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Reviews

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Abstract

Poems and Stories. J.R.R. Tolkien, illustrated by Pauline Baynes. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

Tolkien's Art. Jane Chance Nitzsche. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

Dorothy L. Sayers: Nine Literary Studies. Trevor H. Hall. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

C.S. Lewis. Spinner of Tales. Evan K. Gibson. Reviewed by Sister Mary Anthony Weinig.

J.R.R. Tolkien. "Fantasy Literature" als Wunscherfullung und Weltdeutung. Dieter Petzold. Reviewed by Manfred Zimmerman.

The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction. Ursula Le Guin, edited and with introduction by Susan Wood. Reviewed by Grace E. Funk.

Additional Keywords

George Bolt; Piv

REVIEWS

COLLECTOR'S TOLKIEN

J.R.R. Tolkien, Poems and Stories, illustrated by Pauline Baynes (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980). 344 pp.

This luxurious boxed volume, with its black cover deeply stamped in gold and green, and its edges spattered green, handsomely illustrated by the inimitable Pauline Baynes, joins the india-paper LOTR and the deluxe Hobbit as something to give the person who already has everything. These books are not quite grotesquely expensive (good art books from England cost more--sob-- but they are very expensive, and they ought to justify that expense. Poems and Stories comes close, though I do have a few reservations.

The contents are these: The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhtelm's Son, On Fairy-Stories, Leaf by Niggle, Farmer Giles of Ham, and Smith of Wootton Major. Many readers will probably note that The Tolkien Reader contained all of these except Smith (as well as an essay, "Tolkien's Magic Ring" by Peter S. Beagle). I shan't attempt to discuss the works themselves, as so many books have covered that ground before me. But the illustrations deserve attention. Each work has been given a title page and a frontispiece, suitable to the portion it accompanies. Each title is surmounted by a house or other architectural structure, and each frontispiece depicts a tree, surely the most Tolkienian motif possible.

In The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, all the illustrations except one are the same as those which appeared in the original edition. These were in black with orange elements, and seem to have provided the format for Poems and Stories, which is all printed in the same manner. In P&S, the illustration of "The Hoard" (p. 60) is completely different from the version in the 1962 edition of Bombadil (p. 55). The original barely suggests a horde, and contains no bones. In the new drawing, the knight stands with his back to us and faces the dragon, who lays his head in a kittenish manner above a pile of bones and a very elaborately detailed horde. The lovely full-colour painting of the original edition's dust jacket has not survived.

The drawings in this part of the book are among the most beautiful that Pauline Baynes ever produced, and appear here with their delicacy and elegance intact, as indeed they should!

The Homecoming is illustrated here for the first time. There are, besides the title pages, two fine somber drawings, of which the first, with its massive figures and owl in flight, is the finer.

On Fairy-Stories is not illustrated except with its title page (which contain a splendid combination of dragon, witch, gingerbread hourse, and crowned frog) and frontispiece, a tree with a fantastic bird in its branches and a thorned club leaning against its trunk.

Leaf by Niggle is, like The Homecoming, also illustrated here for the first time, and superb-

ly, with two drawings in which Baynes has exactly caught the odd combination of ordinary naturalism and dreamlike astonishment which characterizes the story. I especially like the title page drawing in which Niggle stands with his rumpled suit and crushed baggage in a little train station awaiting his transportation to the other world.

Farmer Giles of Ham contains Baynes's earliest Tolkien illustrations. Nearly all of the original black-line drawings are here, enhanced with orange, but we have lost the fine original frontispiece and a full-page illustration which had been printed in gold and blue and were very good examples of a medieval illumination style in modern form. To make up for the loss, there are four full-page illustrations, all new, and all important additions to our conceptualizations of the action. Three of them include bold portraits of the rascally dragon Chrysophylax. The message to Giles from the King is now printed in a bold black-letter Textura type (pp. 275-276) which gives a somewhat different impression than did the original version set in a more curvilinear style (although still Gothic). (p. 54)

Smith of Wootton Major has been illustrated by Baynes before, but here her interpretations have been considerably enriched and expanded. There are still (as in each of the previous editions) seven major drawings and a nice coda. In the first, where earlier the 24 children sat around a circular table (spanning a double page) they now sit around a rectangular one. The new cake is larger and more dominant.

A delightful drawing of the village blacksmith has been lost. The depiction of Smith in Faerie has been re-drawn, making the dragon two-headed, giving more flowers and fruits faces, and changing Smith's gesture from a hand placed to his forehead (aghast) to a hand held out in a movement of receptivity, toward a flower's face. The eleven mariners in the next scene have been completely redrawn, given circular shields, and more expressive faces, while Smith's own visage expresses a more boyish fear. The Faerie dancers in the woodland in the next drawing are considerably clarified by re-drawing and by the addition of colour and tone. A very fine original depiction of Smith with Nell and their children has also been completely re-drawn and the faces of the couple made sweeter and more comely (one recalls C.S. Lewis asking Baynes to "pretty up" the faces of the Pevensies!) A significant change is the shadow Smith casts, which is now full of mysterious stars, eyes, and faces.

The gathering of these six works in a single hardbound volume is a useful contribution to the recent collector who has made do before with Ballantine's paperback The Tolkien Reader (1966), and adding Smith of Wootton Major, which appeared in 1967, was essential. I should have loved to find one or two more works in the collection, however. Most notably, I should have been very happy to see "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" (the great precursor and companion-piece to "On Fairy-Stories"), and Tolkien's other two "medieval parodies," "The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun," (1945) and "Imram" (1955), which are discussed in J.C. Nitzche's Tolkien's Art. These are not easy to find and would have been of use to contemporary

students of Tolkien.

A brief introductory essay to the entire volume might have been appropriate: one does have the sense of a portfolio or perhaps more appropriately a Bible of highly varied works pressed into a uniform format. A small interpretive essay could have set these works in perspective and explained their organization (poems/essay/stories), as well as saying a word or two about Pauline Baynes's significant contribution over a period of years to the conceptualization of these works, culminating in this finely-designed volume.

LANDSCAPE OF THE SELF

Jane Chance Nietzsche, Tolkien's Art (London: The Macmillan Press, 1979), 164 pp.

In a work of stunning originality, Jane Nietzsche gives us an exquisitely refreshing and revelatory reading of the whole of Tolkien's scholarly and creative oeuvre by a mind of remarkable sensitivity and radical penetration. She does this by the very simple strategy of paying exact attention to what Tolkien actually said. Her training--she is a teacher of Old and Middle English--gives her the exact interpretive framework with which to address her subject: as she writes, "the seeds for his 'mythology for England' sprang from those medieval

literary, religious, and cultural ideas in which his life was steeped." (p. 2)

She treats all the works in the order of their publication and finds them expressed in kernel in Tolkien's seminal essay, "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics" (1936), which appeared one year before The Hobbit. In that essay Tolkien made the scholarly world aware of the Beowulf as a work in which both Germanic and Christian elements were interwoven. These elements are precisely those upon which Tolkien himself continued to draw for the rest of his life. The two streams come together in the concept of Kingship, the earthly and ideal Kingship of Germanic thought, and the supernatural or divine Kingship of Christian thought which (in Europe) fulfilled these pagan longings. Nietzsche writes that it is "Irresponsible lordship . . . [which] most troubles Tolkien." (p. 4) She continues: "The good lord, then, Tolkien usually casts in the role of healer or artist--but the evil lord he casts in the image of monster or dragon." Monstrosity, then, results from a perversion of what ought to be (and indeed, in its essence, is) creative and good.

A theme which has more than once triggered a misreading of Tolkien's ideas is the concept of secondary creation (the work of the artist) and primary creation (the work of God: often understood by secular readers as "the real world"). Tolkien never suggests that the secondary creation is an improvement upon the primary creation, as if an artist could invent a world superior to the one God Himself has made: rather, it is a revealing, a showing forth of the truth about the primary world. As Nietzsche puts it: "the beauty created by the artist reflects only the beauty of the larger creation, and not the greatness of its [own] creator." (p. 133) If a work of art is great, that is because it accurately reflects the greatness of the Creation and its Creator, not because the artist is great. In The Silmarillion Melkor is one of the divinities by whose song the One creates Arda, Middle-earth. He rebels, adding his "own" discordant notes which, even so, find form in Eru's creation. Melkor, then, creates monsters, and himself becomes a monster. A monster is precisely a monstrous or perverted version of something meant to be normal and good. The hero has at his back the monster, which is himself as he might, without vigilance, become. The monster is the alter-hero: Nietzsche writes that Frodo "discovers the landscape of the self to be a harsher terrain than that of Mordor." (p. 126)

But Nietzsche's beautiful reading of The Lord of the Rings is the culmination of a series of readings which give equal time to his other works. His two fairy-tales: Leaf by Niggle and Smith of Wootton Major receive a full and illuminating treatment, as do Farmer Giles of Ham and his other medieval pastiches and parodies. Nietzsche winks out Tolkien's themes, expressed again and again in all his works, from first to last, and not least in his first-written and last-published The Silmarillion, which she frankly acknowledges to be "difficult to read and even more difficult to enjoy," (p. 129) summarizing, in a few telling paragraphs, how Tolkien "reworks religious concepts and symbols into his invented legends . . . --the theme of pride and fall, related to the desire for power over others as symbolized in the role of the king or wise leader, and knowledge as an end in itself as symbolized by skillfully worked material objects loved for themselves . . . [which] Tolkien contrasts with . . . the regenerative powers of art." (pp. 130-131)

In Leaf by Niggle, Niggle's Tree was present in every one of its leaves, including the Leaf he



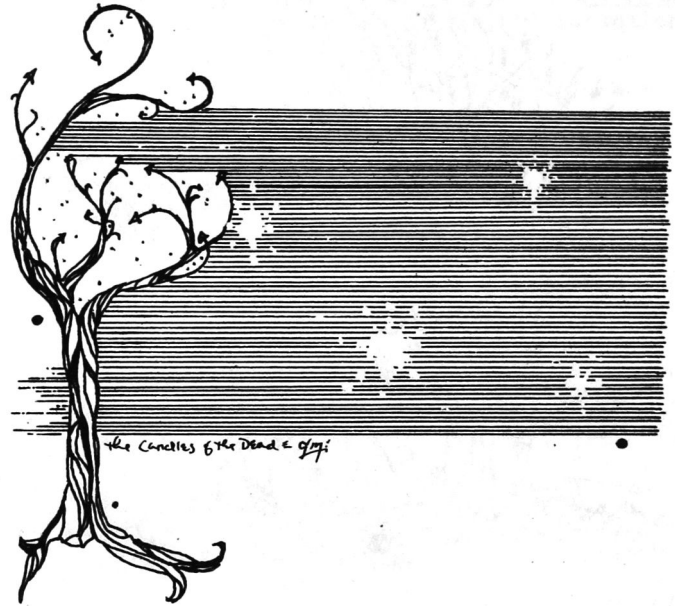
was trying to paint. In the same way, Tolkien's ideas, derived from his reading of medieval and Old English works, are present in all his works, first, last, least, and longest. This was the purpose and meaning of his art. Jane Nitzsche's book, Tolkien's Art, provides a resonant response to his song, a work as fine in its way as the masterpiece it reflects.

NINE TALES OF DETECTION

Trevor H. Hall, Dorothy L. Sayers: Nine Literary Studies (London: Duckworth, 1980).

Nine tales of detection by a master literary sleuth, these essays describe the search for and discovery of long-awaited details of Dorothy L. Sayers's life: Some of the answers to his questions are charmingly minor: some fill in large biographical holes. The two most important refer to the two sides of her life: public and private. In "Dorothy L. Sayers and Robert Eustace" we learn Hall's answer to the question of Robert Eustace's identity. Who, exactly, was Sayers's medical collaborator--openly in The Documents in the Case and covertly (or at least unacknowledged) in Have His Carcase? Hall examines the credentials of two candidates for the honour and decides for one of them: the identity of whom, in accordance with detectival ethics, I will not reveal. I am convinced by Hall's evidence of Eustace's identity, but not by Hall's explanation for Sayers's failure to acknowledge Eustace in the second novel. Hall says it was because the man--disowned by his own father--was a homosexual. I have no idea whether he was or not (and surely it was his own business), but Sayers wrote with a note of compassion about her lesbian characters, and she does not, so much as by a lifted eyebrow, include any reference to male homosexuality whatsoever. Is there evidence in her writings of any opinion on this subject? Maybe she really was stung by having committed a "howler" over muscarine-refraction; maybe she regarded Eustace's contribution to her novel of muscarine poisoning as central, but his contribution to her novel of hemophilia, peripheral. What is more, the "medical" side of mushroom poisoning, which appears to be central in The Documents of the Case, proves (I think I dare say it) to be slightly beside the point--so that a strong emphasis on a medical collaborator provides a nice red herring; while the hemophilia in Have His Carcase needs, for the better part of the novel, not to appear at all. Could Sayers's neglect of her collaborator represent the suppression (ever so slight) of a clue?

In regards to her private life, Hills has made the extremely major contribution of providing concrete evidence (rather than prejudice or hearsay), as to the sort of man Sayers's husband really was--at least as revealed in his own writings. In "Atherton Fleming: A Literary Puzzle," Hall traces down and reprints long and revealing passages from Fleming's three published books, How to See the Battlefields (1919), Gourmet's Book of Food and Drink (1933), and The Craft of the Short Story (1936). The latter two were published anonymously and pseudonymously, respectively, if I have understood Hall's exquisite bibliographical language. The first book reveals the source, I think, of the attraction Captain Fleming held for Sayers (he had won her by the same means that Othello used to woo Desdemona, and for that matter, my World War II veteran husband to win me--by telling stories of his military service--in the latter case, as an X-ray technician in stateside Army hospitals). The second shows us, I suspect, the true source of Sayers's famous "snobbery." There is much of Lord Peter in Fleming, if these books tell us anything of their author. Lord Peter's gourmandizing and bibulosity, his aplomb with every sort and condition, his globe-trotting, his war nerves--indeed, nearly all his charming or touching weaknesses--must have been Fleming's, or at least (since Lord Peter appeared in print before Sayers's marriage) formed elements in his personality which answered to aspects of Sayers's own. Since we don't know yet (but I expect great things of Hall in future) precisely when Sayers met Captain Fleming, we cannot certainly say that he was not indeed the original model for Lord Peter, as Sayers was--by many opinions--for his Lady. (I am familiar with the thesis that Philip Trent--of E. C. Bentley's



masterpiece--inspired Sayers with many of the elements of Lord Peter's character, and agree with it; indeed, Sayers's recently-published essay introducing Trent's Last Case also repeats an especially nasty bit of anti-Semitism which I missed when I wrote my essay on that subject for The Sayers Review (Volume II, Number 2.)

Two essays, "Lord Peter Wimsey and Sherlock Holmes," and "Dorothy L. Sayers and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle," draw upon Hall's deep knowledge of Baker Street (he previously published Sherlock Holmes and His Creator). The first essay was written in response to the thesis (mentioned above) which was proposed by Barbara Reynolds. Hall agrees with her, and then adds Holmes as a second source of inspiration, so I am in good company by suggesting a third. The second essay discusses Sayers's own delicious Holmsian scholarship, both formal and fey. Two additional works of literary fact-finding reveal a neat bit of unacknowledged transatlantic borrowing in the reprinting (with falsified date) of one of Sayers's works--see "The Singular Affair of the Verso Signature,"--and unravel the complex relationship between Sayers's first play and last novel--"The Dates in Busman's Honeymoon." "The Documents in the Case" neatly disposes of the late Janet Hitchman's idea that Captain Fleming served as the model for the character of George Harrison in that novel. "Dorothy L. Sayers and Psychological Research" (a charming essay by an author who has himself published on that subject) neatly scoops an idea I have been nursing, to write an essay on the same subject. Finally, "The Nebuly Coat" offers a remarkable source for some of the most enchanting literary effects--the description of the bells--in The Nine Tailors. It is another, much less-known detective novel, the identity of which you can learn by buying Hall's delightful book. I will tell you, though, that "nebuly" is a term in the language of Heraldry, for a specific type of "line of partition" which suggests, by its undulating form, a characteristic way of showing clouds in medieval illuminated manuscripts.

In Canada we eat a rich confection called Christmas Cake; stiff and black with currents, and topped with a slab of marzipan, a little bit of it is a feast in itself. Nine Literary Essays reminds me of that in its ability to cram into a small space a most astonishing number of delicious felicities. A similar cake becomes "Kings' Cake" when coins are baked in it for Epiphany. Like that, this book contains deposits of pure gold.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

SPINNER OF TALES

Evan K. Gibson, C.S. Lewis, Spinner of Tales (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1980). 284 pp.

Professor Evan K. Gibson, Emeritus of Seattle



Pacific University, enriches our C.S. Lewis shelf with a new paperback presentation of the fiction of this scholar, critic, teacher, and man of letters. Like Thomas Howard's The Achievement of C.S. Lewis, Spinner of Tales addresses the general reader but reaches students very illuminatingly.

Professor Gibson happily combines literary analysis and theological explication, pointing out narrative devices and the serious themes underlying the stories--the fallacious logic of the tempter's life-force philosophy in Perelandra, the "strategy of hell" revealed in Screwtape Letters and the "reason for hell" in The Great Divorce (p. 110). He wisely cautions us that it is easy "to find more meaning than Lewis intended" (p. 181) and makes a very helpful distinction between "instance" and "symbol"--"What we have in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is atonement in Narnia, not an allegory of atonement on Earth" (p. 145).

An overview of Lewis's works, scholarly, popularly religious, and fictional, shows their chronological relation; for instance, A Preface to Paradise Lost (1941) immediately precedes Perelandra where an incarnate demon tries to corrupt a new Eve, and That Hideous Strength (1944) exemplifies in fiction what The Abolition of Man has discussed philosophically the year before.

The Gibson study is fascinating, not tedious, in its detail. It is rich in psychological insights--we find ourselves quite caught up in the analysis of character, as in the case of Reepicheep the mouse, who is "the soul of honor."

The book would please Lewis himself; it should send readers back to the texts with renewed relish.

Sister Mary Anthony Weinig

TOLKIEN: A GERMAN VIEW

Dieter Petzold: J.R.R. Tolkien. "Fantasy Literature" als Wunsch Erfüllung und Weltdeutung (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, a980 [Forum Anglistik]). 126 pp. 19,80 DM.

In striking contrast to the huge amount of critical literature on J.R.R. Tolkien's imaginative writings that has been accumulating in the

English speaking world over the years, critical response in Germany so far has been limited to two equally unsatisfying forms: 1. A few scattered articles in scholarly or literary publications that were, with one or two possible exceptions, either irrelevant or grossly inadequate; 2. Short reviews of German translations or features on the "Tolkien Phenomenon" in newspapers or magazines that were not very illuminating either.

Here now is the first book-length study of Tolkien in German. Petzold sets out, as the subtitle implies, to investigate Middle-earth in terms of the possibilities of wish-fulfillment and interpretation of reality it offers to the author and his readers. He divides his book into 5 chapters: 1. The author, his works, and his readers, 2. A survey of Tolkien's literary works, 3. Tolkien's cosmos, 4. Forms of heroism in Middle-earth, 5. Tolkien as sub-creator.

Although there is little new for the initiated, it is a well written aid for the large numbers of Germans who have only read and possibly enjoyed one or more of Tolkien's books and not ventured into the realm of secondary literature. It is well argued, the style very readable, and the views put forward by the author are usually well balanced. He neither delivers an uncritical panegyric nor heaps perplexed ridicule onto his subject. In some cases, however, he could have been more cautious in his judgements. Concerning the passage which concludes the chapter "The Ride of the Rohirrim" in The Return of the King

For morning came, morning and a wind from the sea; and darkness was removed, and the hosts of Mordor wailed, and terror took them, and they fled, and died, and the hoofs of wrath rode over them. And then all the host of Rohan burst into song, and they sang as they slew, for the joy of battle was on them

he quotes approvingly Manlove's words (Modern Fantasy, Cambridge, 1975, p. 199):

Every word and cadence carries a gush of voulu emotion and hits a false note; this "joy of battle" is the joy of someone who has never been in such a battle. (p. 71)

The obvious question to ask is, how does Manlove

(or, for that matter, Petzold) know? Has he ever fought such a battle? Of course this is not today's war of napalm and fragmentation-bombs, but a quite different kind of battle. The Rohirrim are portrayed as a people of heroic culture living in heroic times; they are entitled to sing "because the joy of battle [is] on them". Furthermore, it seems to me that these lines show Tolkien's ability to reflect the action of the narrative in the rhythm of the language: the orcs get more and more disorganized, their flight gets more and more panic-stricken, until the cavalry of riders sweeps over their hewn-down bodies.

Petzold describes Aragorn's entry into Minas Tirith as "full of party rally bombast: (p. 82) without considering whether it might not be the archetypal king coming into his own in the archetypal way without making allowances for our modern ears sensitized by recent history. To me it seems typical that this criticism should be voiced by a German. These days we are a bit neurotic about a powerful leader being hailed by the people. In other countries such spectacles are innocently enjoyed; they provide a crystallization point for expressing feelings of national identity. After all, Tolkien lived in a country where colourful pageantry still flourishes, what with royal processions and birthday parades that are, viewed objectively, as full of "bombast" as any party rally--and thousands of tourists come to watch.

Petzold's apparent failure to realize that Tolkien's verses in Elvish languages do make sense (p. 56) provides an opportunity to raise a general reservation: this study would have benefited from a better knowledge of the literature on the subject. The "Select Bibliography" at the end is indeed highly selective and seems pretty haphazard. This is an outward indication of certain shortcomings in that respect.

But all in all Petzold's is a very useful book worth its money considering today's book prices.

Manfred Zimmerman

ESSAYS BY LE GUIN

Ursula Le Guin, The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction, edited and with introduction by Susan Wood (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979), 270 pp.

Le Guin's excellence as a writer we know well. It is a moot point whether that excellence is better found in her works of creative fiction or her works of creative criticism. Susan Wood, of the University of British Columbia, has collected Le Guin's discussions of her own background and writing, of the field of fantasy and science fiction, and of its future. The essays are book introductions, speeches, periodical articles, etc., many of them unavailable elsewhere, or available only with great difficulty. Here, for instance, is the text of "Dreams must explain themselves," and "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie," if you weren't lucky enough to catch them when they appeared. The essays are arranged thematically, not chronologically, so that there are five sections: "Le Guin introduces Le Guin," "On fantasy and science fiction," "The book is what is real," "Telling the truth," and "Pushing at the limits." The source and original publication of each essay is meticulously identified. The book is completed by a bibliographic checklist by Jeff Levin of the works of Ursula K. Le Guin up to October 1, 1978, complete with the various editions and translations. It is divided into four sections: books, booklets and records; short fiction; non-fiction; and interviews, questionnaires, biographical

notes and articles containing original quotations. The whole occupies thirty pages.

In her introduction to the book Susan Wood writes, "Ursula Le Guin, one of the best contemporary science fiction and fantasy writers, discusses and analyzes her craft. In so doing, she clarifies what fantasy, and its modern offshoot science fiction, are and can be. These essays are critical in the most creative sense. They work from practical experience to formulate theories; they use those theories to suggest the potential that individual works, and the genre as a whole, can reach . . . Watching Le Guin as critic fairly but firmly dissecting Le Guin as writer is a particularly valuable experience for anyone who cares about writing well." Wood also writes a brief introduction to each section, bringing the pieces together. The very titles are provocative: "Why are Americans afraid of dragons?" and "A citizen of Mondath." "The stone ax and the muskoxen" is a defence of science fiction as the least rigid, freest, youngest of all literary traditions, which as such should be genuinely self-critical. It also shows Le Guin's particular sense of humor: "I like science fiction. And I have reason to be grateful to it. For the past dozen years or so, SF has added money to the family pocket, and confusion to the family income-tax returns, and books to the family bookshelf, and a whole sort of Parallel Universe dimension to the family life.--"Where's Ma going this month?"--"Australia."--"You mean I have to wash the dishes for a week?"--"No, we get to come along."--"Can I have a pet koala, can I?"--Do you people realize, by the way, that to my three children Science Fiction is not a low form of literature involving small green men and written by small contemptible hacks, but an absolutely ordinary, respectable, square profession--the kind of thing your own mother does?"

In all her writing Le Guin is concerned with the "inner journey," with metaphors for translating the content of the human soul into word-symbols. The theme running through all the pieces is that of "unalterable moral value." Science fiction, like all art, deals with important human concerns, and should be taken seriously. (To Le Guin, science fiction and fantasy overlap so closely "as to render any effort at exclusive definition useless.") To the readers of Mythlore, this book will have many delights. Open at random, and you may find: "The borrowing interfered with the tentative exploration of my own personal mythology . . . my job was to go toward the shared, collective ground of myth, the root, the source--by nobody's road but my own. It's the only way anybody gets there."

The book is extremely quotable. I am dragged helplessly into yet another quotation: "In many college English courses the words 'myth' and 'symbol' are given a tremendous charge of significance. You just ain't no good unless you can see a symbol hiding, like a scared gerbil, under every page. And in many creative writing courses the little beasts multiply, the place swarms with them. What does this Mean? What does that Symbolize? What is the underlying Mythos? Kids come lurching out of such courses with a brain full of gerbils . . . True myth may serve for thousands of years as an inexhaustible source of intellectual speculation, religious joy, ethical inquiry, and artistic renewal. The real mystery is not destroyed by reason. The fake one is. You look at it and it vanishes. You look at the Blond Hero--really look--and he turns into a gerbil. You look at Apollo, and he looks back at you."

Read, then, to discover the serious purpose

(Continued on page 37)

consequence, does their thought. The echoes of Orwell are of course apparent.

Mammals speak, and their language, again, shows differentiations comparable to those of birds and human beings. The malapropisms of a frightened hedgehog (he speaks of a "killee's heel") remind the reader of the characteristic speech patterns of Arthur's nurse; and, in contrast, a pretentious badger reads his own version of the creation story aloud in dissertationese, which brings us back to where we began. This is an example of the badger's scholarly jargon, and it is equal to Merlin's:

"People often ask, as an idle question, whether the process of evolution began with the chicken or the egg. Was there an egg out of which the first chicken came, or did a chicken lay the first egg? I am in a position to say that the first thing created was the egg."¹⁴

According to the badger, God created the eggs from which all the fishes and serpents and birds and mammals emerged, and then He called all the embryos before Him to give each a special gift. The gift He granted to man to own exclusively was not language.

White is true to his own myth. When Wart must pull the sword of power from the stone, the friends he has made during the course of his successive transformations encourage him in their own voices. The last to speak is a "white-front," a goose, who says simply, "Come along, Homo sapiens." So geese can't talk, but in T.H. White's world they do; and birds are capable of using language that is differentiated by stage of historical development, dialect, and degree of formality. They are also capable of suiting the style to the substance.

Satisfaction of certain primary curiosities may be one of the best pleasures of fantasy. Some questions, like the one about where language came from, are unanswerable; but some of the unanswerable questions, as White and others have shown, are the most fun. First, the rule that only human beings can talk must be broken. Then other questions may be asked: how do the creatures speak? and what is their language like? In answering these questions the Rule-breaker becomes Speech-maker and Fantasy-creator.

NOTES

¹Noam Chomsky, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965), pp. 79-86, discusses the subcategorization of nouns, using the terms + and - common, + and - count, + and - abstract, and + and - human.

²I refer to the speech of Kehaar and the other characters mentioned in "Non-Human Speech in the Fantasy of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Richard Adams," Mythlore. 5 (1978), 37-39.

³T.H. White, The Once and Future King (1939; rpt. N.Y.: Berkeley Publishing Corporation, 1966), p. 159.

⁴Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion (1948; rpt. N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), pp. 73-74 discusses the imitation of sounds with the intention of gaining power over the phenomena represented by such sounds. If the performer demonstrates that he has power over a creature he wishes to catch, he has, in effect, performed an act of sympathetic magic, because he will have dramatized what it is that he wants to happen.

⁵White, p. 74.

⁶I am using the term "speech act" in the sense developed by J.L. Austin, How To Do Things with Words (1962; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975) and J. R. Searle, Speech Acts (1969; rpt. London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977).

⁷White, pp. 82-83.

⁸"Timor mortis conturbat me" is the refrain of Dunbar's "I that in heill wes and gladness." William Dunbar: Poems, ed. James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 61-64.

⁹White, p. 173.

¹⁰White, p. 174.

¹¹White, pp. 167-68.

¹²White, p. 175.

¹³Benjamin Lee Whorf, "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," Language, Thought and Reality, ed. John B. Carroll (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1971), pp. 134-159.

¹⁴White, p. 191.

(Continued from page 19)

in fantasy; read for a stern warning that the inner journey is necessary to produce a whole, integrated human being; read for the hope that if we all have the same kind of dragons in our psyche it means that we can communicate; read for the sheer pleasure of enjoying the integrity of a faultless word-crafter.

Grace E. Funk

MALORY

He sang a plaintive threnody
A melancholy melody
Such a mournful symphony
Of minstrelsy and psalmody

Of mountains grim in Bolgary
Of forests dark in Muscovy
Of deserts drear in Tartary
Of Araby, of Arcady

Of cruel plans of tyranny
Of ruthless plots of treachery
Of callous schemes of trickery
Of falsity, of perfidy

Of witty mimes of mimicry
Of merry jests of jollity
Of joyful masques of mummery
Of drollery, of raillery

Of mystic tales of wizardry
Of magic lays of sorcery
Of legends fell of devilry
Of witchery, of knavery

Of golden dreams of errantry
Of courtly deeds of chivalry
Of daring feats of gallantry
Of rivalry, of bravery

In ballads old in Gramarye
Beside the singing sea.

Mark Allaby