

activist moral vision that advocates gradual social melioration (associated with the Fabian Society) and a more libertarian view that people should freely choose to change the world and not rely on the government to rectify wrongs. Prinzi further discusses the Wizarding World's maltreatment of women, and especially their virtual enslavement of other magical creatures, including a lengthy meditation upon what Mythopoeic Press author Kathryn McDaniel terms the "Elfin Mystique" of the house elves ("The Elfin Mystique: Fantasy and Feminism in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series" in *Past Watchful Dragons: Fantasy and Faith in the Works of C.S. Lewis*). He concludes by placing Harry, Ron, and Hermione into the company of Frodo, Sam, Aslan, and the Pevensies as heroes who self-sacrificing love can fight evil both in our world and on the cosmological plane.

Harry Potter & Imagination does leave the reader wanting some further explorations of the mythopoeic dimensions of Rowling's series, but it marks an important step in the development of serious critical attention to the popular books. Prinzi's bibliographic citations to interviews and web-based articles about Rowling are useful for researchers seeking statements in those ephemeral sources, but will quickly become dated. Still, this work is a valuable checklist of Harry Potter criticism up to 2009.

—David D. Oberhelman



FASTITOCALON: STUDIES IN FANTASTICISM ANCIENT TO MODERN: IMMORTALS AND THE UNDEAD. 1.1 (2010). Eds. Thomas Honneger and Fanfan Chen. Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.. 978-3-86821-218-1. 92 pp. Pbk. €15. (While published in Germany, the language of publication is English.)

THIS NEW ANNUAL WAS FOUNDED BY THE EDITORS to remedy what they saw as "the lack of a journal that aims at promoting a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of fantasticism across the ages" (1). Each issue is intended to explore a particular theme or an important author in this area, which they do not define explicitly but consider to include topics such as the supernatural, the transcendental, and the monstrous, and authors such as Hoffmann, Poe, Tolkien, de Maupassant, and Dunsany. While it remains to be seen if future issues will

fulfill this perceived need or further clarify their definition of fantasticism, this first issue, on immortals and immortality, is an impressive start.

Dirk Vanderbeke's "The Vampire Strikes Back: On the History of a Nightwalker" starts with a quite informative study of the vampire of European folklore beginning with medieval sources, and shows how the traditional characteristics of the folkloric revenant were very selectively adapted (and sometimes transformed into their exact opposites) in 18th and 19th century literature, then went through a further metamorphosis, primarily led by Hollywood, in the 20th century. I found his generational analysis of Stoker's *Dracula* quite intriguing:

a 500 year old terrorist child with [...] a sexuality which is based on biting and sucking. The very old and the very young merge in the vampire, and together they battle the middle generation. It is, to some extent, the inversion of a common motif of the fairy tale, in which the specially gifted child with the help of some wise old man or woman, overcomes an evil opponent from the generation of the parents—that is, the two powerless generations unite against the presently dominant age group. Now the mature generation is under siege [...]. (13)

The third section, on twentieth century vampires, particularly on film, is by no means exhaustive; while Vanderbeke touches on Coppola's *Dracula*, *The Lost Boys*, and *Interview with the Vampire*, he skips over such gems as the 1979 Frank Langella *Dracula*, the touchstone of my generation of swooning high school girls, and the entire subgenre of comedy vampire films like *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, *Transylvania 6-5000*, or *Love at First Bite*. And in the print medium, while the Stephanie Myers *Twilight* series gets a nod, it is by no means entirely typical of recent and current vampire literature, which ranges as far from her *oeuvre* in different directions as the sad-sack Earl of A. Lee Martinez's *Gil's All-Fright Diner* and the teetotalling Black Ribboners of Terry Pratchett's *Ankh-Morpork*. Still, this is an excellent survey breaking the vampire image down handily into three major time periods, and for a scholarly paper displays quite refreshing touches of wry wit and humor.

Eugenio M. Olivares Merino's "The (Medi)Evil Dead: Revenants and Vampires in Twelfth Century English Literature" limits its subject to the dead who return bodily to cause harm to the living—that is, more precisely, *revenants*. Olivares Merino starts with the influence of the Norse invasions, via both the terror of the invasions themselves and the folk tales the Norse brought with them about walking corpses that must be killed by decapitation and the stake. (In an interesting case of turnabout, a recent dig at Oxford turned up a mass grave of Viking invaders killed—and decapitated—by the English sometime around 1000 AD; see Keys.) The author puts a sort of *terminus ad quo* to the concept of the

revenant exclusively as a physical walking corpse through a brief aside on *Hamlet*, pointing out that by Shakespeare's time it was quite conventional that a ghost on stage, though played by a flesh-and-blood actor, could only be "seen" by certain characters and was otherwise insubstantial (27). Olivares Merino then retells the stories of several 12th century revenants—not vampires, because at this time blood-drinking was not automatically associated with the walking dead in England (Hamlet's "Now could I drink hot blood" referring to a witches' sabbat, not vampirism), but corpses walking for their own several reasons and needing to be put to rest through specific, and sometimes quite locally limited, techniques. The paper is to be continued, with additional examples demonstrating a shift in the nature of the revenant towards vampirism, in part two of this volume.

Siobhán Ní Chonaill's paper on William Godwin's *St Leon* focuses on the implications of immortality that are explored in this novel – political, moral, social, economic, religious, interpersonal, and so on. While Ní Chonaill does not bring up this comparison, the cold rejection of the "domestic affections" (47) by the title character struck me as the polar opposite of the charming warmth of the immortal couple Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, who escape a similar alienation by sharing their immortality. But what struck me as particularly interesting, especially in the light of William Stoddard's essay in this issue of *Mythlore*, is the intersection of art, fame, and immortality Godwin explores in this novel. Given immortality and perfect memory, is there a need to attach one's name to a work of art? And indeed, can the work rise from the level of craft to true art without the added pathos of the inescapable death of the artist? Ní Chonaill points out, in reference to St Leon penning his memoirs, that "[a]s an immortal, the usual motivations or inducements for attaching one's name to an enduring [...] text are irrelevant. St Leon does not need his name to live on after his death as he is himself immortal" (47). The author's conclusion reinforces for us, as readers of Rowling, that an immortality reserved exclusively for one person is soul-deadening and corrupting, while an immortality shared, like that of Tolkien's elves, can lead to great beauty and wisdom—and yet paradoxically it can be "at once the culmination of rational life and yet incompatible with a rational life" (52).

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu seems to have shared with J.R.R. Tolkien a tendency to revisit and rework favorite stories over the course of a lifetime of writing. In Françoise Dupeyron-Lafay's "Victorian Gothic Fiction as a Ghost: Immortality and the Undead in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864)," the author closely examines the changes between the 1838 "Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess," an intermediate version with minor changes retitled "The Murdered Cousin" (1851), and the final substantial revision of the material in the 1864 novel *Uncle Silas*. The treatment of the story over nearly

thirty years becomes progressively more “elusive, ambiguous, uncanny and disturbing”; even the title becomes “more enigmatic” and “misleading,” while the style leaves behind some of the excesses of the Gothic and takes a more “symbolic approach that intensifies the sense of the uncanny” (56). Indeed, the passages Dupeyron-Lafay chooses for closer study evoke a chilling sense that the living are always under the immortal gaze of a spirit-world just out of sight and not always benign.

The final paper in this issue is of particular interest to our readers, and it is certainly worth seeking out, as its approach is somewhat different from treatments of the subject seen before (building in particular on Tom Shippey’s paper on wraiths). Amy Amendt-Raduege writes in “Better Off Dead: The Lesson of the Ringwraiths” about the wraiths being neither alive nor dead, but “*caught in the process of dying*” (71), trapped forever in a fate of their own choice while they gradually lose “[f]ace, form and freedom—the very foundations of what it means to be human” (74-5) as the “great zero” (an apt turn of phrase) of the One Ring sucks away their individual names, their physical bodies, and their free will. She makes the important point that “Ultimately, what makes the Nazgûl so frightening is not that they might kill us [...] but the very real possibility that *we might end up like them*”; and indeed, like other revenants, “the first and most terrifying motivation of the undead is a terrible compulsion to create more undead,” as we see in the Witch-king’s threat to Éowyn and the action of the Morgul-knife on Frodo (79).

Douglas A. Anderson ends this issue with several pages of “Notes on Neglected Fantasists,” providing a few paragraphs each on seven different American and European writers active from the early 1800s through 1994. Those interested in the study of vampire tales (particularly those presented on stage), ghost stories, or supernatural/detective story hybrids might find some useful leads to follow up on here. It looks like this will be a recurring feature of *Fastitocalon*.

The table of contents for the second half of this volume is available at the journal’s website at <http://fastitocalon.kolbitar.de/> and looks equally enticing, with articles on immortality in science fiction and in oriental manuscript illustrations, and on the undead in Victorian literature and Terry Pratchett’s Discworld. The second volume, due out in 2011, will deal with Europe as “the cradle of modern fantastic literature.” All in all, this is a journal that looks like it will publish much of interest to *Mythlore*’s readers, though it is perhaps closer in its mission to *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. The quality of the articles in this first issue was good, and it was especially refreshing to encounter a bit of humor and playfulness in Vanderbeke’s article.

—Janet Brennan Croft

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- Stoddard, William H. "Simbelmynë: Mortality and Memory in Middle-earth." *Mythlore* 29.1/2 (#111/112) (2010): 151-60.



THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL [*sic*]. Donald E. Pease. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. "Lives and Legacy" Series. xiv + 178 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-19-532302-3.

Ah, DR. SEUSS. EVERY KNOWS HIS LINES: "A person's a person no matter how small" (*Horton Hears a Who*); "And the turtles, of course . . . all the turtles are free / As turtles and, maybe, all creatures should be" (*Yertle the Turtle*, orig. ellipsis)—as well as less morally intended statements: "I do not like green eggs and ham! / I do not like them, Sam-I-Am!" (*Green Eggs and Ham*).

Since Theodor Geisel died in 1991, a number of books, M.A. theses, and articles have been published about him—in fact, the first book appeared in 1988. Pease's book is intended to be relatively short, biographical, more concerned with content than artistry; but it reprints (in black and white) forty-seven of Dr. Seuss's drawings and offers some analysis of the poems and stories—particularly of plot patterns. Pease has used well Seuss's archive at the University of California at San Diego—often cited in the endnotes.

The book begins with Geisel's rough voyage back across the Atlantic in 1936 (via ship, of course), returning from a visit to Germany, when he began jotting notes that resulted in *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1937), his first book for children. Pease reads this partly in terms of Geisel's home town, Springfield, Massachusetts, since that has its Mulberry Street, but also in terms of Geisel's family—a fact-minded father (in the poem) and a fantasy-encouraging mother (not in the book). (The facts and fantasies in the early days were in terms of Geisel's drawings of zoo animals.)