuss the Christian view of the immortal soul in

one chapter and show almost total lack of interest in the immortal soul of a murder victim in the next, nor for that of the culprit when finally caught at the end. (Lord Peter Wimsey, in the Dorothy L. Sayers novels, does not forget to concern himself with his culprits.) One of the conventions of the “cozy” is that the initial murder victim should be someone whom the other characters dislike intensely. This convention, which Richards follows precisely, serves two plot functions: one is to give everyone a motive for murder, and the other is to prevent the reader from being distracted by sympathy for the victim. A novel featuring grieving over a death would be a different kind of story. The victim in a “cozy” is not a human being, but serves the sole function of a plot point to kick off a puzzle. And sleuth Lewis in these novels must follow that convention too.

In the course of each story, a second murder occurs—this is telegraphed in the second book by the plural in the title—and this ratchets up the tension over the course of Richards’ extremely readable and entertaining prose. Lewis, of course, eventually solves both cases. These explanations are exceedingly improbable, but Richards has followed the “cozy” plot convention of coming up with something that’s possible physically, if not in other respects, and which will not have occurred to the reader. While I doubt the real-life Lewis’s capacity to serve as such a sleuth—he was in some ways very unworldly—it is, allowing for the conventions of the “cozy,” a believable portrait of what he would be like if he did.

Despite the references to other Inklings whom Lewis already knew at this point in his life, none appear onstage except Warren in the first book. (In the second book, Jack comes to the country house where Tom is working as a librarian at Tom’s urgent request to defend him from the murder charge.) Warren is depicted as a pleasant sidekick; he likes his drink, but he is not the maniacal dipsomaniac described in some recent biographies. Warren also appears in a third book, *The Floating Body* (scheduled to appear in the UK in 2016), also set in a fictional locale.

All three books originally appeared in Australia under

different titles: *C.S. Lewis and the Body in the Basement*, *C.S. Lewis and the Country House Murders*, and *The Floating Corpse*. The author reports that he’s recently returned from a trip to Oxford researching the fourth book in the series, *The Sinister Student*, which will feature the rest of the Inklings. Although these are light novels without—apologetics apart—the weight or seriousness of Sayers at her best, I enjoyed reading them, and am looking forward to the succeeding volumes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mythpress Nominated for BSFA Awards!

Mythpress is most honored that two recent titles have been nominated for British Science Fiction Association award for Nonfiction: *Perilous and Fair* (co-edited by Leslie A. Donovan and Janet Brennan Croft) and *Baptism of Fire* (edited by Janet Brennan Croft). See more at: www.bsfa.co.uk/bsfa-awards/nominate-for-the-bsfa-awards.

Concerning the Mythopoeic Website: A Note from David Emerson, Mythopoeic Society webmaster

As most of you are probably aware, the MythSoc website is still in the partially-damaged state it’s been in for the past 18 months or so. Our plan to have the site reconstructed from the ground up has not worked out, due to the limited ability of our (mostly volunteer) consultant to spend any time on the project. We have begun looking at other alternatives to either correcting the existing site or finding another outside expert to build us a new one.

In the meantime, most of the functionality of mythsoc.org is intact, with the most glaring exception being the navigation links on the home page. In lieu of the useful links that are supposed to be there, you can still access parts of the web site directly by appending the appropriate section names to the URL. For example:

- General information: www.mythsoc.org/about
- Council of Stewards: www.mythsoc.org/leadership
- Awards: www.mythsoc.org/awards
- Mythcon: www.mythsoc.org/mythcon



Jeff Murray, “White Tower of Ewing.”
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Publications: www.myth-soc.org/publication (includes valid links to *Mythprint*, *Mythlore*, *Mythic Circle*, and books)

Members' links: www.mythsoc.org/members.

We apologize for the long delay in being able to present a coherent web site, and beg your patience as we move forward.

Submit to Mythprint!

We are always looking for reviews, but we also publish letters to the editor, short articles and notes on Inklings topics, art, discussion reports, and more! Also, if you are interested in being a reviewer, let Megan know at mythprint@mythsoc.org.

Faery Rebel Series (Enclave Publishing, 2015 Reprint), by R. J. Anderson

Steve Laube at Enclave Publishing (formerly Marcher Lord Press) has bought US reprint rights to author R.J. Anderson's UK-bestselling, Carnegie Award-nominated *Knife*, the story of a fierce young faery hunter who fights to save her dying people while concealing her forbidden friendship with a human. Described by the Times of London as "Pure pleasure...a particularly well-drawn, charming romantic thriller," this contemporary fantasy novel is suitable for readers aged 10 and up. The story of *Knife* and her fellow Oakenfolk will continue in December

2015 with the release of *Rebel*, and conclude in mid-2016 with the first-ever US publication of the third book, *Arrow*.

Iter Tolkienensis: A Tolkiennymical Road Trip from Buckland to The Ivy Bush (Lyfrawr, 2016), by Mark T. Hooker

The name *Iter Tolkienensis* is an echo of the book title *Iter Britanniarum*, an extract of the Roman Roads of Britain from the Antonine Itinerary, a famous itinerarium, or list of the Roman stations and the distances between them along the roads of the Roman Empire. In Tolkien's famous letter to Rayner Unwin about the translation of the place names of the Shire, Tolkien says that "the toponymy of The Shire...is a 'parody' of that of rural England" which requires "some acquaintance with English toponymical history." This Tolkiennymical road trip will try to provide the reader with the requisite 'acquaintance with English toponymical history' exploring the implications of individual names, and wringing the juice out of them, as Tolkien once said.

Iter Tolkienensis, therefore, looks at the meanings and stories of the place names that the route passes along the way, place names that might be translations or corruptions of those on a map of Middle-earth. *Iter Tolkienensis* passes places that could be Minhiriath, and the family estates of the Gamgees and Boffins (The Yale); the Black Country, a rope-walk, and a lookout post; Rivendell, Esgaroth, and Eryn Vorn; before reaching The Carrock, Dol Guldur, and the Ivy Bush; to name but a few. Learn more at lyfrawr.com/Iter/Iter.html.

Mythopoeic Press

Books by and about writers of mythopoeic and fantastic literature

The Mythopoeic Press publishes material by and about writers of mythopoeic and fantastic literature. Our publication projects primarily involve works related to the Inklings, as well as those who influenced or who were influenced by their work. Works previously published or being considered for future projects include out-of-print materials, collections of articles and essays, scholarly items, and books that have not found a publisher before.

Recently Released!

Available in print and Kindle from Amazon.com; other ebook versions from Smashwords.com

***The Birth of the Modern British Fantastic in World War I* • \$19.95**

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft

This volume sprang from a desire to examine selected examples of the fantastic response to World War I among British authors. Its contents comprise a mix of five classic articles from *Mythlore* and twelve new essays. The first half of the book considers the Inklings, the Oxford literary group centered on J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, while the second half deals with other authors.

***Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J. R. R. Tolkien* • \$19.95**

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft and Leslie A. Donovan

To remedy such claims that Tolkien's fiction has nothing useful or modern to say about women, *Perilous and Fair* focuses attention on views that interpret women in Tolkien's works and life as enacting essential, rather than merely supportive roles. It includes seven classic articles as well as seven new examinations of women in Tolkien's works and life.

For more info, visit www.mythsoc.org/press

The Mythopoeic Society



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MYTHCON 47

Faces of Mythology: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern



Omni Colonnade Hotel

San Antonio, TX

August 5 - 8, 2016

Author Guest of Honor:

Didori Snyder

Scholar Guest of Honor:

Andrew Lazo

Registration is available!

Paper Proposals due May 1st!