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Abstract

The Shores of Middle-earth. Robert Giddings and Elizabeth Holland. Reviewed by Nils Ivar Agøy.

SEVEN (March, 1982), Volume 3. Dr. Barbara Reynolds, Dr. Clyde S. Kilby, and Dr. Beatrice Batson. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

THE DARK CRYSTAL. Directed by Jim Henson and Frank Oz. Screenplay by David Odell. Story by Jim Henson. Conceptual Designer, Brian Froud. Reviewed by Benjamin Urrutia.

The World of the Dark Crystal. Illustrated by Brian Froud. Text by J.J. Llewellyn. Designed and Edited by Rupert Brown. Reviewed by Benjamin Urrutia.

The Tale of the Dark Crystal. Text by Donna Bass. Illustrated by Bruce McNally. Reviewed by Benjamin Urrutia.

The Dark Crystal. Novelization by A.C.H. Smith. Reviewed by Benjamin Urrutia.

Dragonslayer. Hal Barwoods and Matthew Robbins. Reviewed by Jessica Yates.

C.S. Lewis: Mere Christian. Kathryn Lirdskoog. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

A Day in Narnia. Paul Ford. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

Additional Keywords

Patrick Wynne; Sarah Beach; Ataniel Noel; Diana Paxson; Tony Patrick



The Degradation of "IS"

Robert Giddings and Elizabeth Holland, The Shores of Middle-earth (Junction Books, 1981).

Review Editor's Note: This review, contrary to the usual practice of Mythlore, is reprinted with minor changes from the Norwegian English-language amateur publication Outbreak (No. 5): it was submitted by its author, who commented, "My only excuse--except laziness--must be that the book doesn't seem to have made any significant impression on your side of the Atlantic yet."

A strange title for a review but this is a strange review, and the book discussed is a strange book. It is without doubt the most controversial volume of Tolkien criticism to date. I freely admit that it is also a book that made me boil inwardly. Sometimes while reading it I just had to get up and walk around a little, steaming with righteous indignation and wanted very strongly to kick something. It should be noted that this review is more a general impression than a detailed discussion.

What SoMe propounds is not so much a consistent theory as a particular way of viewing Tolkien's books; this, however, can be said to rest upon a group of central beliefs. Some of the more important of these are:

- I) Nobody has really understood what LotR is all about before Holland and Giddings. The book has been seen as something quite different from what it really is. Tolkien "has been overpraised for a kind of book he did not intend to write, and the real nature of his work has hardly been recognized." (p. 3) ". . . LotR has consistently been seriously misinterpreted . . ." (p. 147)
- II) The common belief that LotR is mainly based on "Northwestern" mythology (Germanic, Celtic, Norse etc.) and that it is in any way "Northern" or "European" is sheer bosh!
- III) What LotR really is based on, to the extent that it is more or less a re-telling of these, are three popular modern adventure-stories, i.e. Haggard's King Solomon's Mines, Blackmore's Lorna Doone and Buchan's The Thirty-Nine Steps. However, Tolkien also draws heavily on sources like Shakespeare's Henry V, Seton's Krag the Kootenay Ram, Milton's Paradise Lost, Haggard's Allen Quartermain, Tennyson's version of the Arthurian stories, Grahame's Wind in the Willows and some other books. According to Holland and Giddings, the agreement is so thorough that a remark like "Tolkien's narrative now diverges from the story" (p. 93) is fully justified. We must understand that Tolkien's dependence upon

his sources is total: every last detail in LotR is based upon something else, nothing is to be taken at face value. Also, (p. 24), "Tolkien's use of the source books was conscious throughout."

- IV) The notion that Middle-earth is placed in Western Europe and that its history grew out of Tolkien's invented language is nonsense. To believe that a serious and accomplished linguist like Tolkien would have spent time and effort on invented languages and invented mythology after adolescence is only ridiculous. The languages, geography and mythology are of course real. Why, Middle-earth is consciously based on the Middle-East, with Thrace as the Shire and the ancient Bulgars as hobbits. "The Greeks spelled the name of Thrace with a kappa . . . but in the spelling Thracia . . . we get the suggestion of the relevant pronunciation: Thra-shia/the Shire" (p. 247). Even the Riders of Rohan have their roots in the Middle-East rather than among the Anglo-Saxons. And that "As nazg, the One Ring, is Ashpenaz, the Babylonian master of the eunuchs, in the Book of Daniel" should be obvious to all. (p. 159) Incidentally, this is "a fine comment on the Ring-wraiths, who appear to have lost their virility along with their will-power."
- V) To say the LotR is a Christian work is true only in a very restricted sense. Tolkien recognized the value of Oriental and Persian religions and used material from them consciously and deliberately. Indeed, his cover-illustration is really based on a traditional rendering of the Hindu god Siva (as can be seen at a glance). The connection between LotR and various Eastern religions is elaborated over some fifty pages, with lots of examples.
- VI) LotR was not primarily written to entertain. That Tolkien managed to shape his material so that it was attractive to a large public is only a sign of his genius. LotR is a deadly serious book, fundamentally the author's (religious?) self-expression (H & G are not particularly clear at this point, but I think that is what they mean). A third and final aspect of the book is the humorous; lots and lots of puns and hidden jests, especially in relation to the source books. According to H & G there is much sexual material in the book. Particularly there is much phallic imagery. Both the cover design mentioned above and the illustrations of the Gates of Moria are first and foremost phallic; i.e. that is the most important thing about them. Not only the illustrations, but "The script, the Tengwar, is also a phallic design. It is a satire on the handwriting of the MSS. of the Lindisfarne Gospels, known as insular half-uncial. It is a

play on the words Lyndes Farand: "splendid loins." (p. 166) "The script is used on the Gate of Moria. In the arch of semen, it is written so as to appear as spermatozoa . . ." (p. 177). And so on. (The text sometimes borders on the obscene.)

This was not meant to be a complete presentation of Holland's and Gidding's views, but I hope I have included the most important of their underlying thoughts. These are not set forth systematically in the book, so some points are treated several times. The book could have done with a little more editing. However, roughly one can say that the first part is about the source-books, the middle part about the "Indo-European Connection," while the final part is mainly religious.

To be able to maintain the views listed above, it has been necessary for the authors to ignore not only what previous Tolkien-critics have arrived at, but also what Tolkien himself said about his books. What Tolkien wrote or said about LotR is irrelevant, say H & G. The book speaks for itself, and if Tolkien wishes to conceal the truth, that is his business. Even if Tolkien said repeatedly and forcefully that he hated the Byzantine world and setting, it doesn't matter. Middle-earth is the Middle-East nevertheless, say Holland and Giddings. When Tolkien says that his book was Christian and that it was founded on his own invented languages and the mythologies of Western Europe, he is just being ridiculous. Say Holland and Giddings. When Tolkien took inquiries into Middle-earth lore seriously, he was just playing the enquirers along, the stupid asses, say Holland and Giddings. Anybody who doesn't immediately understand that Bree is Berea, that Buckland is Buchan-land and that Lothlorien is composed of Lost Leirion (leirios equals lily in Greek) is a fool, say Holland and Giddings. Or so it would seem. It is this smothering, almost intolerable air of superiority, haughtiness and Besserwissen that is the most irritating feature of the book. "You mean you really hadn't noticed that Sauron is Sir Ensor Doone (scoff, scoff)?" the authors seem to say. This

is all the harder to swallow as their "proofs" are by no means obvious, as I hope some of the examples have shown. A very characteristic trait of the book is the tendency to regard identity as a necessary concomitant of superficial similarity. If a person in LotR is stabbed, you may be reasonably sure that H & G will present that person as being identical with each and every other stabbed person in all the "source-books" and in all of Indo-European mythology. No created character can be himself, oh no, he has to be somebody else. A few examples should clarify this "degradation of is": ". . . the Black King of the Ring-wraiths. He heads the file of marching soldiers on his great black horse, in the person of a Haggard Rider . . . As he is a Haggard king, the Lord of the Nine Riders is personifying, yet again, the malevolent spirit of Ignosi . . . He is at the same time Basil II of Constantinople, whose name Basil-ikos, cobra . . . Also . . . he is Arthur, seen for the last time by Guinevere" (pp. 114-115)

"Most of the leaders of the West have their turn to play John Ridd. They play him in unison in facing Sauron/Counsellor, they play him going into battle with the Mordor/Doones, Eomer, Aragorn, and Faramir all play him in this story from "Blood on the Altar." Frodo, and Sam, play him on the Dead Marches/Serjemoor, and in his entry into the perilous dark passage to Mordor/the Doone Valley. They are all John Ridd, that is they are all St. George in his battle with the Dragon, which is what John Ridd really is (as he is also Theseus, and Mithras the mighty wrestler who fells the beast). Meanwhile the chief ladies of the West all play Lorna Doone" (p. 122).

"But Shelob is an image of the False City; her name, as well as suggesting Sheol, signifies the reversal of the Covenant which binds the True City, Elisheba the Oath of God. She is Cerberus at the Gates of Hades; Sam is now Orpheus (as Gabriel the singing angel) and Frodo, Aeneas." (p. 199)

Often Holland and Giddings revert into what is, to me, nonsense: "Smeagol also means 'It's Me that's Gagool,' on the principle of elision," ". . . the Swertings. This is taken from the Norse tribe the Svertlings. It is also "Swing Curtis," without a C because Tolkien thinks there is nothing of Christ in Curtis." (p. 181)

"As Meriadoc and Pippin son of Paladin, they are together an apparition of the figure who appears in the Old Testament—Merodach-Baladan, son of Baladan king of Babylon." (p. 194)

Examples of this sort riddle the book. The ones quoted here are not carefully selected, but rather the first I found in a short time. To establish connection, if not identity, between two persons or places or whatever, it is often enough for Holland and Giddings that two or more letters are the same. That the alphabet only has so many letters, so that they have to crop up every so often, is a circumstance of negligible interest to them, or so it seems. Another thing is that they think that sheer massing of "evidence" of this sort in some way strengthens their argument; they do not consider that if criteria are defined so that they are easy to fulfill, one can amass evidence for anything, but the evidence is not therefore necessarily valuable. In this reviewer's opinion, 99% of the pair's "evidence" is worthless. Worse than that, it is not even convincing. It demands a sacrificium intellectus, and why, ask I, is it



necessary to seek out highly improbable explanations when plausible, even obvious ones are already there—and supported by the authors. Sometimes the notions supported by H & G are downright grotesque, as when they claim that Tolkien, the devout, highly orthodox Roman Catholic, for whom religion was not a habit, but the fundament of his daily life, would consciously have used, or even thought of using, the ideas, even the idols (to him) of oriental religions. Religions may be the vessels of mythology to Holland and Giddings, but when they assume that they could have been that to Tolkien—or to any Christian—they only show their lack of understanding. Which makes their dogmatic attitude all the more irritating. This is in one way sad, for while the book as it now stands is to my mind worse than worthless, some of the arguments are valid. It probably cannot be denied that Edwardian literature of the Haggard-Buchan kind did influence Tolkien, as Jared Lobdell elaborates in his new book England and Always, but absolutely not in the way H & G say.

It should be observed that the authors, to defend their theory of "source-books" have been compelled to shift from one source to another constantly. "This passage from LotR echoes Henry V, while further down the page we are clearly back in Lorna Doone." With this method, and the criteria H & G use for claiming "parallels" it should not be difficult to "prove" that any given book is based upon any other three. Consistent misinterpretation, indeed!

The Shores of Middle-earth was, unfortunately, published before Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien. Needless to say, the letters are invaluable in evaluating Tolkien's literary creations. Almost as needless to say, Tolkien in his letters contradicts Holland and Giddings on almost every point, and their position has been made that much less defensible. This, however, does not make H & G change their minds or revise their theories. Elizabeth Holland's comment on Letters is simply that Tolkien mostly is talking nonsense, and that's that. Personally I find it strange that there are actually some who are willing to listen to the pair. Can it be because they both are "scholars" ((?-G.G.)) or because it is tempting to say that everybody else is wrong? It has been suggested that the whole phenomenon is a giant hoax, a case of the "Emperor's New Clothes," but as the months go by that seems less and less likely. Personally, I don't think this can be the case. Who can tell? At any rate, The New Tolkien Newsletter is still appearing, though Mr. Giddings has retired as co-editor, and there the same fundamental beliefs are still expounded.

A few hard facts about Shores before I stop. The book has 289 pages, an index and many notes. There is one illustration, a photograph of a statuette depicting Siva, so that the readers can be dumbstruck by the resemblance to the LotR cover design (the Eye).

My conclusion is this: if you want to know more about Tolkien and LotR, you should not waste time on this book. As Tolkien criticism it is completely worthless. If, on the other hand, you are interested in the evolution of Tolkien criticism, or you have a very good sense of humor and want a good laugh, the time is well spent. But be warned, if you do not have a sense of humour, the book will probably irritate you more than you would have thought possible.

Nils Ivar Agøy



The Passionate Intellect

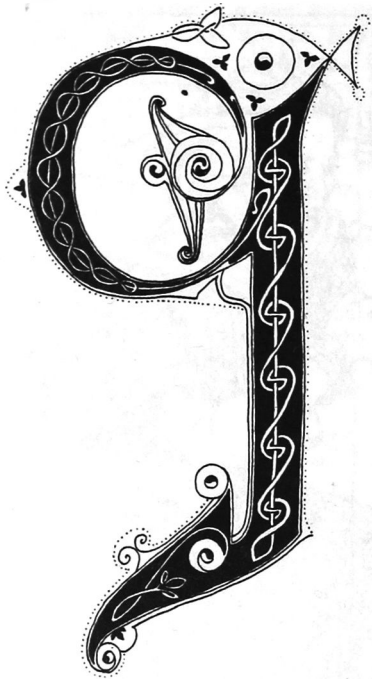
SEVEN (March, 1982), Volume 3 (Wheaton, Illinois: Wheaton College, 1982), 134 pp.

In a dramatization of the tale of "The Emperor's New Clothes," my late daughter Jennifer played the role of the boy who recognized that the Emperor was, in fact, nude. I am reminded by this that those who use the tale as a metaphor by which to ridicule the ideas of their antagonists thereby cast themselves in the role of the child. To the innocent eye of this onlooker in Anderson's tale, the efforts of the false tailors, the pretensions of the Emperor, and the credulity of the other onlookers are equally transparent. The dialectical structure of the story—the false tailors versus the fooled Emperor—is synthesized by the child, who turns both falsity and folly into truth.

This structure does not exist in a debate like the one set forth in Volume 3 of SEVEN. Both parties—all parties--involved are engaged in defending their opposed positions. As onlookers we can take sides but we are prevented, in the context of the debate, from stepping outside the parade to the edge of the road, where the child stands, and observing the event with an innocent eye. Resolution, synthesis, and a most exquisite and absolute refutation are, however, provided. Before describing the method by which this is achieved, I must go back to the beginning of the parade.

In Volume 2 of SEVEN, Richard Webster in an essay "The Emperor Clothed and in his Right Mind?" addressed himself to Kathleen Nott's book, The Emperor's Clothes (1953). Coincidentally (since he does not refer to it)





the biography by James Brabazon, Dorothy L. Sayers, The Life of a Courageous Woman (London: Gollancz, 1981) was published. One of its most notable features was an examination of Nott's public attack on Sayers et al, and a private attack, by John Wren-Lewis, which took place in the context of a Maundy Thursday meeting of the Society of St. Anne at St. Thomas Church, Regent Street, in 1954. Wren-Lewis' attack represented a more painful thrust, Brabazon wrote, because it came from within the Church. Sayers wrote a strong reply on Good Friday, of which Brabazon reproduced a portion. These events were followed by a debate sponsored by St. Anne's House which was to have featured "Dorothy and C.S. Lewis on one side and Kathleen Nott on the other" (Brabazon, 1981, p. 265). Brabazon notes that "The debate was a good deal dampened by the fact that two out of the three debaters failed to appear." The two were Lewis and Nott, who says that she did not attend because T.S. Eliot was not there. How do I know? Because she says so in Volume 3 of SEVEN.

In that volume, these battles (public and private) have been re-joined in a series of items which, read together with Webster's article and the passages in Brabazon's biography of Sayers, provide one of the most elegant printed conversations it has even been my privilege to read. First is an article by a writer who may be the most distinguished orthodox theologian of Anglicanism, E.L. Mascall: "What Happened to Dorothy L. Sayers' 'That Good Friday?'" Mascall, with Anthony Fleming's permission, has examined the complete text of Sayer's Good Friday letter to Wren-Lewis, and provides not only a summary, but still more quotations from it. These would be well worth reading even without Mascall's remarks but with his illuminating and authoritative essay the Sayers/Wren-Lewis debate becomes vividly clear.

In proper detectival fashion the events are described and the conclusion reached: "I am forced to the conclusion," Mascall says, "that Mr. Brabazon has radically misunderstood what happened to Dorothy on that Good Friday in 1954." (p. 15) The arguments upon which this conclusion is based comprise the article, which must become (at least until Sayers' letter to Wren-Lewis is published in its entirety, and probably,

because of its interpretive force, thereafter) an essential source for Sayers studies.

So much for the private attack. In the case of the public attack, there is even more. First of all, Kathleen Nott is allowed, with utmost courtesy, to reply in full voice to Webster's article, in "The Emperor's Clothes Invisible? An Open Letter to Richard Webster." This essay is a point-by-point refutation, with a mea culpa or two, of Webster's article. Its most important sentence is this: "I do not believe that there are two or more 'domains' of equal truth value: and you, Mr. Webster, for all your painstaking and indeed courteous endeavors have not persuaded me to the contrary." (p. 33) The "domains" are those of theology and science, and Nott does not mean to say that she believes the two co-exist, but are of unequal value. Rather, she believes that there is but one domain and science fits its title as well as may be. Theology, for her, cannot exist, since theology is the "science of God," and as there is no God, there can be no science of God. Or at least, in a nutshell, this seems to me to be her argument. As her chief objection to Lewis, Sayers, and her other betes noires is that they assume a priori what they set out to prove (the existence of God), it is no wonder that she is so offended: Jung tells us that we always dislike most in others what we possess most forcefully (if unknown to us) in ourselves.

Another of my daughters, Francesca, who is a student of Zoology at the University of Toronto, heard me discuss these matters and remarked that one cannot, as with the scientific method, propose a "null hypothesis" in regards to God, for God is prior, both transcendent to and immanent in all observable phenomena. It is impossible for a contingent entity (including the mind) to stand apart in this matter, however many other mysteries may be unlocked by alternative hypotheses submitted to experiment and other applications of the scientific method. Francesca is the daughter and grand-daughter of academics with scientific training, but I quote her as an innocent commentator, since she has not read any of the articles but merely volunteered her remarks as an onlooker.

To continue, in Volume 3 of SEVEN, Sayers too is allowed to reply fully, to Nott's book. Her article, here titled "The Dogma in the Manger," is the third of her essays to be published in SEVEN, and is the only primary work printed in Volume 3 (contrary to the previous volumes, each of which featured not only a primary work by Sayers, but by Barfield as well). Of her works so far published in this setting, "The Dogma in the Manger" is by far the most important. It is a fist-sized nugget of purest gold and add measurably to the Sayers canon. She begins by refuting Nott's dictum about the non-existence of the two domains out of Nott's own mouth, and proceeds step by vigorous step to her conclusion, where with characteristic panache she quotes from Shakespeare, Ovid, and Nott again in a single paragraph: her debt to Nott is the apparently jocular, but indeed profoundly revelatory phrase which the editors have chosen to entitle this essay. Everybody who writes about Sayers in future will need (and now, thanks to SEVEN be able) to read this rich little work. Some may wish to refer to Nott's "Notes Towards a Reply," which the editors, ever gracious, have placed so as to give her the last word. This word is that "I do not claim that there is an absolute and final 'truth' in anything." (p. 48)

Now for the "resolution, sythesis, and . . . refutation" which I promised above and presaged by two

unabashed references to onlooking children offered to the indulgence of the reader above. I have referred to the editors who have so exquisitely footnoted and entitled Sayer's essay on "The Dogma in the Manger." The collection of essays I have so far described is discussed in an Editorial (pp. 1-2) which is signed by Beatrice Batson, Clyde S. Kilby, and Barbara Reynolds. To one or all of them goes the credit for the stunning placement, immediately following this imperial-sartorial debate, of another essay, seemingly but not at all unrelated to those which go before it.

This is D.J. Taylor's "Meaning and The Mind of the Maker." Written in response to Owen Barfield's article, "The Nature of Meaning" published in Volume 2 of SEVEN and "three books by Dorothy L. Sayers" (p. 49), it focusses "the life-giving heat of Christian tradition" upon his own "modern world of communications engineering, physiological psychology, computing and mathematics" (p. 49)—Taylor, you see, is a scientist. His domain (pace Nott) is "the role of categorization in the foundation and communication of science." (p. 4) As such, he applies Sayer's insight that human creativity follows the same trinitarian pattern as is followed by the Divine Maker, to "the 'mind' of a computer." (p. 2)

This article, set at the cutting edge of science, theology, and literature, is a dazzling exercise in model-making, the crystalline product of a mind as "modern" as today's technology. It is therefore entirely Christian (Christ being the same today, yesterday, and forever). Just by existing, it refutes Nott. With the perfect innocence of an onlooking child, it unclothes and exposes falsity and folly alike. Nice editing, editors!

The riches of these Sayers-centered essays might, in some other setting, outshine the rest of the volume. But not here. Not in this company. MacDonald, Chesterton, Williams, Lewis, and Barfield are the subjects, and the authors do them justice in varying degrees. The slightest essay is "George MacDonald and the World of Faery" by Marion Locheed. She draws upon her knowledge of Scottish fairy lore and literature to place MacDonald's works in their setting: "The mystery and grandeur of MacDonald's tales are at times overwhelming. He realized to the full his Celtic heritage and illumined it with holiness." (p. 71) Her most striking assertion is that MacDonald exhibits "a devotion to the Virgin Mary" in the "creation of such mother-figures as North Wind, the Queen Grandmother, Mara of the Sorrows and Lona, one of the Little People." (p. 71) The brevity of this survey treatment perhaps diminishes its impact but Locheed's intuitive judgements are nonetheless interesting and useful.

A stronger essay, because of its carefully structured treatment of the development of Chesterton's ideas, is "G.K. Chesterton and the Myth-Making Power" by Leo A. Hetzler. Chesterton's witty intuition parallels Jung's discovery and draws upon MacDonald's image of the goblins in the cellars and the divinity in the attics of the human psych, and Hetzler makes use of several examples of little-known juvenalia from Chesterton's pen which show his dawning genius. Finally, "For Chesterton there came a time when pessimism with its inevitability, optimism with its illusion, and duality with its relativity were answered . . ." in "his recognition of the divinity of Christ . . ." (p. 81) This essay also includes a very fine little critique of Joseph Campbell, of use to the many who try to use Campbell's ideas on myth in discussing the Christian myth-makers.

B.L. Horne's essay, "Known in a Different Kind: A Comment on the Literary Criticism of Charles Williams" discusses Williams as "the Critic as Teacher." (p. 83) A number of seldom-used works are discussed tellingly and fairly, and The English Poetic Mind is specially praised. Horne states that Williams believed that poetry "could, and should, alter and shape one's apprehension of the everyday world, but it did not have a kind of ultimate authority: if it tested one's beliefs, it too must be tested by one's beliefs." (p. 91) This essay, balanced and serene in its treatment, manages to contain but by no means diminish the furnace-blaze of Williams' intellect.

Possibly the most perfectly satisfying of the many fine secondary essays in this volume is Michael Murrin's "The Dialectic of Multiple Worlds: An Analysis of C.S. Lewis' Narnia Stories." Murrin begins by stating (and goes on to prove) that "In the Narnia Series C.S. Lewis developed an elaborate cosmological dialectic." (p. 93) In this process, Lewis "used the dialogues of Plato and the tradition of the art fairy tale, initiated by the German romantics," Murrin says. The origins of the fantasies of the late nineteenth and the early to middle twentieth centuries must be sought in these German works (which influenced both MacDonald and Morris), in the same way that the Pre-Raphaelites contain echoes of the German Romantic painters. Recognition of these sources of British Romantic art and literature, perhaps suppressed because of World War II, are gradually re-surfacing in essays and exhibitions which restore these essential sources to their proper position. Interestingly, though Volume 3 of SEVEN contains no essay on Tolkien (the seventh of the authors) he is mentioned copiously in Murrin's essay.





"The Lady of Light"

The emphasis, however, is neither on Lewis' sources nor on Tolkien, but on an extremely useful and stimulating analysis of the four devices by which movements occur between the simultaneous worlds of Lewis' Narnian cosmos. These are "The Door," "The Picture," "The Railroad Station," and "The Wood Between the Worlds." Each of these motifs is made to yield remarkable new understandings of the riches of Lewis' Narnian creation. In this essay the artistic and philosophical importance of the Chronicles receive their full due. In his final section, "Why We Go Between," Murrin contrasts Lewis with David Lindsay and the German Romantic Tieck and points out the moral dimension which distinguishes and immeasurably enhances Lewis' works. It is this moral dimension which the multiple and interlocking worlds of Lewis' work exhibit and express: "Lewis differs from Plato in degree more than in kind. Plato uses myth to control dialectic to preserve its value. Lewis stresses the myth but uses dialectic to preserve its value." (p. 111) This splendid essay can read in concert with the insights of the anthropologist Victor Turner's understanding of liminality. The Threshold, the picture-frame, the railway station, the Wood Between the Worlds: these are limina, places between, in which all dimensions interlock and from which all categories derive their meanings.

The final essay in this rich volume is Patrick Grant's "The Quality of Thinking: Owen Barfield as Literary Man and Anthroposophist." The essay delicately dissects the methods by which Barfield follows and yet distances his mentor, Rudolf Steiner. The awkwardness of having an occultist guide is avoided by leaving out references to the Akashic records, by dressing the teacher in the robes of the fictional Meggid. Barfield's thesis of the evolution of consciousness seems to me impossible to discuss in any terms which recognize twentieth century anthropology.

Is it really consciousness—the consciousness of the human race—which has evolved? Are the Tasaday in their Philippine cavern, and the Shavante in their Amazonian forest, aware that their consciousness has evolved and the genial (or malignant) spirits have withdrawn to their own minds? Or does Barfield mean (in anthropological terms) "evolution of culture?" There are many cultures in today's world. Some struggle to become entirely secular. Others still find spirit in what Western culture calls the physical world.

Does Barfield mean that the brain itself has evolved in short jumps between the last few centuries (I am aware of psychological speculation about this possibility)? Does he know of the many millions of years of evolution of the human psyche, in the context of which, Cro-Magnon Humankind is as modern as we are? Does he postulate some Lamarckian response to the crises of the Western world which has really caused the potential intellects of unborn babies to shift in their foetal envelopes (not to say their genetic programs) to some new configuration? One assumes not. What then does he mean? Patrick Grant does not, and does not intend to, tell us. Quite rather, he deftly delineates the very large element of occult thought in the man he calls "Steiner's most discerning disciple." Barfield's writings offer an excellent example of the domains in operation. He does not write as a scientist but as a most gifted commentator on aspects of Western culture and psychological-spiritual traits. It is not necessary for him to be "right," even about his own subject. His truth is the truth of occult speculation, which is a kind of poetry, a kind of art. Patrick Grant says that Barfield's distinctive quality is "a most teasing deficiency combined with a most provocative suggestion . . . Such deficiency, we might reflect, is an inherent characteristic of the beautiful: That in which we delight, but which draws us on." This pronouncement would well describe a Japanese sumi-e painting. It might even describe a Japanese silicon-based computer: in its miracle of miniaturization and economy of means, this too is a work of art. It's all in Plato, all in Sayers, all in Taylor!

As the Editors of SEVEN 3 quote Sayers: "the 'passionate intellect is really passionate." These essays are tributes to, and examples of, the passionate intellect in operation.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

The Triple Sun

THE DARK CRYSTAL. Directed by Jim Henson and Frank Oz. Screenplay by David Odell. Story by Jim Henson. Conceptual Designer, Brian Froud. Rated PG.

The World of the Dark Crystal. Illustrated by Brian Froud. Text by J.J. Llewellyn. Designed and Edited by Rupert Brown. (N.Y.: Henson Organization Publishing/Alfred A. Knopf, 1982). 128 pp.

The Tale of the Dark Crystal. Text by Donna Bass. Illustrated by Bruce McNally. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), 48 pp.

The Dark Crystal. Novelization by A.C.H. Smith. New York: Henson Organization Publishing/Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 186 pp.

The people listed above are actually only a fraction of those who were involved in creating the Gelfings,

Podlings, Skeksis, urRu, and their marvelous, frightening world. Many artists, designers and performers also contributed their talents. David Answan, Newsweek's movie critic, also points out the influence of "the Greeks, Tolkien, and George Lucas." That is true enough, but stronger and more direct influences are those of C.S. Lewis and Ursula Kroeber LeGuin. The relation between the brutal Skeksis and the Pod-people is almost the same as that between the Stingingmen and the Jerkies in Lewis' The Dark Tower. LeGuin's transformation of Tolkienian themes (see my letter in Mythlore 22) has been expanded and raised to a place of central importance:

When single shines the triple sun
 What was sundered and undone
 Shall be healed, the two made one
 By Gelfling hand or else by none

The Gelflings themselves suggest a fusion of Hobbits (small people with surprising reserves of strength to confound the plans of the great) and of the Jewish people (the victims of cruel genocide and heirs of a glorious prophetic future).

Besides its striking visual qualities, the film is also notable for bits of humorous, thought-provoking dialogue:

Aughra: urSu? Where is he?
 Jen: He's dead.
 Aughra: Could be anywhere, then.
 Jen: You have wings? I don't have wings!
 Kyra: of course not. You're a boy.

That delightful exchange is missing from the Bass-McNally version, which is poor in its text but wonderful in its illustrations. For the other two books, and for the movie itself, I have nothing but praise.

Benjamin Urrutia

Rehearsal for C.A.L.A.R.F.

Dragonslayer. Paramount Picture Corporation. Screenplay by Hal Barwoods and Matthew Robbins. Cast: Ulrich the magician, Ralph Richardson; Galen his apprentice, Peter MacNichol; Valerian, Caitlin Clarke; King of Urland, Peter Eyre; Village blacksmith, Emrys James.

The film uses the traditional St. George/Perseus legend of a monster who can only be appeased by virgin sacrifice. It sends up the legend, but by its use of British actors for the supporting roles it gives the story some air of epic seriousness. Several of these actors perform for the Royal Shakespeare Company, so are used to costume roles.

A delegation from Urland comes to the home of Ulrich the magician to get his help in slaying a dragon. They are weary of paying a twice-yearly tribute to the dragon. But even before the party sets out, the magician is murdered by the King's Captain of Guard, who has followed the delegation all that way to make sure they don't get Ulrich's help. Now why should that be?

The magician's apprentice, a curly-haired Luke Skywalker-type, offers to take on the task, and performs a bit of magic with the magician's amulet,

though it's clear that magic is not in his bones. He becomes friendly with the leader of the delegation, discovering that Valerian, a seeming boy, is in fact a girl, brought up by her father as a boy to avoid being sacrificed.

When the party reach Urland, they find out why the King doesn't want the dragon killed. He'd rather pay a modest tribute, than risk angering the beast, and maybe have his villages or even the whole land laid waste. And as long as he controls the lottery, he can cheat it, and stop his own daughter's name going into the urn. Still, Galen has a try at killing the dragon, causing an avalanche to bury it in the mountain. They all think he's won, until an earth-quake signals the dragon's return, and it burns up a few villages in a very Smaug-like manner. Galen is Public Enemy Number One, but when the king's daughter fiddles the lottery by inscribing her name on every lot, the King is forced to give Galen another try. The blacksmith forges a magic spear, but even then the dragon won't be slain. Time for Ralph Richardson to earn his fee with an amazing return from the dead . . .

The film contains many memorable scenes, especially the special effects work on the dragon, which I found totally convincing. The creature is good in close-up, and when flying. The Welsh landscape is authentic, so are the peasant huts, castle, and magic spells (which are in Latin!) The people who made this film could have done The Hobbit.

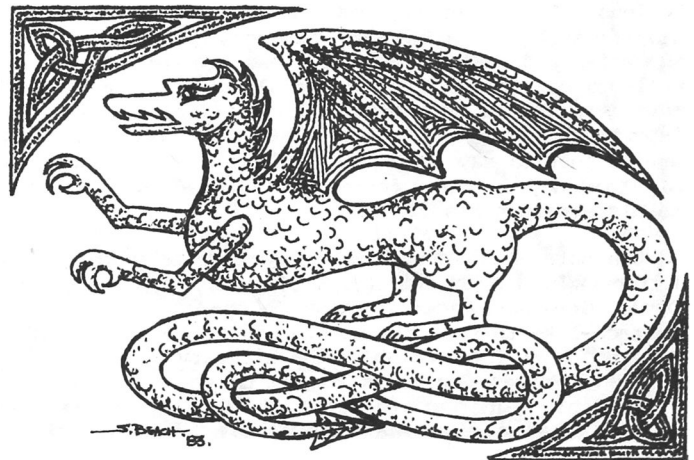
I'd like to start a campaign known as CALARF: Campaign for a Live Action Ring Film! I am sure it can be done . . .

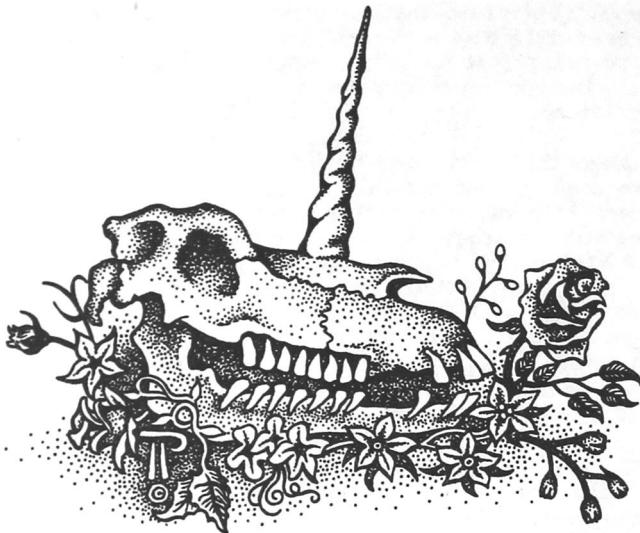
Jessica Yates

Rightly Revised, Really Expanded

Kathryn Lindskoog, C.S. Lewis: Mere Christian, revised and expanded (Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1981), 260 pp.

As Joe R. Christopher has pointed out in his meticulous bibliographical report on this book (Mythlore XXIX Autumn 1981, p. 47), this is the third edition of Lindskoog's book, but as I only possess a copy of the "First Edition," of 1973, I shall have to base my comparative remarks upon that. As it happens, I saw a typescript draft of the first chapter in 1971 and had the honour of commenting on it. As far as I can recall, my only contribution was to suggest that Joy Davidman be identified as a Jew rather than by the





sexist term Jewess. At the time I disliked the title of that chapter, "C.S. Lewis: Sincerity Personified," but rather than sound like the insufferable prig that I am, I said nothing about it. In her new edition, Mistress Lindskoog has changed the title to the very apt "C.S. Lewis: A Messenger," without any help from me! In fact, she has taken out all the jaunty (not to say frivolous) subtitles which interrupted her original edition, and replaced them with fewer and better-chosen section titles. What is more, her book now rejoices in a beautifully produced, larger format, with a superbly readable typeface, elegantly designed and impeccably proofread (except that David Lindsay Gresham has lost the D in his middle name and Dorothy L. Sayers still lacks her middle initial). Had this been all, it should have been enough for us!

But: this edition really is revised and expanded. The revisions include both minor and major excisions, additions, and felicitous re-writing of many phrases: I counted at least thirty changes. Additions include more or new material about Janey Moore (pp. 13-14), Warren Lewis (p. 22), Joy Davidman (p. 77), G.E.M. Anscombe (p. 105), Thaniel Armistead (p. 115), Dr. H.E. Harvard (p. 133), Charles Williams (p. 136), Walter Hooper (p. 138), and Sheldon Vanauken (p. 159). All the chapters have additions to the suggested reading lists, to include works published between the editions.

The three new chapters are, with the exception of a few transplanted comments on science, entirely new, and very fine indeed. The subjects are, under the supertitle "Culture: What is Our World View?": "Sciences," "The Arts," and "Education." Lewis wrote significantly on all three subjects, and Lindskoog's summaries and analyses of his views are both lively and well-argued. These chapters add a good twenty per-cent more material to the book, and treat subjects of great importance, upon which Lewis had some very wise and useful (not to say prescient) things to say, despite an odd tendency of his critics (duly noted by Lindskoog) to misrepresent his views.

One note which struck me as particularly amusing is Lindskoog's suggestion (implicit, not explicit) that David Gresham, one of Lewis' stepsons, played a Eustace-like role in his stepfather's life. The matter (quoted from Chad Walsh's The Literary Legacy of C.S. Lewis) involves Gresham's boyish remark that Lewis was "incredibly ignorant of such things as biology; he thought that a slug was a reptile." In a Scrubbsian

mood myself, I could add that a slug (Genus Limax) is a member of the Order Stylommatophora, of the Sub-Class Palmonata, of the Class Gastropoda, of the Phylum Mollusca, and an Invertebrate: hence it is a poor relation of the land snail. Even in our world, that it is not what a slug is! Ask the sluggard, ask Slubgob! Lewis knew what to do with a slug, whether he thought it was a reptile (one of the Vertebrates) or not.

Lindskoog's C.S. Lewis: Mere Christian was a good book before: it is now a very good book. Her warm, anecdotal, confidently popular style is very well suited to her subject and this new edition will make her work more accessible to a wide and ready audience. One senses the presence of Lewis (who did not quite believe in prayers to the saints) as a powerful intercessor on her behalf.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

ADDENDUM: Presuming upon an attractive feature of Lindskoog's new edition of C.S. Lewis: Mere Christian, "A Year With C.S. Lewis," (pp. 244-245), in which she lists twelve months of readings selected from Lewis' apologetic non-fiction works, and combining her idea with Chad Walsh's newly-published anthology of Lewis' fantasy fiction, The Visionary Christian, I have been inspired to propose "A Second Year with C.S. Lewis," to be used as an alternative lectionary. It is offered with affection and respect.

January: Out of the Silent Planet.

In the darkest days of the year, travel away from benighted Earth to an unfallen world in the first novel of Lewis' Space Trilogy.

February: Perelandra.

As winter continues in many places, and hints at Spring in others, read of a planet saved from the Fall, in Lewis' glorious second space novel.

March: That Hideous Strength

During the deepest part of Lent, read about a Hell on Earth overcome: the third space novel returns us to Earth, to a bureaucratic repression as familiar as today's headlines, saved by a Power older than Time.

April: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.

As a celebration of Eastertide, read in the first-written of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, how the Passion of Aslan brought an end to Winter, in Lewis' beautiful secondary creation.

May: Prince Caspian.

The second of the Narnian Chronicles brings the reader and the Pevensie children back to Narnia in search of the faithful remnant: Aslan makes His appearance and there is a country dance which includes trees!

June: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader.

In the season of vacations and holidays, when the sun reaches its highest point, travel with the Dawn Treader to the uttermost East.

July: The Silver Chair.

As the sun begins, imperceptibly, its downward trend,

read of the underground world beneath Narnia, and of a Witch defeated yet again.

August: The Horse and His Boy.

During the last month of Summer, read the most light-hearted of the Narnian tales, a story of Narnia's own high Summer.

September: The Magician's Nephew.

As Autumn approaches, and the school year begins, read of the beginning of Narnia, created by the Song of Aslan.

October: The Last Battle.

In preparation for the high and solemn season of the Incarnation, when the Last Things are to be contemplated, read about the Last Judgement of Narnia.

November: Till We Have Faces.

Lewis' greatest work can be a suitable introduction to Advent and the coming of Winter: here he transcends all previous images and retells the great Greek myth of the Soul, in a November world of pagan religion on the Eve of the Incarnation.

December: The Visionary Christian.

In the busy pre-Christmas season, which ought to be a contemplative Advent, but so often isn't, steal a moment here and there to read selections not only from the works read during the previous year, but from others--poetry, allegory, diabolical correspondence, and dream of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

The Narnian Creed

Paul Ford, A Day in Narnia (Los Angeles: Franciscan Communications, 1981): tape recordings of four lectures, plus a note on the contents and a four-page pamphlet containing "A Narnian Creed," "A Comparison of Narnian and Earth Time," "Chronology of the Composition and Publication of The Chronicles of Narnia," and "List of Comparative Ages of Principal Characters in the Chronicles of Narnia," all reprinted (with some revisions) from Paul Ford, Companion to Narnia (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

When I reviewed Paul Ford's Companion to Narnia in Mythlore XXVII (Spring, 1981), pp. 30-32, I remarked upon his "clear language, balanced judgement, and . . . eirenic and ecumenical tone" and called him a "true disciple of Lewis and a fine scholar." After spending what amounts to a day in his company by way of the four tapes in this collection, I would add that he has a remarkably winsome persona and makes a warm and wise companion on the road to Narnia.

The first tape introduces the Chronicles and concludes, like the others, with questions from the audience, focussed, oddly, on Lewis' beliefs about Hell, which are answered gracefully and effectively. Ford begins quite humbly by suggesting that he speaks only to those who have already read the works, and, indeed, these tapes are best heard by listeners already familiar with Narnia. He recommends that the books be read in the order of their publication, but here he treats them in a different order, based in part upon the very high estimation in which he holds The Horse

and His Boy. In line with the efforts of several recent interpretations, he bases his approach upon Lewis' own dictum that reason is the organ of truth, but imagination is the order of meaning. Finding that the Chronicles were written during the same period as the composition of Surprised by Joy, Ford relates the writing of the childrens' stories to Lewis' narrative of his own youth. What is more, the coincidence of the Chronicles with the advent of Joy Davidman Gresham, who became Lewis' wife, is called upon to account for a change which Ford sees in the female characters, from the worldly Susan and intuitive Lucy in the earlier books to the bold and more autonomous Aravis, Jill, and Polly of the later works.

The second tape begins the study of the Chronicles individually, and treats "The Days of the High King": The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, and The Horse and His Boy. Lion is seen as presenting the meaning of Sin and Redemption. Sin is embodied by Lewis as Turkish Delight, Ford points out, and he reads aloud Mother Kirk's story of the Fall from The Pilgrim's Regress as an explication. Horse is concerned with the meaning of Providence: the Lion is behind all the tales, and here Ford tells us his own experience, when, asked to leave his monastic order, and faced with the death of a beloved teacher, he begged Aslan to "lie as my back" as he had lain all night (in the form of a cat) to protect and embolden Shasta. Ford's treatment of The Horse and His Boy is a special feature of these recordings and made me wish (despite the pleasures of participation which listening gives) that I had these materials in written form.

The third tape concerns "The Caspian Triad": Prince



Caspian, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, and The Silver Chair. Ford says of Prince Caspian that most people like it least. It presents the meaning of Faith, and suggests this by themes of Return. Faith is exemplified here by Trufflehunter, the Badger who "holds on." Lewis was especially partial to badgers, Ford reminds us. Ford also suggests a correlation between the idea of the sanguine "red Irishman" and the melancholic "black Irishman," with Lewis' red and black dwarfs. In discussing The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Ford especially concentrates on Caspian's faults; Lewis gives us his fullest portrait in this character, Ford points out. As Lewis had originally planned this work as his last, Ford suggests, the symbols in the Last Sea are all references to death. The meaning presented in this work is Vocation, and the motif is the Voyage, from which Caspian must return, and Reepicheep go on, each in fulfillment of his respective vocation. The Silver Chair presents the meaning of Obedience. Oddly enough, Ford says he cannot suggest an operative image: it seems to me that the central symbol is Descent. Aslan is least present in this work as Ford says, but Aslan's odd surrogate, Puddleglum, acts as guide instead. A questioner asks if the Four Signs, so important to obey, and so hard to recognize, are "allegorical," and Ford replies that they are not so in themselves, but do show what it is like to try to obey.

The fourth tape, "First and Last Things," discusses The Magician's Nephew with its meaning of Power, and The Last Battle, which means, Ford hesitantly tells us, Perseverance. In discussing Nephew, Ford takes the Power seriously: he defines it as Magic, Technology, and the Limits of Knowing. He is quite willing to see allegory which equates the Deplorable Word with the atomic bomb. This book is considered to arise from the "Lefay Fragment" making it the longest in gestation and writing, Ford points out. He explores the characterization of Digory, who is very much Uncle Andrew's nephew. In this work, Lewis makes his major attempt to draw together and rationalize the Chronicles, offering a new explanation for Jadis and her origins. Perhaps the most poignant and pregnant suggestion made by Ford is that Lewis worked through his own childhood in the Chronicles and that the last two books show him reconciled first (in The Magician's Nephew) with the death of his mother, suggested in the healing of Digory's mother, and last (in The Last Battle) reunited in forgiveness with the memory of his father, suggested by the reunion in Aslan's country or Tirian and Erlian.

In discussing The Last Battle, Ford speaks at length about Emeth, whose fate is not, he argues, an example of Universalism. In response to questions, he also speaks in detail about Susan, concluding altogether correctly, I think, that she is not necessarily damned, but rather requires a long life (bereft of family) to ready her for Aslan's country. I would suggest that the stories of Emeth and Susan show us that the meaning of The Last Battle is actually Judgement. The book is quite plainly about the Last Judgement of Narnia, just as The Magician's Nephew is about its creation. Ford concludes his presentation by reading, in a voice full of emotion, The Narnian Creed: "I believe in the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea . . . I believe in his Son Aslan . . . I believe that upon us all falls the breath of Aslan."

Synchronistically (or perhaps Providentially) the C.S. Lewis Newsletter which I received in the mail during the period when I was listening to these tapes, contained a reference to a work which attacks Lewis

because the people in Narnia are required to live by Obedience rather than by free choice alone. Ford's analysis shows very clearly that in Narnia (as in our world) one freely chooses whether or not to obey. As he points out, Lewis believed that "stock responses"—those right choices inculcated by Christian teaching—come to one's rescue when, suddenly, raw temptation intrudes into one's life. Again and again in Narnia the choice is indeed between obedience (to faith, vocation, perseverance) and disobedience (apostasy, abandonment of duty, weariness in well-doing). We have the rules, Lewis tells us. Our task is to obey them. Then he shows us Aslan paying in Edmund's place the price of his disobedience, welcoming Emeth the pagan who has given the right obedience to the wrong god, walking beside Shasta on the foggy road to Archenland. Narnia is, stock and stone, a Christian world.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

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The Dark Girl's Answer

(To C.S. Lewis, "The Phoenix")

A falling star came plummeting to earth,
 And, as it burned upon a distant tree,
 You plummeted before me, mad with mirth.
 "The fabled Phoenix lives! Come! Come and see!"
 I dropped my wicker cages by the gate
 And followed you in wonder, for I knew
 The Phoenix as a name, and sensed the fate
 And the strange chance that flung before us two,
 And us alone, the knowledge he was real.
 Hand in hand, we watched him play and preen;
 Together, we had found the one ideal
 That, separate, each had sought but never seen.
 I turned to see what sort of soul was this
 That threw its shadow long across my path,
 But, as our glances met and sought to kiss,
 You flung me off in sudden scorn and wrath
 For watching you while your rapt gaze was turned
 Upon the flaming glory of the tree
 Where, unconsumed, the living Phoenix burned.
 I hardly think that this was fair to me,
 For I was born to weave with withes and reeds.
 A bird was something kept inside a cage
 Which these two hands had made. The shapes and needs
 Of Phoenixes in this or any age
 I knew but by report. But you who proved
 The thing was real, and could have taught me more,
 Took it amiss that my quick spirit loved
 The heart that drew it through the long-sought door.
 You claim me as carrion for a solemn rite,
 But if your Phoenix is a golden crow
 And I am nothing but a tasty bite
 To offer for your sins, then let me go!
 If you need me living, to perform
 The tasks that I, and only I, can do,
 My hands are yours, in sunshine and in storm,
 And gladly will they work for Him with you.
 If otherwise, I have a life to live,
 Others who need me, urgent calls and cures,
 Nor may I let you cage me here to give
 My life to Him, unless He gives me yours.

Alice P. Kenney