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## Letters

L. Sprague de Camp

Melissa Halpern

Jessica Kembball-Cook

Alan Cohen

L. D. Fleckenstein Jr.

*See next page for additional authors*

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## Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

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### Additional Keywords

Barbara Mann

### Authors

L. Sprague de Camp, Melissa Halpern, Jessica Kemball-Cook, Alan Cohen, L. D. Fleckenstein Jr., Jeremy Anderson, Michael D. Wiele, Joel Griffith, Eileen F. Doser, Steven Chan, Thomas P. Allhoff, Owen Barfield, and Kevin Keach

Culdi sat huddled over the manorial accounts beside a crackling hearth, wrapped in a fur-lined mantle against the chill of the deserted great hall, a brindle wolfhound asleep at her feet. Torches guttered on the wall behind her, though it was not yet mid-afternoon, besmirching the stone walls with soot. Smoke mingled with the scent of mutton roasting in the nearby kitchens, and a rushlight cast a yellow glow across the table where she worked. (p. 1)

Sadly, there are problems, moral and stylistic. The moral difficulties are more complex to analyse, but easy to state: even the good guys seem to practice situation ethics, in *Camber* as well as in the other Deryni books. In *High Deryni*, Morgan—a great lord among the good guys, knifes a sentry in the back through a door, and excuses it as one of those things "necessary" for the triumph of good; nor is he condemned for this. In *Camber*, Benedict is lured into placating himself in a trance; then Evaine, Camber's daughter, enters his mind and without his permission makes certain "adjustments" that will make him more responsive in future (p. 255). While acceptable defenses for these might be made for ordinary persons, the reader of the Deryni books is constantly encouraged to believe that the characters are, as Le Guin calls them, "Lords [and Ladies] of Elfland," the only true lords, who possess "greatness of soul" (*From Elfland to*

*Poughkeepsie*, p. 11); and these things—stealthy murder, and mind tampering—are actions which ring false with that; and the latter is in very doubtful agreement with the Christianity the good guys profess.

The stylistic problems are more obvious. For one thing, the "duel arcane" (or duel of magic between Deryni or humans with Deryni powers) clearly is getting out of hand. Such a duel climaxes *Camber of Culdi*, as it did *Deryni Rising* and nearly did *High Deryni*; and the batting average of the good guys is so high as to give the whole affair a reek of those *Star Trek* episodes in which assorted good guys face horrible (and constantly defeated) enemies. This item is in grave danger of becoming a hack device. Also, in *Camber* as in the other Deryni books, political calculation is of such overwhelming importance that those suggestions of Faery which the structure of the books leads the reader to expect are driven out; and even in their calculations the characters show no "greatness of soul" at all. Where we want Gandalf and Aragorn at the Council of Elrond, we get Haldeman and Ehrlichman plotting to "maximize the incumbency." Nor, despite the constant invocations of the supernatural, can any hint of Joy penetrate so resolutely mundance a setting.

As God is not always with the biggest battalions, so in these three cases it is evident that the Muses do not always favor the biggest presses.

— by George Colwin

## LETTERS

L. Sprague de Camp

Villanova, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Ms. Lindskoog's article, in *Mythlore* #12, on C. S. Lewis and women suggests a question that your readers might like to explore, namely: is there a connection between an urge to write fantasy and a mother complex?

Several of the best-known male fantasy writers have shown an Oedipal tendency. Sometimes it was so strong that, when the writer's mother was dead, he glued himself to another female, of his mother's generation, and long maintained his dependence upon her—sometimes till death them did part. Meanwhile the man's normal mating and pair-forming drives were in abeyance, so that he had little or nothing to do with women of his own age group.

Edgar Allan Poe played this part with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, H. P. Lovecraft did it with his mother. After she died, he tried it with his older wife Sonia, but it did not work; she was too near his age to be satisfied with a mother-son relationship. Then he did it for the rest of his life with his mother's sisters, Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Gamwell. Robert E. Howard killed himself when he learned his mother was dying; would he have, had he had an aunt available as a substitute? And C. S. Lewis had his Mrs. Moore. Green and Hooper, in their biography of Lewis, pointedly disclaim knowledge of whether or not Lewis and Mrs. Moore had sexual relations.

Other fantasy writers, such as Dunsany and T. H. White, have shown no such tendency. Plenty of men who do not write fantasy do show the trait. Still, the pattern stands out so conspicuously among fantasists as to suggest a causal connection. I don't much like the term "mama's boy" for these Oedipal writers, since it implies scorn or contempt. But Poe, Lovecraft, Howard, and Lewis can all, in a non-perjorative sense, be fairly called mama's boys.

The pattern is somewhat like this: The boy is a puny schizoid, precociously intellectual. (I am tired of explaining that "schizoid" does not mean that the individual is crazy or even neurotic. The term denotes a common personality type often found among scientists, writers, artists, and other persons of creative minds. The schizoid tends to be shy, seclusive, over-sensitive, self-centered, individualistic, introverted, absent-minded, wary of close or competitive human relationships, and inept in everyday affairs.) Lack of muscle on one hand and of sensitivity to the emotions of his peers on the other make him unpopular with those peers and a natural butt of bullies.

So the boy spends more time at home, reading or day-dreaming, and less out playing with the gang than the average. Consequently (my colleague Lin Carter suggests) he is

in his mother's company many more hours a day than normal, during the times when most boys are stretching home ties and transferring their main interests and loyalties to peer groups. Hence the man grows up with the image of an ever-present older woman, always available to act as fairy god-mother, ineradicably fixed in his mind.

To sustain this pattern, the man may maintain a connection with an older woman whose company is as unrewarding as Mrs. Moore's is said to have been. Such men usually leave no children of their own. Perhaps readers with a more profound knowledge of psychological matters than I can comment on these speculations.

[The details of Lewis's life do not match the pattern you suggest. His mother died when he was nine years old, and he spent the rest of his life in boarding schools and college. He had no mother's company when he was growing up, and no surrogate's apron strings to be tied to. It is true that he did badly in competitive sports, but this was largely due to the fact that both he and his older brother Warren lacked one of the joints in their thumbs which made





them physically awkward. Lewis made many friends at school. While being an individual, he was no loner. His lifelong friendships with Arthur Greeves, Owen Barfield, and J. R. R. Tolkien (to name only a few of the better known) show that he was capable of deep, warm, and lasting relationships. He loved to go on walking trips with a group of friends on holiday. One of the key hallmarks of his character was his genuinely uncritical acceptance of other individuals, and his easy ability to make fact friends. He took on Mrs. Moore as a moral duty, since his best friend in the Great War and son of Mrs. Moore, Paddy Moore, asked him to as a dying request. Being careful with my words, I would say his care of Mrs. Moore over the years makes him worthy of sainthood on that count alone. She was a heavy burden, who gave him no encouragement in his work or faith. It is hard to be a "mama's boy" with no real mother in his life since he was nine. —G.G.]

Melissa Halpern

Highland Park, Illinois, U.S.A.

Recently, a small group and I were engaged in a discussion concerning Aristotelian tragic heroes. Boromir seems to fit Aristotle's criteria quite well on three counts: he was in a position of eminence and fell from this position because of the tragic flaw (in Boromir's case, his overwhelming need to save Gondor through any means). He was neither completely good nor completely bad, and in the end redeemed himself by dying gallantly while trying to save the hobbits from attacking orcs. With these characteristics alone Boromir cannot be classified as a tragic hero. Boromir had to be the sole controller of the flaw, i.e., his obsession could not have been manipulated by some external source. Therefore, if the ring's power forced him to lunge at Frodo rather than his character flaw, he was not an Aristotelian tragic hero. Which was it? I can find information backing up both reasons for his actions, but cannot distinguish between which has the greater influence.

[I believe Boromir was a tragic hero as you have defined it. If the ring exasperated his flaw, it make it all the more tragic. In a sense the Ring is not an external source, but rather a concrete symbol of the strong proclivity for evil in human nature. The Ring was not alien to Boromir, it brought forth what was already in him. His noble and heroic behavior in saving the lives of Merry and Pippin at the cost of his own must not be overlooked, and in my mind tips the scales. —G.G.]

Jessica Kemball-Cook

London, U.K.

One small comment on *Mythlore* 10, which I have only recently seen. This may already have been answered. It's on the letter on page 33 from Janet Fisher, who says, "no dogs, cats or pets as such figure in the books." Wrong! Well, she's almost right, but...the genus *Canis* is found in Middle-earth, both in its savage form, as wargs, which she mentions, but also in the domesticated form of the household dog, as the guard-dogs of Farmer Maggot, Grip, Fang, and Wolf. All right, they are pretty fierce too. The genus *Felis* is not found in the wild form of lions and leopards, BUT there is a poem entitled "Cat" in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and other verses from the Red Book* which would indicate that domestic cats were found in the Shire. Of this poem Tolkien says, "No. 12 is also marked SG, though at

most Sam can only have touched up an older piece of the comic bestiary lore of which Hobbits appear to have been fond."

In the illustrations to *Tom Bombadil*, Pauline Baynes draws five dogs in the picture of Farmer Maggot's house, and a cat and lions for the "Cat" poem. Perhaps lions were found in the far south. Don't forget the "tipsy cat" and the dog in Bilbo's poem of the Man in the Moon.

We have just had, in England, a "scare" which reminded me so much of *Prince Caspian*—a number of people claimed to have seen a Lion in the countryside of Nottinghamshire. There were sixty-five separate "sightings" and the police were sent out armed to bring it in. But there were no reported escapes from zoos or safari parks, and they now think that a large Labrador was the partial cause, together with human imagination. This lion had ten days of "mythical existence" and I'm sure that Lewis would have enjoyed the story.

On page 29 of *Mythlore* 12 there is a mention of Reepicheep's Dryad as in inconsistency in the Narnia books. I congratulate Mr. Fleckenstein on his percipience—obviously the prophecy had to be, and so Lewis had to contradict himself. The greatest of all contradictions, of course, and one which Roger Lancelyn Green pointed out, is the existence of Father Christmas and the festival of Christmas in a world which had not yet known the existence of Christ nor of His sacrifice. (R. L. Green refers to this in an article "C. S. Lewis" for the *Puffin Annual* 1974. If you would like to see a copy for the bibliography, I will post you one.)

[I, too, am made uncomfortable with the presence of Father Christmas in Narnia, but would like to point out two things. First, there is a theme running through Lewis's works: that what is to us legendary and mythological, may be reality in another world. Second, Father Christmas is inserted as the good counterpart to the evil White Witch, thus making it obvious that she and Aslan are not equals, avoiding theological dualism. The Narnian cosmos was not completely thought out in Lewis's mind when he wrote *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; no such major incongruities appeared in the later books. —G.G.]

Another inconsistency, which is just an error, occurs on page 120 of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (Bles/Collins). The sailor Rhinee says, "Well, that's three. Only five more." But there were only SEVEN lords, so he should mean "only four more." The paperback edition (Puffin) has already corrected it, and I pointed it out to the editor of Collin's children's books, who said they would alter it in the next printing. It must have been a slip of the pen by Lewis.



Alan Cohen

Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

I would like to clarify some of the points that Mr. Fleckenstein has brought up.

First, concerning the age of Sauron, I would like to state that Middle-earth as we know it (from the Northern Waste to the Haradwaith) was there before Morgoth and Sauron arrived. The men that inhabit Middle-earth were there, but they were not civilized. As to the age of the creatures that lived beneath the delvings of the dwarves, they may have

been there since the world was created. This will show us that Sauron may be a great deal older than Fleckenstein tries to point out, and that he may have been a lesser Vala, perhaps one who was sent there by God. [I believe that The Silmarillion will show that Sauron was a Vala who sided with Morgoth in his revolt, and became subservient to him.

—G.G.] Still, Mr. Fleckenstein may be right in the point that Sauron may have been part of the race of Gandalf and Saruman, but I will try to change his mind about that.

Sauron, being the most mysterious character of *LotR* (with the exception of Gandalf) is not known very well. We know that he is powerful in wizardry and perhaps had the same power of voice that Saruman had. Even still, we cannot judge Sauron's power because we have no clear counterpart for him. As worthy an opponent as Gandalf may be, he does not stand up to Sauron in true power relating to wizardry. Did it not take the whole White Council to drive him out of Mirkwood? Gandalf says that he is not an adversary for Sauron: on page 131 of *The Two Towers* [Ballantine ed.] Gandalf cries, "Dangerous! And so am I, very dangerous: more dangerous than anything you will ever meet, unless you are brought alive before the seat of the Dark Lord."

Tolkien tells us that Gandalf is an angel. What is Sauron? Does not God send evil upon the world to help govern it, to make man pay for his sins? Perhaps Sauron has been sent there (and Morgoth before him) to carry out the work of God in the name of evil. Gandalf tells us that Sauron was just an emissary. Perhaps he was hinting that there will be others.

[In Judeo-Christian theology God does not "send evil upon the world to help govern it." The Old Testament says God "uses the wrath of men to praise Him" and the New Testament refers to "the mystery of iniquity" and warns, "No-one...should say 'I am being tempted by God'; for God is untouched by evil, and does not himself tempt anyone." Evil is a mystery because it is permitted by God to continue to exist. Tolkien stands firmly in this theological tradition in his works. The quote on Sauron being an emissary—"for Sauron is himself but a servant or emissary" (emphasis mine)—becomes clear when we are told elsewhere that Sauron was a servant of Morgoth. Morgoth was a far greater evil figure than Sauron. —G.G.]

L. D. Fleckenstein, Jr. Meridian, Mississippi. U.S.A.

Larry Krieg's extremely extensive and informative treatise, "Setting Silver Against Black" (March '76 *Mythprint*), really spurred me into thought. One of the items in his essay that particularly caught my interest was the comparison of Lucifer/Satan and Melchar/Morgoth as "light bearers." After reading Mr. Krieg's analogy of these two fallen archetypes, I was reminded of a similar case in Norse mythology.

In Scandinavian myth the two personages who come to mind are Balder and Loki (also called Lodur), two principal deities of Asgard. Balder was a sun god (i.e. light bearer?) who is said to be the personification of innocence and beauty. He was loved by all in Asgard (with the exception of Loki) and was held in high worship by all mortals. Being jealous of Balder's radiance and glory, Loki (who is said to have personified sin) aspired to arrange the sun god's murder. Loki did succeed in bringing about Balder's death, and was later imprisoned for doing so by the action of Odin, Thor, and Kvasir. (Interesting is that although it is Loki who bears the guilt and blame for Balder's death, it was by the hand of another god, Hodur the god of darkness, that the sun god was slain. Hodur was later sought out in vengeance and killed by a deity who bears the curious name of Vali!)

The similarity between the cases of Loki and Morgoth is easily seen. Loki's envy of Balder the Light Bearer is closely associative to Melchar's jealousy of the Two Trees of Light and possibly of Eru and the Valar. Furthermore, Morgoth and Loki both committed possibly their principal crime in a place comparable to heaven. Both these crimes had great effect on the metaphysical and possibly the moral structure of their respective cosmic orders. And both deities were ultimately sentenced to exile (in Loki's case the banishment took the form of imprisonment).

Another idea is that perhaps Morgoth is a combination of both Loki and Balder. If what Larry Krieg says is true—that Morgoth (like Satan) may have been a light bearer—then it is possible that before his decadence Morgoth was like

Balder. Melchar's evil side may be a reflection of Loki.

[According to C. S. Kilby, the spelling is Melkor, rather than Melchar. Melkor/Morgoth is very much like Lucifer/Satan in that he was the greatest of God's created intelligences and fell through pride. Balder was always kind and gentle, and was not the chief of the gods. The personalities of Melkor and Balder seem to be very different. —G.G.]

After I had discussed these thoughts with a friend and correspondent of mine, Steven Willow. Mr. Willow pointed out that there are quite a few differences between the lives of Loki and Morgoth, and in their respective worlds. While Loki was forced into incarceration, Morgoth left Middle-earth of his own free will. Maybe so. And Mr. Willow's commentary should not be taken lightly. The first answer to this is that although Morgoth left Middle-earth on his own volition, it is doubtful if he had any other choice. For unless after his fall he became like Saruman (powerless), the Iron Crown would have assuredly arisen again to become the nemesis which it formerly was.

There is another answer which I think even better. Even though, I believe, Tolkien had Loki and Balder in mind when he wrote the saga of Morgoth, it would have been extremely unlike him to make his Middle-earth (or any events in its history) an exact copy of another world. Middle-earth, while providing glimpses at our own mythology (Judeo-Christian, Norse, or otherwise), is still very much its own world and not an imitation of any other. From *Mythlore* 10 I quote Tolkien saying, "It is not 'about' anything but itself." It is here that we find one more example of J. R. R. Tolkien's subtle genius. By not allowing his world (and in a way, it is our world) to be too similar to either pagan or Judeo-Christian myths, "The Master of Middle-earth" is able to keep the story of Melchar associative with the tales of both Loki and Lucifer. In short, by relating occurrences in Middle-earth and the West (on both metaphysical and moral planes) with both Judeo-Christian and Norse myths, Tolkien's universe is able to reflect two entirely different cosmologies without limiting it to either one.

One final bit on Scandinavian mythology before going on to other things. In his letter appearing in the May issue of *Mythprint*, Eric Linder gives us the results of his research into the word *Valar*. He compares it with the Spanish word *vela* (pronounced *vāla*) and the Latin word *vēlāre*, which both resemble in meaning (as well as sound) the Quenya term *vala*. It is thought provoking that there are also two more equivalents in Norse mythology. The first, which I've already mentioned, is the god Vali. The second is just as interesting. While reading *Myths of Northern Lands* by H. A. Guerber, author of *Myths of Greece and Rome*, I learned that a Vala (in Scandinavian myth) is a propheticess. Mind-catching is the fact that a dead (spirit) Vala predicted Balder's untimely death.

Getting on to other things: we finally have an official(?) statement on what the Secret Fire is! I quote from Clyde S. Kilby's latest book on Tolkien (*Tolkien & The Silmarillion*, p. 59): "Professor Tolkien talked to me at some length about the use of the word 'holy' in *The Silmarillion*. Very specifically he told me that the 'Secret Fire sent to burn at the heart of the World' in the beginning was the Holy Spirit."

Jeremy Anderson

Riverside, California, U.S.A.

Mr. Firnen's brief mention of Sauron's use of Power to "make or transform" things brought back a half-answered question of my own: what exactly was the origin and history of the Orc race? For a while it seemed to me that Sauron created this race for his own purposes, but later it was said that "The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don't think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them" (hdcvr III, p. 190). This is clear enough, but it occurs to me that this may be an example of what L. D. Fleckenstein Jr.'s letter (in the same issue, *Mythlore* 13) alluded to; perhaps Sauron *did* create this evil, the mockery of it being that the Dark Lord did it through his slavery to his own hatred and spite rather than as an act of pure free will (as were the acts of the Elves).

The same question applies to the origin of the trolls (check hdcvr II, p. 89).

Any ideas?

[Morgoth bred the orcs and the trolls in mockery and imitation of the elves and ents respectively. It is not clear to me whether he used captive elves and ents as the breeding stock, or used other creatures. —G.G.]

Michael D. Wiele

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

There are several things I would like to comment on. The first is the matter of whether Middle-earth was actually changed from a flat surface to a sphere? There have been several letters on this topic. All of these say that they do not believe that this is possible. It is stated in *Mythprint* 13:3, page 4: "I'll just point out that Christopher Tolkien confirmed to Glen GoodKnight...what many have speculated: that before the founding of Númenor Tolkien's world of Enchantment was flat; after that it assumed its spherical shape." That statement is enough to completely convince me that Middle-earth was in fact changed from a flat world to a sphere. It seems only logical to expect that Eru, being equivalent to God, would be able to do everything and anything that he wants to. Just because we cannot understand or explain something is no reason to deny it.

[While reading the handwritten originals of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* at Marquette University, I found this reference at the end of the first draft of *The Return of the King*: "...the ship of Master Elrond took the Straight Road and bore him away...then the seas of the Bent World and the Wind of a Round Sky fell away below them, and they passed into the ancient West..." (The capital letters are Tolkien's, not mine). This ending was marked out and a longer ending was added, as we have it in the published work. The fact that it was crossed out, does not prove at all that Tolkien rejected the idea, but rather because it may have been too direct for something so numinous to him. I think this should settle the matter. —G.G.]

The second is the matter of how Gollum got out of Moria. Margaret Howes gave a good explanation in the April '76 issue of *Mythprint*, but there is, I believe, one flaw in it. It states in *The Fellowship*, Book II, Chapter 5, at the end of the chapter, that "There was a guard of orcs crouching in the shadows behind the great door-posts towering on either side, but the gates were shattered and cast down." While the encounter between these orcs and the Fellowship was very short, the orcs were there, and Gollum could not have escaped from them. While it is possible that they were stationed there during the short period between the supposed passage of Gollum and the passage of the Company, considering that the orcs were a warlike race in a time when war was near at hand, coupled with the fact that intruders were in

their midst, wouldn't it seem logical to suppose that the orcs would have a guard posted at the exit? Besides, in both *The Hobbit* and *LotR*, orcs had guards posted at all gates. Could anyone offer any new theories as to how Gollum got out of Moria?

Finally, I would like to comment on Rebecca Hoffman's letter in the May '76 *Mythprint*. I do not quite share her opinion on how terrible it would be to have *LotR* filmed. It would be interesting to see the film. Rebecca says it will be a disaster. It will, but only to the few really devoted Tolkien fans. In answer to her question "How?", it will of course be warped and twisted to the point where it is hardly recognizable. It is this factor that really upsets me. *LotR*, a magnificent piece of literature, will be transformed into your average blood-and-gore disaster movie. That really horrifies me.

Joel Griffith

Sterling, Illinois, U.S.A.

Just recently I have read a parody of the wonderful *Lord of the Rings*. This parody was written by a couple of people on the staff of the *Harvard Lampoon*. When I read the parody I was filled with anger. Those buffoons who wrote it turned a beautiful, meaningful, enlightening novel into an obscene, sick, revolting nightmare. They twisted the characters, turned the plot around, took the very nature of the characters and dragged them through the gutter. They turned Galadriel into a whore, the four hobbits into rough, incorrigible idiots, made Gandalf look like a fool, and did the same to Aragorn. They turned the whole book into a *Playboy Magazine* and ruined the goodness of it.

I am writing to ask the Mythopoeic Society to take an avenging stance on that and remove that piece of trash from the market, as it deserves. Please write the authors, file suit, inform Tolkien's children, or something! They had no right to maul the book the way they did. Only read it and you will agree. It's called *Bored of the Rings*.

[*Harvard Lampoon's Bored of the Rings* appeared in 1969 and caused some small controversy then. Since then it has become a Tolkien related oddity of rather small moment. Most Tolkien admirers do not take it seriously (surely it was not written to be taken so!). I see it more of a parody of American TV commercials and pop culture than of *The Lord of the Rings*. When I heard it was going to appear I feared some real harm would be done, but in retrospect it seems Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* have weathered this tempest in a teacup exceedin' well. —G.G.]

Eileen F. Doser

San Luis Obispo, California, U.S.A.

It's beautiful! It's lovely! It's the cover of *Mythlore* 13! It is not precisely how I had perceived Arwen, but then how I perceive almost all the persons in *The Lord of the Rings* has never been hit right on the button. I really love black on white artwork, and this is a beautiful work in that vein. Another work along these lines is the cover of *Mythprint* January 1974.

As for what happens to an elf who dies, I would think whatever happens to mortals when they die would also happen to elves. On the subject of orcs, from what I gather from Appendix F, I would think that Tolkien intended that the orcs were soulless beings, and as such would just die. What is more of interest is whether in Middle-earth there is a heaven-purgatory-hell system for the humans. There is never a mention of what happens to the evil humans. If I lived then, I would be most concerned about that. (Actually, as an agnostic I would not be, but it makes good copy to say so.)

[Aragorn tells Arwen, "in sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory...." It remains an open question as to the fate of dead elves (since Aragorn said this to Arwen after she had made the choice to share with him human death). From talking with Christopher Tolkien, I understand his father was troubled with these questions and spent considerable time trying to work out a satisfactory explanation. —G.G.]

I don't think that smoking had anything to do with the hobbits' size. Remember that Aragorn and Gandalf smoked, and they weren't all. Don't forget that the hobbits smoked pipes, and pipes are not as harmful as good old cigarettes.



One thing that I would really like to see is a graphic story version of either *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*. Not in the "regular" Comic Book format, but more along the lines of a black-and-white magazine or one of the "treasury sized" books, or even something along the lines of the "Fiction Illustrated" books. I would just love to see what Barry Smith, Frank Brunner, or Berni Wrightson could do with the material. I especially would like to see a Wrightson orc.

If I go mad before next Fall, it will be because the waiting for *The Silmarillion* got to me. So have pity....

Steven Chan Waltham, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

I very much enjoyed issue number eleven of *Mythlore*. However, I noticed on page 24 in the book review on *The Not-World* by Thomas Burnett Swann that Ed Chapman, the reviewer, comments that,

Today...nearly all the virile writing...is being done by women: Evangeline Walton, Joy Chant, Katherine Kurtz, Mary Stewart.... The male mythmakers seem to be in retreat or other fields.

I would tend to refute this statement because I think that Roger Zelazny with his *Lord of Light*, *Nine Princes in Amber*, and *The Guns of Avalon*; Michael Moorcock with his *The Jewel in The Skull*, *The Sleeping Sorceress*, and many other books; and the number of books by Lloyd Alexander are all relatively recent and excellent pieces of writing. Another thing that puzzles me about that statement—Evangeline Walton's four books based on *The Mabinogion* were written more than thirty years ago. Has she come out with any new writings recently?

[The fourth book, *Prince of Annwn*, was not written thirty years ago with the first two, but after *The Island of the Mighty* was printed in paperback a few years ago. She is now doing research in Greek mythology, and plans to write fiction based on this mythos. —G.G.]

Thomas P. Allhoff San Diego, California, U.S.A.

I came across a passage I was unable to understand. On page 157, paragraph 2, of *The Fellowship of the Ring* (HM) Tom Bombadil says: "Here is a pretty toy for Tom and for his lady! Fair was she who long ago wore this on her shoulder. Goldberry shall wear it now, and we will not forget her!"

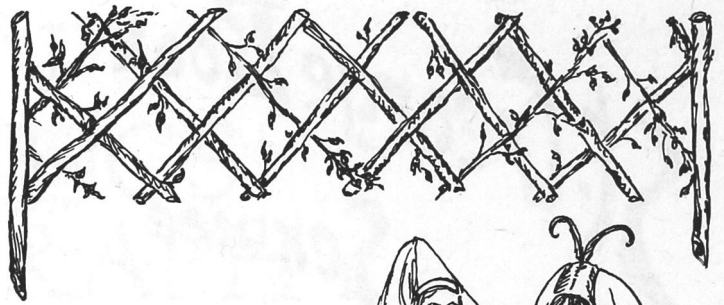
I have read most of Tolkien's books and papers and have been unable to find out more about this character. I would greatly appreciate any help you could give me in this area.

Owen Barfield Kent, England

There were a number of things I liked very well in *Mythlore* 12, and I am particularly grateful for the excellent photo (the second one) of Harwood. By the way, the "quarrel" with me with which Mrs. Lindskoog begins her article strikes me as misconceived. She quotes me as saying he was a misogynist "on the theoretical level" (a remark by the way dropped off the cuff in an endeavor to reply without insincerity to a question thrown at me without preparation) and then spends the rest of the article demonstrating very satisfactorily that he was not one on the practical level!

Kevin Keach St. Charles, Missouri, U.S.A.

Re: Joe Finieno's letter about how Sauron fed his vast armies. This passage does not describe the whole area of Mordor itself, just the Morgai, "the inner ring of fences of the land." The whole land of Mordor was not the bleak, dying scene that Frodo and Sam traversed. Some regions were comparatively greener.



Quoits

Tolkien himself give us an answer to this. Sam asks Frodo about food and water in Mordor, because they have seen so many Men encamped in Mordor itself. Tolkien tells us:

Neither he [Sam] nor Frodo knew anything of the great slave-worked fields away south in this wide realm, beyond the fumes of the Mountain by the dark sad waters of Lake Núrnen; nor of the great roads that ran away east and south to tributary lands, from which the soldiers of the Tower brought long waggon-trains of goods and booty and fresh slaves. Here in the northward regions were the mines and forges....

And after victory is won, King Elessar gives to the slaves of Sauron the lands around Lake Núrnen. So I believe that Mordor probably produced enough food for its own inhabitants.

But of Harad and Rhûn would be a different story. I would agree that they were a wild, wandering people who knew little of agriculture, witness the "Wainriders." This very issue of food and land was probably why Sauron could so easily stir up the Easterlings and Southrons. Gondor was able, though at great cost to themselves, to almost completely annihilate both of these tribes many times, and yet they always came back for more.

I would theorize that each time that the wild men would grow too much in population, running out of good land and growing short of food, they would somehow have to expand. They would be easy prey for Sauron to seduce, telling them to look at the richness of Gondor and how easily it might be taken. This has happened many times in history. The shortage of land and food is one of the main causes of war.

Now I would like to ask a question myself. Has anyone else noticed any references to *LotR* in the lyrics of the rock group Led Zeppelin. In the song "Ramble On" there is a line "...In the darkest depths of Mordor, ... but gollum, the evil one crept up, and slipped away with her." In another song called "The Battle of Evermore" there are many references to *LotR*. Two of the best are "The Ringwraiths are out in black," and "the tyrants face is red." And in their classic, "Stairway to Heaven," it seems to me that the lady they are talking about is Galadriel herself. "There's a feeling I get, when I look to the West, and my spirit is crying for leaving, and your stairway lies on the whispering wind." Any comments would be appreciated.

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