



Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper

By Charles Butler

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Four British Fantasists explores the work of four of the most successful and influential fantasy writers of the generation who rose to prominence in the "second Golden Age" of children's literature in Britain: Susan Cooper, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Penelope Lively. Drawing on history, archeology, social geography, anthropology, and postcolonial theory, as well as literary criticism, Butler provides a series of new perspectives through which to view these writers' achievements. He begins by highlighting some points of biographic coincidence (e.g. all four authors were children during WWII, all were born within a year or two of each other, and all attended Oxford University in the early 1950s when C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien were publishing their seminal fantasies) and questions if these factors play any significant role in the development of these fantasy writers. The author then uses this question as the springboard for a case study in the assessment of biographical and literary influence.

The book also considers the role played by Britain itself in determining the shape and preoccupations of these writers' fiction. Britain is a land with a long history in which contemporary life is constantly juxtaposed with evidence of the past in the form of ancient buildings, historic sites, and archeological remains. By placing the work of Cooper, Garner, Jones, and Lively in the context of British culture and of their own time, Butler provides a key to their fascination with history, mythology, and magic, and to the ways in which that fascination has found expression in their fiction. Students of children's literature and of fantasy literature as well as readers who are interested in the lives of these four subject authors will find this an insightful read.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

A literate, illuminating look at four authors whom Butler calls, important contributors to the formation of a corpus of modern children's literature...capable of bearing the weight of academic scrutiny. All four studied at Oxford while J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis were writing and lecturing, and Butler notes the influences that these men had on each writer. The text is divided into three major sections. Applied Archeology deals with the interplay between past and present, especially as it is played out on the landscape. Longing and Belonging addresses the complex relationship between identity and place. Myth and Magic explores each author's use of traditional literature, especially from the British Isles. Butler convincingly demolishes reductive, issues-oriented critics by explicating and celebrating the artistic choices made by these four masters of their craft. Since many of today's undergraduates grew up with these writers, this important title should not be limited to academic libraries supporting graduate and undergraduate children's literature courses. It belongs in any library that serves a liberal-arts curriculum. It is highly readable, commandingly intelligent, and refreshingly jargon-free. A seminal work of criticism.—*Margaret A. Chang, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams*

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Review

A literate, illuminating look at four authors...Since many of today's undergraduates grew up with these writers, this important title should not be limited to academic libraries supporting graduate and undergraduate children's literature courses. It belongs in any library that serves a liberal-arts curriculum. It is highly readable, commandingly intelligent, and refreshingly jargon-free. A seminal work of criticism. (*School Library Journal, 10/1/2006*)

...recommended... (*American Reference Books Annual, vol. 38 (2007)*)

This is a well-written and extremely scholarly work. (*The Green Man Review*)

...the thoughtfulness and depth of the scholarship that went into this study, and the intriguing perspectives from which Butler considers these four premiere British fantasy authors, have resulted in a work that is well worth returning to again and again. (Martha Hixon, *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 3)

Butler examines the work of four British authors of children's fantasy fiction who began their careers during the 1960s and 1970s. Particular attention is paid to the role played by British history and culture in the development of their writing. The literary influence of such writers as C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien is also considered. Butler (English literature, U. of the West of England) is the author of numerous fantasy novels for children and young adults. (*Reference and Research Book News, August 2006*)

About the Author

Charles Butler teaches English Literature at the University of the West of England.

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This *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies* of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book is information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. That *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies* of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper without we understand teach the one who studying it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't end up being worry *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies* of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper can bring if you are and not make your carrier space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even cellphone. This *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies* of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper having excellent arrangement in word and also layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

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