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Letters

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LETTERS

Glen GoodKnight

Los Angeles, Calif.

I have noticed since the Mythopoeic Society began printing letters, they have been interesting and informative. However, over the last year the quality and literateness of them overall have risen sharply. I am delighted with the variety of topics and opinions expressed. The space given to letters in this issue is larger than ever, since the volume has increased. I salute the readers who have contributed in this way, and invite others to personally participate in this valuable exchange of information and ideas!



Eomer

KUCHARSKI

Robert Foster

Bound Brook, New Jersey

As soon as I saw Paul Kocher's "Tale of the Noldor" (*Mythlore* 15), my long-practiced instincts as a Middle-earth scholar (or quibbler or trivialist or pedant) awoke to their fullest. Are the details accurate? Is there any New Information? Happily, Kocher's article is one of the best of its kind I have seen; rarely is the High Matter of Middle-earth retold with such accuracy and grace. Moreover, two of Kocher's interpretations strike me very powerfully, and confirm my belief that he is the best Tolkien critic around. First, the distinction he makes concerning the forging of the Rings between Sauron's craft and Noldorin knowledge is an important insight into the nature of good and evil in Middle-earth. It appears that only the forces of good -- the Noldor, the unfallen Valar, Eru -- possess the freedom of spirit to imagine something previously uncreated; by their denial of good, evil beings have lost the power to sub-create and can only pervert -- Elves to Orcs, Ithil to Morgul, truth to lies, Rings of Creation and Preservation to Rings of Power and Domination. (Of course, all of this is reading a little into

the 55 words on I 318.) Once all this is seen, Sauron's fortuitous inability to understand the strategies of the West during the War of the Ring is more plausible; his thinking is mechanistic and derivative, and his knowledge is limited to evil. Moreover, a similar distinction may hold between the Valar and the created races. After the Creation, the Valar rule and judge, but they no longer create; progress, advancement of and by mind, is left to the comparatively human peoples, especially Feanor, Daeron, Celebrimbor, Elendil, and Aragorn. (A kingdom is a creation.)

Second, although Kocher's belief that the two trees carved on the Doors of Durin must represent the Two Trees of Valinor is mistaken (they probably represent the holly-tree emblem of the Elven-smiths), he is correct in pointing out the Noldorin "tribal pride in the ancestral feat" of Feanor, the creation of the Silmarils. In this connection, we should carry two steps further Sam's awed recognition that the Phial of Galadriel (a Noldorin princess) places him and Frodo in the ongoing tale of Earendil: ultimately, the Phial bears the light of the Silmarils and of the Two Trees, and thus demonstrates that Feanor's craftsmanship, if not his pride, was just and virtuous, and that this virtue is retained by his descendants.

Of course, Kocher also makes some minor slips and dubious statements. Tom Bombadil's assertion that Morgoth came from "Outside" almost certainly means 'outside Middle Earth,' and therefore does not show that Morgoth was not a Vala. By omitting Morgoth's poisoning of the Two Trees, Kocher implies that Feanor's creation of the Silmarils was responsible for making the light of Valinor vulnerable. Also, Kocher places too much emphasis on Gandalf's praise of "the *unimaginable* hand and mind of Feanor": the wizard is clearly exaggerating here in a vain attempt to overawe Pippin, who has just unwisely used the palantir. Fourth, I do not see how the palantiri are "more complex and altogether wonderful than even the *silmarilli*"; as with the Stone and Ring of Suleiman in Charles Williams's *Many Dimensions*, "exploring time and space" is probably less important than displaying the clear light of the divine spirit. Finally, the fact that Beren was imprisoned in the dungeons of Sauron does not necessarily make the latter Morgoth's turnkey; he could easily have been a vassal acting autonomously.

But as I was thinking about all of this, it struck me that soon many of these points will no longer be debatable. For ten years now, I have been trying to restrain contentious speculation about these matters (although frequently enough I didn't succeed even with myself) with a two-part litany: "I alone hold the key," says Tolkien, and "Wait for the *Silmarillion*." Well, the *Silmarillion* is almost upon us at last, and many of the famous questions that have vexed us for a decade will soon be answered. What is the social structure of the Valar? Do they, like the Olympian gods, have leaders who specialize in certain functions? What does it mean that Melian, the mother of Luthien, was "of the people of the Valar"? Are Morgoth, Sauron and the Istari Valar? Was Aule the Smith a Vala (as I too blithely assumed in my *Guide*), or was he one of the first of the Khazad? Who is Eldest, Tom Bombadil or Fangorn? And my favorite -- what are the Three Kindred of the Eldar? Are the Noldor one of them?

I am very fond of these questions, and they have been a major part (I sometimes think an excessive part) of my reaction to Tolkien and my contact with other fans. By revealing many of the obscurities of the High Matter (although no doubt

raising new ones), the publication of the *Silmarillion* will mark the end of an era of fantasy for me. And I suspect that having these questions answered is not the most important factor involved. Up to now, all of us, even those who identified most with Aragorn or Gandalf or Galadriel, have viewed Tolkien's mythos from the perspective of Middle-earth, and Middle-earth through the eyes of Hobbits, unheroic, unambitious, tempted as little by nobility and greatness as by greed. We may know that Luthien rescued Beren from the dungeons of Sauron and played a role in the theft of one Silmaril from Morgoth's Iron Crown, but as we read *Lord of the Rings* we see her most clearly dancing in Elvenhome "To music of a pipe unseen." Of course, one of the chief pleasures of *LotR* is its rich background of history, filled with people greater, nobler, more beautiful than we, but nonetheless individual and therefore very much like us; one of the chief desires aroused by all of Tolkien's fantasy is a yearning for the depths of time. The *Silmarillion* will no doubt give us those depths, but their background will probably be the supra-individual figure of Eru. Being a Hobbit (which one must be while reading *LotR*) is quite comfortable; I have met some people who don't like *LotR*, but no-one who found it disturbing, as many people do H. P. Lovecraft or even Charles Williams. Now Faerie should not be frightening (fear is, I think, a reflection on the reader), but it must not be overly comfortable. Dealing with High Matters can be somewhat uncomfortable for writers and readers, especially since once you become an Elda it is difficult to feel like a Hobbit again. The shift in tone from *LotR* to the *Silmarillion* may not be as extreme as that from the *Hobbit* to *LotR*, but it will be great. Read *LotR* again this summer; it may seem rather different by Christmas.

Robert A. Gilbert

Bristol, U.K.

I was intrigued by Joe R. Christopher's review "Rites of a Rosicrucian Mystic" (*Mythlore* 13), as I am currently working on a biography of A. E. Waite and from my own research was able to provide Christopher Armstrong with his information on Evelyn Underhill's membership of the Golden Dawn. It was, however, unfortunate that you should have linked so excellent a biography with two such unsatisfactory and inaccurate studies of the Golden Dawn itself.

The history of the Golden Dawn has been fully charted and admirably presented by Ellic Howe in his book *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972). There are also extant adequate records of its later offspring which are gradually appearing in print (e.g. *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, by Ithell Colquhoun (Spearman, 1975)), and it seems desirable to correct the errors deriving from Torrens and similar uncritical writers.

The Golden Dawn was not itself a Temple but a magical Order, having several Temples in Great Britain, the most famous being Isis-Urania in London. The Order was a wholly Victorian creation with no claim to great antiquity beyond the fictions of its founders; which fictions, added to Mathers' abrasive personality, did much to provoke the first split in 1900. This was followed by a more serious split in 1903 when Waite and two others, the Rev. Ayton and M. W. Blackden, assumed control of Isis-Urania, organised the "Independent and Rectified Rite" and began the process of Christianising the Order's rituals. The old magical tradition was carried on by Dr. Felkin in his *Stella Matutina*, which became increasingly influenced by the ideas of Rudolf Steiner; ideas which permeated Waite's Order also, until the tensions resulting from this encroachment led Waite to close down Isis-Urania in 1914.

Within a year, Waite had reorganised his Order

into the "Fellowship of the Rosy Cross," providing it with rituals that were mystical rather than magical, and that show their author to be a somewhat unorthodox Christian mystic. It was this Order that Charles Williams may have joined, although no definite evidence of his membership has yet been found. He was certainly in correspondence with Waite as early as 1915 and if he did join, it may well have been then rather than in 1917, which is the date usually given. To what extent Waite's ideas appear in Williams' novels remains to be established, but Waite's association of the Tarot trumps with the Grail Hallows may well have been utilised in some form. I would welcome any suggestions on this point.

As to other personalities of the Golden Dawn,



Arthur Machen had left the Order before 1903 but rejoined in 1904 by special invitation. Neither he nor Evelyn Underhill remained long in Isis-Urania, although precise dates are still unknown. What is certain is that Sax Rohmer was never a member of the Golden Dawn or of any of its offshoots. The fiction that he was may be traced to the fantasies of Pauwels and Bergier in their book *The Morning of the Magicians*. It is equally certain that the Stella Matutina was never "under the direction of Dion Fortune." She was a member, but resigned to found her own Order, the "Fraternity of the Inner Light" which remains active today.

It is also incorrect to state simply that Arthur Machen was "stimulated by Waite's studies of the Holy Grail." Their common interest in the Grail led to a considerable collaboration which is acknowledged in Waite's "Hidden Church of the Holy Grail" (1909). Machen's own ideas on the Grail appear in "The Shining Pyramid" (1925).

Although the Golden Dawn may be of only peripheral concern to readers, it may be of greater interest to note that Waite was the author of two ponderous Faerie romances, "Prince Starbeam" (1890) and "The Golden Stairs" (1893), both of which are intended to symbolise the Soul's inward

quest for God. They were revised and amalgamated as a single work, "The Quest of the Golden Stairs" (1927), which has recently been reissued by Newcastle as a "classic of occult fantasy . . . strangely neglected." No one can deny the neglect, but not even Waite's most ardent devotee would call the work a classic.

Mary Nessen

University Park, PA

In reply to Mr. Griffith's letter in *Mythlore* 14: just what did you expect from a parody? Anyone who reads a parody of a literary work that he greatly enjoys is asking for trouble. Of course *Bored of the Rings* is trash; it was meant to be



that way. Actually, the parody has very little to do with *The Lord of the Rings*. It only borrowed the basic plot, corrupted the names of a few characters, and added a lot of nonsense. The authors could have done this to just about any classic you could name. As Mr. GoodKnight pointed out, Tolkien admirers should not take the novel seriously, and I agree. Even though *Bored of the Rings* is trash, it still has some worth: it is a sad comment on American values. But please don't misunderstand my position; I dearly love *The Lord of the Rings*, and there is no literary work comparable to it. However, I do believe that the reader should have the right to choose his reading material as he sees fit, and no one should forbid his right to choose. Therefore, Mr. Griffith, please don't impose your tastes on other people. *The Lord of the Rings* has indeed done very well in spite of the parody.

Colin Mathers

University of Sydney, Australia

Dragon lore has always fascinated men like Lewis and Tolkien although it has been largely neglected by the scientific community. In the

last few years there has been an upsurge of interest in animal behaviour and ecology and this neglect has been remedied by two articles in the scientific press. P. J. Hogarth (*Bull. Brit. ecol. Soc.* 7, 2-5; 1976) surveys historical accounts of dragons and estimates their typical lifespan as 1000 to 10,000 years. He concludes that the medieval dragon became extinct by the late 18th century due to diverse pressures exerted by man (including exploitation for pharmacological purposes). Only once was conservation legislation passed to protect dragons (or knights?) when the King of Rhodes, in 1345, forbade any knight to attempt to slay a dragon.

Robert M. May has reviewed Hogarth's article in *Nature* (Vol. 264, p. 16; 1976) praising it and calling for further research. However, May takes issue with Hogarth's theory that dragons and related species originated only 5000 years ago, pointing out that dragons and griffiths are six-limbed creatures whereas throughout five hundred years of evolution fishes, reptiles, birds and mammals have had the basic four-limbed structure. He concludes that "dragons, griffiths, centaurs and angels belong to an entirely different lineage, the evolutionary history of which is shrouded in mystery." Hogarth, in a reply to this article (*Nature*, Vol. 264, 607; 1976) defends his estimate of 5000 years before the present, claiming that the total dependence on human imagination for their existence precludes an origin earlier than the late Pleistocene.

Of course, readers of this journal will know that this is incorrect. Dragons have been around for much longer than 5000 years. They abounded in the First Age of Middle Earth and lived practically forever unless killed (*Hobbit*, p. 35). The Hidden City, Gondolin, was destroyed by a host of dragons and orcs near the end of the First Age (*Hobbit*, p. 61), but with the passing of Morgoth, most of the dragons were slain and only the strongest and most cunning survived. One of these was Smaug who died near the end of the Third Age, but I fancy some of his relative still survive -- dragons are immensely powerful, cunning and unscrupulous.

John H. Chalmers, Jr.

Houston, Texas

Two short comments on Joe R. Christopher's review of "Aniara," which appeared in *Mythlore* 15, are in order. One is that "loxodrome" is a standard navigational term and the second is that "Aniara" was made into an opera in the late 50's. The significance of this is that to my knowledge, "Aniara" was the first opera to use electronic music (mostly in Mima's part). I believe that the composer was Karl-Birger Blomdahl, but I don't have the resources at hand to reference it right now. A recent Schwann catalogue would settle the question and also indicate whether the recording is still available. Anyway, "Aniara" stands as the first electronic SF opera.

Alexei Kondratiev

Flushing, New York

On the subject of "what happens to an elf who dies," one could recall Richard Purtill's theory in *Lord of the Elves and Eldils* (pp. 129 ff.): if Arwen is described as the only elf to have "truly died," despite the fact that many elves have been killed in the wars of Middle-Earth, "some sort of translation 'beyond the Western Sea' for elves who 'die' in Middle-earth would account for this apparent inconsistency." Purtill points to Glorfindel's transfiguration at the ford near Rivendell (when he appears "as he is upon the other side") and concludes: "Evidently the elves are not wholly of this world even when they dwell in Middle-earth." (One might add that Arwen's "dying" implies the vanishing of her entity "on the other side"; this recalls the scene in Joy Chant's *Red Moon and Black*

Mountain in which In'serinna's star vanishes from the heavens when she chooses to marry a mortal.) As for the Orcs, Tolkien may indeed have intended them to be soul-less, yet somehow I doubt it. During much of the Third Age (cf. *The Hobbit* and *LotR* III, pp. 439-446), when Sauron's power was in eclipse and the Orcs were as "free" of it as they ever could be, it appears that they had their own kings, and we learn from *The Hobbit* (p. 73) that they invented many ingenious machines (albeit destructive ones). This is quite different from the purposeless, stupidly malignant scurrying of the Orcs in *LotR*. A hierarchical concept of society and skill in craftsmanship are good things in themselves, even if they are still being used for cruel and destructive ends. Since, in creating the Orcs, Morgoth artificially twisted a nature that was basically good, could not this timid reappearance of positive traits be a sign of Nature re-asserting itself? Perhaps if the Orcs had remained untampered with by agents of the Shadow for a long enough time, Nature alone would have been enough to heal them.

In answer to Margaret Hannay's inference that Lewis was a "racist" because he made Hyoi's blackness frightening to Ransom, one need only point to Valerie Protopapas' excellent letter in *Mythlore* 13 on the archetypal negative value of blackness. Menacing creatures have been black in folktales since time immemorial. Something that is both "very big" and "very black" would make an ideal nursery bogey (and remember that *Out of the Silent Planet* is Ransom's *enfance!*). As Ms. Protopapas notes, only recently has the word "black" come to be a racial term; Lewis probably didn't think of it in that context.

Dale W. Simpson

Jessica Kembell-Cook's note on the etymology of "Moria" in "Three Notes on Names in Tolkien and Lewis," *Mythprint*, 15, No. 2 (February 1977), argues for a Northern origin for the place-name "Moria." However, I would suggest, with Pat Moynehan (whose note in *Amon Hen* I have not read), that the evidence within *Lord of the Rings* points more toward a "latinate" origin, in this case. The word *mor* is a modern Latin word meaning "Dullness, or Folly, or Stupidity, . . . a defect of Judgment and Understanding" (*OED*, Vol. 6, p. 663), deriving ultimately from a Greek term meaning "folly." I think that its Latin meaning is more than a "coincidence" in *Lord of the Rings*, though, as I hope the following discussion will show.

When the Fellowship limps into Lothlorien after Gandalf's downfall at the hands of the Balrog in Moria, the news they bring to Celeborn and Galadriel shocks the Elf-rulers. Celeborn replies somewhat rashly to the evil news, saying: "And if it were possible, one would say that at the last Gandalf fell from wisdom into folly, going needlessly into the net of Moria" (I, 461, pbk). I suggest that only the latinate source can function with any kind of meaning in this passage, producing a subtle name-play for which we ought to give Tolkien the credit, not "modern readers only," as Ms. Kembell-Cook suggests. While it may be true that this pun is meaningful for modern readers only, we must not forget that all puns in *Lord of the Rings*, whether on Middle-earth names or on the actual terms from real languages which underlie even the Middle-earth names, are ultimately for modern readers. It does not matter to me whether Celeborn or his listeners were aware of a Middle-earth pun on the name Moria; it seems to be more than a coincidence that it *is* a pun in this context. And if the Latin-Greek source is not proof enough of an intentional pun here, then certainly even the Middle-earth connotation of Moria suggests "folly."

Robert Foster's *Guide to Middle-Earth* suggests

that Moria means "black pit" in the Westron or Common-speech of Middle-earth. I believe instead that its Middle-earth meaning is probably closer to the Latin-Greek. In Middle-earth a name depends upon its cultural perspective, which results in a multiplicity of names for the same person, place, or thing. For instance, Gandalf says of himself:

Many are my names in many countries . . . Mithrandir among the Elves, Tharkun to the Dwarves; Olorin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten, in the South Incanus, in the North Gandalf . . .

(II, 353)

Inherent in the various names are probably the qualities of the wizard most manifest in the different regions, or at least slightly different cultural connotations. The principle holds true for Moria,



also: the Dwarves "real" name for the old mountain kingdom is Khazad-Dum, but Moria seems to have been the name given to it by the Elves, especially after its power grew. Sometime after the middle of the Third Age, however, the Dwarves delved too deeply into Moria in their search for mithril, stirring a thing of evil which had slept there for countless years, and their realm came to an end in a fury of death and destruction (III, 439). As Tolkien later says, the dwarves were inflamed with a lust for gold and precious things, "so that if they lacked them all other good things seemed profitless . . ." (III, 446). With respect to the relative worth of precious metals and jewels, then, the Dwarves and Elves did not see eye to eye. Hence, I suggest, the Elves' apt name "Folly" for the mountain kingdom of the Dwarves.

Viewed from this perspective, which is more preferable for me, it is the allusion to "Soria Moria Castle" which seems to be coincidental. So much the better for Teutonic or Scandinavian place-names in Tolkien's work, but not to the oversight or lessening of a beautiful pun like Moria.

Concerning L. Duke Fleckenstein's speculations about the Istari and your response, I agree with

your interpretation derived "on very good authority," presumably privy information. However, Tolkien himself has provided a clue to the origin and nature of the Istari, in the notes at the end of *The Road Goes Ever On and On*. On p. 66 of that work, Tolkien writes concerning the Quenya word *Fanuilos* in "A Elberteh Gilthoniel" that *fana* refers to the "'veils' or 'raiment' in which the Valar presented themselves to physical eyes":

These were the bodies in which they were self incarnated. They usually took the shape of the bodies of Elves (and Men) . . . In these *fanas* they later presented themselves to the Elves, and appeared as persons of majestic (but not gigantic) stature, vested in robes expressing their individual natures and functions. The High Elves said that these forms were always in some degree radiant, as if suffused with a light from within. In Quenya, then, *fana* thus came to signify the radiant and majestic figure of one of the great Valar.



Gandalf

This description reminds me of the robes of Saruman and Gandalf, particularly how they "express their individual natures" (i.e., the white robes of Saruman and Gandalf, the earlier grey of Gandalf and the later iridescent of Saruman; white symbolizing purity and high station, and iridescent symbolizing cunning and deceit). There is no question in my mind that the five Istari were at least more powerful than the High Elves, if not Valar themselves. Furthermore, I cannot ignore the obvious Christian (or pre-Christian) parallel of pure or divine spirit taking on human form as a sacrifice in order to help save fallen Man from the powers of darkness, especially as we see this presented in the role of Gandalf.

Jessica Kembell-Cook

London, U.K.

I much appreciated the article by Margarat Hannay on C. S. Lewis's attitude to women, and a two-part article by myself is currently being serialized in our journal *Mallorn*. The first part,

already published, deals with Tolkien, attempting to defend him against charges of 'sexism.' The second part, about the Narnia stories, makes the point that C. S. Lewis hated those aspects of women which the Women's Movement also detest: reliance on make-up and 'dumb blonde' behavior according to the old stereotypes, as shown in the character of Lasaraleen. None of the Earth children marry, but marriage is normal for the Narnian princes. *The Horse and His Boy* and *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* both conclude with an (off-stage) marriage. The article is entitled 'Male Chauvinist Lions.'

Branton G. Lachman

Corona, California

James Spreckles' comments (*Mythlore* 15) on Gandalf, angels, and rings are very interesting, but I think he is mistaken on several important points.

None of the rings have been indicated as being a primary source of power. In fact, it is explicitly stated that to wield the Great Ring effectively required great personal power (I 350, 474) and this is not a too improbable inference to make towards the other rings.

Secondly, it is both fitting and preserving of symmetry that the Three Rings were possessed and actively used by the three greatest opponents of Sauron in the Third Age -- Gandalf, Elrond, and Galadriel.

Gandalf does anticipate Christ, yet is not Messiah, therefore it is not necessary not perhaps even proper that he parallel Christ in all actions. Even if this were not so, it is recorded that Christ at times used "devices" such as placing mud mixed with spittle on a blind man's eyes (John 9: 6-7; also see Mark 7:33-35, 8:22-25).

Most importantly, making the ring invisible on Gandalf's hand is not a "poor ploy," but one of the most beautiful and meaningful symbolisms in *The Lord of the Rings*. First, it should be noted that the other two rings also remained invisible on their keepers' hands until the final parting when they were shorn of their power. One time, Frodo is privileged to see Galadriel's ring whereas Sam only saw a star through her finger (I 474). Elrond also explicitly states that the Three Rings are kept hidden (I 352).

The important symbolism is that the One Ring was a consumer of souls, inexorably sapping the being and spirituality of all who tried to use it. The possessors became the possessed. That the wearer becomes invisible is a symbol of the negation or sublimation of his personality into the Ring.

On the other hand, the Three Rings were made to be "taken up" into their keepers, to augment and focus one's natural force and talents. This is effectively symbolized by these rings becoming invisible on their wearer's hands. They draw no attention to themselves, rather are assimilated into their possessors. Thus, the contrast between the compelling nature of the One Ring and the reflexive nature of the Three is beautifully portrayed in this one respect.

Edgar L. Chapman

I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed the last three issues of *Mythlore* (12, 13, 14) and how much I admire the growth of the publication into a professional looking work, yet with many lovely illustrations that probably wouldn't be found in some of the more austere professional journals.

Concerning Mr. Steven Chan's letter about my review of *The Not-World*. Mr. Chan very properly offers a correction on my comment on the prevalence of dominance of women in the fantasy field. That statement is the sort of sweeping generaliza-

tion that a reviewer makes at his peril.

The truth is that I did not know anything about Lloyd Alexander's books, when I wrote the review, and Mr. Chan correctly reminds me of them. Since then, my friend, Professor Douglas Rossman of LSU has convinced me of their merit, and I have discovered them for myself.

The review was written a long time ago, and before Richard Adams's *WaterShip Down* had made much of an impact. Since then, I've read *WaterShip* and *Shardik* and regard both works as virile writing.

When I spoke of male fantasy writers as being in retreat or in other fields, I was thinking of Avram Davidson, for instance, who hasn't had much public success with his work, and some fantasy writers like Fritz Leiber and Sprague de Camp, who are identified with the science fiction community or writing non-fiction.

I imagine I felt that way about Roger Zelazny and Michael Moorcock too, although it's becoming increasingly obvious that Zelazny and Moorcock are fantasy writers who masquerade as science fiction writers -- if there's point to that distinction any more. Mr. Chan mentions *Lord of Light* and Zelazny's Amber series with approval. I concede that *Lord of Light* has merit (I'm teaching it this spring), and I enjoyed *Jack of Shadows*. But the Amber series I find unreadable. It seems to me to consist of derivative potboilers, an opinion also held by Alexei and Cory Panshin, although the Panshins have indicated some improvement in *Sign of the Unicorn*. These books certainly don't seem to me on the level of Mary Stewart, or Evangeline Walton.

As for Michael Moorcock: I had read eight or ten of his books, including the six in the Knight of the Swords series, but without being impressed by him very much. Moorcock is a talented, facile entertainer, and most of his fantasy novels seem invented as he goes along. He writes and publishes too much, maybe because he has to make a living by his writing, but he reminds me of Max Brand, the enormously prolific old Eastern writer: so much is good that you wish he would concentrate his talents, take his time and really deliver the goods in one solid book. Moorcock's self-pitying Werther-like heroes are a pain in the solar plexus, as far as I am concerned; they really don't have much to whine about, compared with the kind of anguish that William Morris faced all his life, but you don't see a Morris hero sitting around in a mood of fine aesthetic despair . . . For that reason, I prefer *The Ice Schooner* and Konrad Arflane to Moorcock's other books.

Actually, then, to sum up, I didn't think Zelazny or Moorcock were really writing on the level of Tolkien, Lewis, Walton, Kurtz, Chant, and the grand tradition of fantasy that breathes the spirit of life into great mythic themes and characters. Zelazny, a capable adventure writer, may someday produce a fine fantasy, but I doubt that Moorcock is ever going to be anything but an aging hack. At the time of the review, too, in January of 1975, I hadn't yet run into Poul Anderson's *A Midsummer Tempest*, which is much closer to the level of achievement I was looking for. I had also heard Gordon Dickson mention his plans to write a "sword and sorcery" novel way back in 1972, when Dickson visited Peoria, and this reference was to the book that, presumably, became *The Dragon and the George*. But Dickson mentioned contracts for so many writing projects at the time, that it was obvious that we should not hold our breaths. Anyhow, I haven't yet been able to read *The Dragon and the George* to see whether it is comparable to Anderson in quality. In short, that generalization to which Mr. Chan takes exception was the kind of asinine remark that a reviewer should restrain himself from typing. But it did seem to make a little more sense to me back in January 1975 than it does in the present context.

In short, then, while I may have had some basis for my generalization when I made it back in January of 1975, in January of 1977 it is not accurate, and I probably shouldn't have written the comment in any event. I wish to thank Mr. Chan for calling that point to my attention, even if he and I do not agree on who the best male fantasy writers are.

P.S. Glen, you may want to excerpt some paragraphs from this in regard to Chan's letter. I don't expect this to be printed in entirety. Incidentally, I have the impression that both *Prince of Aunwan* and *Song of Rhiannon* are recent works. Is this so, or not?

Terri Williams

Portland, Oregon

After reading both Gene McGovern's letter and Margaret Hannay's response in *Mythlore* 15, I am at a loss as to why they consider "Priestesses in the



Grima
Wormtongue

Church?" the least persuasive of Lewis's essays, unless it is only because they disagree with him. Disagreement is their right, but let's look at the essay to see if it really is *weak* (which is what I assume as the context for "least persuasive").

Some introductory remarks on the general subject of priests might be helpful.

The designation of priests is exclusively God's choice, and it is apparently not based on the merit system. Note the outcome of Korah's attempt to burn incense before the Lord based on the argument that all the congregation of Israel was holy. (Numbers 16)

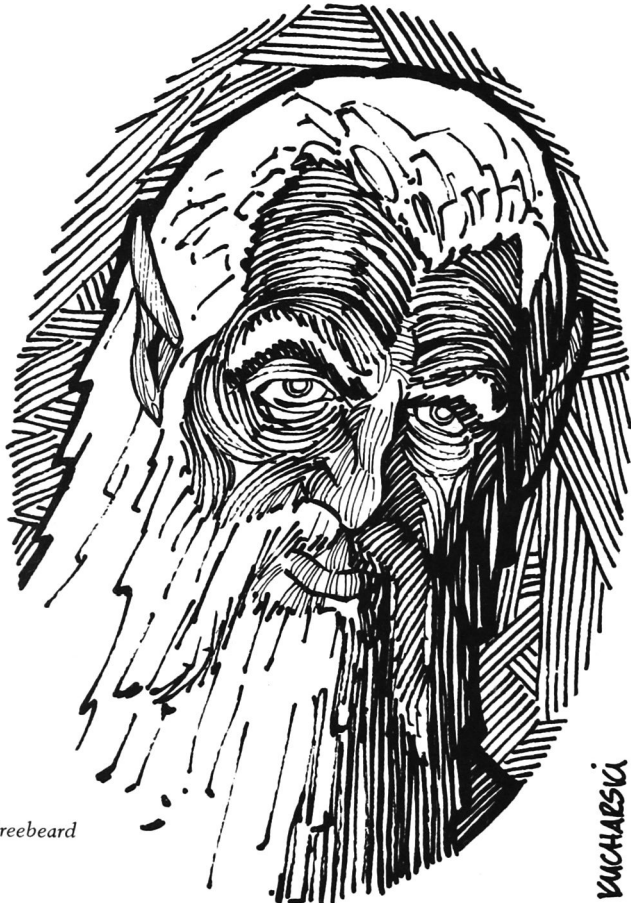
There were strict regulations for fulfillment of priestly duties in the Old Testament beyond the lineage requirement. They included regulations on uncleanness and physical defects. Interestingly, both prospective priest and prospective sacrifice were disqualified on the basis of physical defects. (Lev. 21 and 22) (Contrary to Margaret Hannay's assertion, the argument against women priestesses based on menstruation would be a strictly theolog-

ical argument if taken from this context. It would not be a "superstitious taboo" unless God is a giver of such, in which case priests themselves would be products of superstitious taboo.) In the New Testament requirements were changed but not abrogated. (I Tim. 3; Titus 1)

Keeping this background in mind, two principles of priesthood become apparent:

- 1) God chooses who shall serve Him and His people as priests; they do not choose themselves.
- 2) God ordains the qualifications they must fulfill to serve as priests. This is not the responsibility of the congregation of the church or of the priests themselves.

Thus, in the designation of either who will be priests or what rules shall apply to them it is



Treebeard

VACHARSIA

exclusively a matter of God's choice and not at all a matter of our standards or preferences.

Well, what does Lewis say in "Priestesses in the Church"? Surprisingly, he affirms the legitimacy of two points used to support ordination of women as priests. First, women can fulfill purely pastoral duties as well as men. By this he admits that merit is not at issue. Second, women have played an important role in the religious life of both Israel and Christendom. There were prophetesses in both Old Testament and New Testament scriptural accounts. But, as he points out, though there were prophetesses, there were no priestesses. Why?

It is important to stop at this point to consider how the reasoning on this issue must progress. Lewis does not try to prove that women should or should not be priests from natural reason. Rather the argument for priests must be built another way, for the requirements for priests are known only through revelation. We do not discover them; they are given to us. As Lewis says, these understandings are "opaque to our reason though not contrary to it." That is, we could not think of them ourselves, but once we are given them we can see some of the logic behind them. Thus, the argument of

"Priestesses in the Church?" must be radically different in structure than, for example, that in *Miracles*. The one is "opaque"; the other is self-evident. Perhaps the difference can be better expressed on a different issue. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to construct a proof in which the necessity of Jesus's death for the salvation of men would be self-evident. Nevertheless, we know through revelation that it was. And, once knowing that, we can construct a reasonable case or explanation for it (as Lewis does in *Mere Christianity*). The proof is there, but one must have already started to believe for it to be effective.

To return to the issue at hand, why no priestesses? Because, as Lewis explains, the priest is a representative. The priest represents man to God and God to man. In the capacity of representative the priest must meet certain symbolic requirements to be effective. (Hebrews 5 and 7-9 give us some of Christ's qualifications for being the perfect and eternal High Priest.) To represent man to God, either men or women could serve because mankind is both of them. However, to represent God to man there is need for further requirements, for God is quite different than man. If the imagery of Scripture is inspired and if imagery is at all important, the weight of the evidence points toward the assumption that God is masculine when compared to a feminine humanity. That is, God is our Father, and we are the bride of Christ. Thus, the priest with his masculinity writ small (because it is merely sexual) nevertheless demonstrates to some degree a specific God-like quality the priestess cannot. Thus,

Only one wearing the masculine uniform can (provisionally, until the Parousia) represent the Lord to the Church: for we are all, corporately and individually, feminine to Him.

He goes on to say that in the Church we not only deal with male and female as facts of nature, "but as live and awful shadows of realities utterly beyond our control and largely beyond our direct knowledge."

We must now return to our previous point about the necessary style of the argument. Lewis does not mean for this proof to be so self-evident that if we were setting up a church without Divine guidance we would automatically ordain priests rather than priestesses. Rather, in view of the scriptural evidence of priests and not of priestesses and the historical evidence that the mainline of Christendom (East, West, and Reformation) has ordained priests (and pastors) rather than priestesses, is it not reasonable to assume that there is something about masculinity that better images and symbolizes God than about femininity? Further, does not the predominantly masculine imagery used for God and Christ support that thesis?

I think that the assertion that it is a weak argument is based on the expectation that this argument should be philosophical (based on natural evidence) rather than theological (based on revelation and church practice). That is not to say that there may not be strong arguments to counter Lewis's thesis. It is only to say that this argument will not fall by itself and needs strong refutation if it is to fall.

Anders Stenstrom

Stockholm, Sweden

I was happy to read about the *Silmarillion* in December, 1976, *Mythprint*, and am greatly intrigued about Gandalf's true nature, if he is not a Vala (about the Balrog being a fallen Vala, I think bal- tells us it is so). I look forward to discovering this and so many other things in *Silmarillion*, and I hope especially for much more Elvish words and grammar. "Nan Elmoth" in the same *Mythprint* is a promise, but "Maia" is, I suspect, only an allusion to the Greek Maia, daughter of Atlas, mother of Hermes, and one of the Pleiades, or to

the Roman goddess Maia, spouse of Vulcanus and the origin for the month-name May. There is a story about the first one in *Mary Poppins*.

Mary M. Stolzenbach

San Jose, Costa Rica

I. Margaret Purdy (*Mythlore* 15, p. 23) "read somewhere" that Tolkien's eyes were gray. Louise D. Morrison (p. 37) describes them as kindly and blue. The second seems to me almost bound to be spurious. (*Kindly?*) But does anybody know? Or was changing eye-color one of the Wizard's many talents?

II. I am grateful for the information on Michael Scot, and embarrassed to discover most of it is right here in my *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I went to the EB in search of an answer for Alexei Kondratiev's question about Williams' "young pope Deodatus, Egyptian-born." The EB lists two possibilities: Saint Deusdedit, pope 615-618; Adeodatus, pope 672-678. No mention of age or country of birth. (The *Catholic Encyclopedia* might have more information.) A saint might seem more nearly to fit Williams' bill. Williams speaks of the Church's resisting the Mohammedan heresy, and it is to be noted that Egypt fell to the Arabs about 640, so that Williams may envisage the Pope as a refugee from Islam. Arthur has been roughly dated around 500 by some scholars, but I would assume exact history or chronology to be far outside Williams' concern.

Pursuing the matter in *Arthurian Torso*, I happened upon these lines, quoted by Lewis from Williams' poem "The Coming of Merlin":

In the wood . . . no strife
is except growth from the roots, nor reaction but repose;
vigours of joy drive up; rich-ringed moments
thick in their trunks thrive, young-leaved their voices.

I wonder if anyone else has suggested that these lines may have influenced the conception of the Wood Between the Worlds in *The Magician's Nephew*.

III. Regarding Judith Brown's speculation on the future Pendragon, Ransom says specifically to Camilla, "You carry [Logres'] future in your body." (Macmillan paperback, THS, p. 228).

But this possible child is little stressed in comparison with the child Jane Studdock failed to bear "by whom the enemies should have been put out of Logres for a thousand years." (THS, p. 278) I have a feeling our author may have been absent-minded in starting these two hares at once. Was Jane's child, too, supposed to have been a Pendragon? Jane was a Tudor by birth. (Of course, Merlin in his fierceness might not have realized that God could take other steps, by means of Arthur and Camilla.)

Ransom's successor is nowhere indicated, but Arthur Denniston does seem the best immediate possibility.

IV. Doesn't Hannay realize that the "*Abece-darium Philosophicum*" is entirely a spoof, turning commonplaces of various schools of philosophy into light verse, and having no bearing on whether or not Lewis himself believed Matter or Not-Being, either one, to be "female"? I feel that his actual concepts on hierarchy and on gender as a trans-sexual reality, whether true or false, are miles above the kind of footling taking-of-offense which seems to be the stock in trade of feminist critics.

Also -- it is specifically stated that at the coming of Viritribia "they all" began to talk brilliantly (p. 321, THS), not just the men. Can't we at least be accurate?

Dirk W. Mosig, Ph.D.

Dept. of Psychology,
Americus, Georgia

I feel obligated to comment on the letter by

L. Sprague de Camp which appeared in *Mythlore* No. 14 (December 1976), in which he tried to apply to C. S. Lewis the same Procrustean and pseudopsychological approach he forced on H. P. Lovecraft in *Lovecraft: A Biography* (Doubleday, 1975).

I think that your response in defense of C. S. Lewis was quite adequate -- you were essentially correct in stating that C. S. Lewis's life did not fit the "schizoid mama's boy" pattern suggested by Mr. de Camp. Nevertheless, neither did H. P. Lovecraft's, and for almost the same reasons you enumerated in C. S. Lewis's case.

Lovecraft, like C. S. Lewis, had many good friends at school, and while being an individual, he was not a loner or a recluse. His lifelong friendships with Alfred Galpin, Frank Belknap Long, W. Paul Cook, Reinhart Kleiner, and many others,



show that he was capable of deep, warm, and lasting relationships. He never discriminated against, or in any way injured anyone who came in personal contact with him, and he had the ability to make friends easily. He attended the meetings of the now legendary Kalem Club in New York City, and visited many of his friends in various parts of the country.

While it is true that Lovecraft's mother was a neurotic, overprotective woman, it does not follow that Lovecraft became a mama's boy as the consequence, nor that the failure of his marriage or his care of his ailing aunt, Mrs. Gamwell, can be attributed to a need for a surrogate mother.

Lovecraft's marriage was a failure for reasons of incompatibility as well as of financial indigency, for Lovecraft was unable to find a paying market for his literary talents that would allow him to support his wife, or some other form of employment in the New York City of the mid-1920's -- and not because he didn't try. It is rather absurd to state that his marriage failed because his wife was not old enough to be his mother, but such an inane statement is hardly surprising coming from Mr. de Camp, who has demonstrated a unique talent for inanity in his *Lovecraft: A Biography* and elsewhere. (Incidentally, I should add that Sonia Haft Greene Davis, Lovecraft's wife, when interviewed years later by the Lovecraft scholar, Mr.

R. Alain Everts, indicated that her late husband had been sexually active and a satisfactory lover, as Mr. de Camp well knows, although he is not one to allow himself to be confused by the evidence.)

Since Lovecraft was the last surviving male member of his family, it is hardly surprising or abnormal that he took care of Mrs. Gamwell (who at one time suffered a broken leg and depended entirely on her nephew for care). Since when is the care of an ailing elderly relative an indication of a schizoid personality or of a need for a mother surrogate?

I should add that I have been studying H. P. Lovecraft's life and works intensively since 1970 (I am currently writing a critical-analytical study of Lovecraft for Twayne's U.S. Authors Series), and that I do not regard Mr. de Camp as an authority on H. P. Lovecraft. His schoolmasterish biography of the man is studded with errors and is more a rehash of information available elsewhere than a monument of original scholarship. To make up for the paucity of new data, Mr. de Camp cluttered his book with literally hundreds of pages of verbal



garbage: value judgments, opinions, armchair psychodiagnoses, amusing attempts at freshman literary criticism, high school lectures, and countless digressions of no value to the reader of a biography. His generally unsympathetic and condescending -- ever derogatory -- attitude toward his subject has led some to compare his book to the Rev. Griswold's slanderous biography of Edgar Allan Poe, and Mr. Donald Wandrei, a long-time friend of Lovecraft's, has summed it up best by calling the book a "biograffito."

But Mr. de Camp has carried his inanities further. A brief examination of his recent Arkham House book, *Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers*, reveals it to be a collection of biograffiti, not only of H. P. Lovecraft, but of a number of other fantasy writers, on whose lives the insensitive author has conducted even less original research -- or, most likely, no original research.

Mr. de Camp's best work has been the debunking of pseudo-sciences in a few mediocre volumes. Regrettably he seems to labor under the mistaken assumption that major fantasy writers are also in need of "debunking," or that an approach which worked on Mary Baker Eddy or on Scientology is applicable to every major fantasiste -- one can only smile at such a naive lack of originality.

Mr. de Camp is obviously no biographer, for he seems to have no idea of how to go about the writ-

ing of an objective biography. The idea of presenting factual data, sans the unsolicited embellishment of his boring and ill-conceived opinions, seems to have never occurred to him -- apparently he does not believe his readers are capable of making up their own minds, or he is so insecure of his conclusions that he fears no one will share them unless it be by force-feeding, a pathetic spectacle.

It is clear from an examination of the pointless plot-summaries and the appallingly superficial evaluations of Lovecraft's fiction in *Lovecraft: A Biography*, that Mr. de Camp is no literary critic. And after reading all his pseudopsychological nonsense and preposterous psychodiagnoses, it is obvious that he is no psychologist, either.

Mr. de Camp may or may not be a mama's boy himself (his fixation with the idea certainly smacks of projection) -- I do not know, nor do I care to find out. But he obviously does suffer of a curious problem, which might be called "the schoolmaster syndrome," a condition particularly pitiful when it leads him to pass judgment on his ethical, intellectual, and creative betters, such as C. S. Lewis and H. P. Lovecraft.

Perhaps it was about time someone debunked the debunker.

F. W. Edwards

Coquitlam, British Columbia,
Canada

In *Mythlore* 14, L. Sprague de Camp considered the question of whether or not there is a connection between the urge to write fantasy and a mother complex. Using a form of inductive reasoning he carelessly came to the conclusion that the pattern of the mother complex "stands out so conspicuously among fantasists as to suggest a causal connection." (*Mythlore* 14, p. 27)

If any inductive argument is to be effective, it must adhere to the following principles: 1) A sufficient number of examples or facts must be cited to justify the conclusion; 2) Each example or fact must be proven; 3) The examples or facts must be typical and not isolated instances; and 4) The supporting instances must follow a common principle.¹ Mr. de Camp has certainly violated all of these basic regulations.

The four examples of fantasy writers with a so-called mother complex, namely R. E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft, E. A. Poe, and C. S. Lewis, hardly serve as a sufficient number of examples to make a generalization about all fantasy writers. Just because some of these showed a tendency towards a mother complex does not mean that all, or even most, fantasy writers do. The generalization, given by Mr. de Camp, is absurd, especially when one stops to consider just how many fantasy writers there really are. For example, the following show no mother complex in any way (for the sake of brevity, I have elected to mention only a few of the better known authors): P. S. Beagle, Richard Adams, Hannes Bok, E. R. Eddison, Ursula K. LeGuin, H. R. Haggard, Fritz Leiber, George MacDonald, William Morris, and J. R. R. Tolkien. With this wide range of fantasy writers in mind, how does one conclude that the mother complex stands out so conspicuously among fantasists? The examples given by Mr. de Camp do not justify his generalized conclusion.

Although we are told that each of the examples are "mama's boys," Mr. de Camp has not shown in any way how they do in fact fit the generalized pattern of the "puny schizoid"; he has not made a convincing proof that they actually do fit the pattern. This is probably due to the fact that the pattern is grossly over-simplified and does not allow for character differences to exist.

These examples can also not be accounted as typical examples. Each of these writers had their own unique character traits. As a result, they were each probably affected differently by the deaths of their mothers. Hence, it follows that

the degree to which they had (or might have had) a mother complex would be different too. This follows, since the mother complex is directly affected by the character traits of the person in question. Therefore, since it is unlikely that the mother complex was the same for any two of the examples given by Mr. de Camp, it is even more unlikely that any of these examples could be considered as typical examples. (In fact, these authors did react differently to the deaths of their mothers. For example, note the reactions of R. E. Howard and H. P. Lovecraft; they were quite different.)

The examples do not follow a common principle because they are not, in the strict literary sense, all fantasy writers. As H. P. Lovecraft shrewdly observed, it was the growth of an imitative Gothic school which "inspired the real weavers of cosmic terror -- the line of actual artists (of supernatural horror) beginning with Poe."² It seems to me that Lovecraft also followed this same trend of writing, with such books as *At The Mountains of Madness* and *The Lurking Fear*. Thus, while Lewis and Howard may be considered as fantasy writers, Poe and Lovecraft cannot. Since these instances are not of the same class, in that they do not follow the same type of writing, generalizations cannot be accurately made using them as support. Even Mr. de Camp must see that he has committed an almost-unforgivable slip of the pen here.

These points, however, are not the only holes in his inductive reasoning. He clearly commits the fallacy called "Non sequitor," which occurs when a connection is made (or, in this case, attempted) between two things when actually no such connection exists.³ The urge to write fantasy has nothing whatsoever to do with a mother complex. Fantasy writing is clearly a literary expression, while the mother complex is a psychological expression. The one is definitely not dependent on the other; no connection exists between them.

It is a fault to interchange the terms, "mama's boy" and "oedipal writer," as Mr. de Camp has dared to do. The term "mama's boy" simply suggests someone under the strict protection and guidance of his mother or some other suitable substitute. Anyone having read the Oedipus cycle would realize that the term "oedipal writer" suggests something quite different; namely a stronger relationship with sexual involvement. The differences may at first appear to be slight, but the total outcome of these relationships cannot and should not be classed as one and the same thing.

Lastly, the letter, written by Mr. de Camp, demands and begs (all at the same time) the question: how, exactly, is there a connection between the urge to write fantasy and the mother complex possible? Although he means to answer this question, he fails to do so. Perhaps he became too preoccupied by Lin Carter's fabulous "puny schizoid" pattern. At any rate, if a theoretical connection could exist between the urge to write fantasy and the mother complex, he certainly forgot to illustrate its plausibility. Certainly, from a practical point of view, the connection does not hold any water! It seems to me that Mr. de Camp would have done far better (and done us a royal favor) if he had delved into the matter with more meat, researching the topic more and giving more superior explanations. In fact, I challenge him to do so!

I wish to end this rather lengthy paper with one small comment on Glen GoodKnight's editorial to L. Sprague de Camp's letter; a comment on a comment, as it were. Glen nobly reasons Lewis's inability at competitive sports with the lack of a joint in his thumbs. However, this is no excuse! It may explain away a possible writing difficulty but can hardly serve as a reasonable explanation of why Lewis was not good at competitive sports. For example, he would still have done well at a sport like soccer, if the thumb joint were his only problem. And if anyone thinks that

soccer is not competitive, I invite him or her to come and play here in British Columbia!

My main point is this: C. S. Lewis needs no one to find excuses for him, even if he was bad at competitive sports. If he was bad, then he was just plain bad and that is all there is to it! Really! One can hardly expect everyone to be entirely perfect in everything, even if they are our idols. Remember the golden rule: only gods may claim to be gods!

¹ Richard L. Cherry, Robert J. Conley and Bernard A. Hirsh, "Argument and Persuasion" in *Structure and Purpose: The Essay* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975), pp. 308-309.

² H. P. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973), p. 25.

³ Cherry, Conley and Hirsh, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

Margaret R. Purdy

Ridgewood, New Jersey

I was delighted by *Mythlore* 15.



James Sreckels asks about elf-rings and wizards. He says that as an "angel," Gandalf had no need of Narya, the Ring of Fire. I have two things to say about this. Firstly, it seems to me that the Great Rings were not exactly sources of power in the first place; their function was more to channel and direct to specific uses power that was already there. The One Ring itself gave power only in proportion to the "stature," or inherent strength, of its wearer. The other Great Rings probably worked similarly.

Narya, the Ring of Fire, had as its function the very sort of influence that Gandalf would need for his mission -- to "rekindle hearts in a world that grows chill." (III, p. 456, Ballantine) Cirdan the Shipwright knew perfectly well that this Ring would do little good just sitting in the Grey Havens, which he himself did not plan to leave. Gandalf, on the other hand, was peripatetic and could carry its rekindling power to all those who needed it, something much more important than preserving symmetry.

Making the ring invisible on Gandalf's hand was not a "poor ploy," either; it was an inherent property and power of the Elven-rings. Galadriel's Narya was invisible to all but the Ringbearer, and no one ever saw either of the other two elven-rings until the One had been destroyed and they had lost

their powers.

Concerning Radagast and the other two wizards -- a subject that has puzzled me, too -- the reason that Radagast's role seems minor may be that his job was to work with creatures, notably beasts and birds, that lie outside of the main story. We know already that at least some of the fauna was intelligent. The Eagles are the most obvious example, and think of the fox who came upon the sleeping hobbits and remarked upon the queerness of it. If Sauron and Saruman were able to corrupt beasts and birds for their own purposes, then I would say that these creatures needed their Wizard as well. As for the other two, I have only a couple of guesses. One is that, like Radagast, the other two wizards may have been assigned to races that lie outside of the main narrative. Gandalf says, "To the East I go not," but there may have been a wizard who did. How successful such a wizard may have been is debatable, considering how many Easterlings Sauron was able to muster, but after all, the Easterlings are intelligent beings, too, and presumably are as much *Erusen* as the Dunedain, despite the pretensions of the latter. The other guess is that the other two wizards had already accomplished the tasks they were set, and had gone back over Sea.

I always like to think that one of the other Wizards could have been female.

Query: If "Cirdan" means "Shipwright" (singular) and "Celerdain" means "lampwrights" (plural, as in "Rath Celerdain"), would "Lampwright," singular, be "calardan"? The Quenya word for "lamp" is *calma*, which seems to sustain this hypothesis.

Paul H. Kocher

San Luis Obispo, California

It is well known that Tolkien contributed to *The Jerusalem Bible* (1966) an English translation of *The Book of Proverbs*.

This fact never struck me as having any particular connection with *The Lord of the Rings* until I ran across a reference in *The Book of Joshua* (4:20; 4:9-10) to a place called "Gilgal," where the Israelites camped after crossing the River Jordan. Now the name of the elf King of Berelien who joins Elendil in the Last Alliance against Sauron is "Gilgalad" (*LotR* III, 363); the close resemblance to "Gilgal" is obvious. As if this were not enough, the great Queen of Lothlorien is Galadriel, a name which likewise has its likeness to the names of both the place and the King. Worth remarking also is the further fact that "Gilgal" is mentioned not merely once but several times in the *Joshua* episode and in *The Jerusalem Bible* even has a considerable footnote (p. 279).

What I'm suggesting, of course, is that Tolkien as an Old Testament scholar may have remembered, either unconsciously or consciously, the Gilgal episode and fashioned the *LotR* names after it. Has anyone run across other examples of the same kind of thing?

Lee Burwasser

Alexandria, Virginia

Having just mailed my dues to the Mythopoeic Society, I venture to write and ask a question which has puzzled me. If the Society has dealt with the subject, I would be grateful for citations on it. If not, it might be a matter of interest to a sufficient number of members as to be worth looking into.

We have C. S. Lewis's assertion in *Surprised By Joy* that he was ardent in his affliction of the Northern Thing, and that he disliked the Disney dwarfs. Why, then, are the dwarfs in his Narnia tales so little improvement on the Disney vulgarization, so inferior to Tolkien's dwarves as to be almost another people? To restate, for the benefit of Lewis fans, in a less judgmental fashion:

why are Lewis's Trumpkin, Nikabrik, Poggin et al not only far different from the Khazad of Middle Earth, but hardly traceable to the *duergar* of the Eddas? From what other source do the dwarfs of Narnia derive?

I have, of course, my own ideas on the matter, but I am far from learned in matters CSLewisian. If any student of the Narnia tales can find, or has found, the sources of the Narnian dwarfs, I would appreciate knowing about it. (I do not, however, promise to call them "dwarves.")

Ellie Farrell

Pacific Grove, California

Here's yet another reply to Mary W. Stolzenbach's query (*Mythlore* 13) about the factual/fictional existence of Michael Scot. He is mentioned (but not bodily present) in John Bellairs' novel, *The Face in the Frost*, as the teacher of the magicians Prospero and Melichus, good and bad wizards respectively. Prospero mentions that Scot is buried in Melrose Abbey, which is one of the suggested burial places of the historical Michael Scot -- as chronicled by Sir Walter Scott in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" -- so Bellairs apparently used the real person as his model. Interestingly, Prospero (as Bellairs says in his book: ". . . and not the one you are thinking of, either!") has a best friend named Roger Bacon, also a magician (though not one of Scott's students). The historical Bacon was a contemporary of Scot and praised Scot's astronomical and mathematical work (Costain, *The Magnificent Century*). So far I haven't found a historical (or otherwise) predecessor of Melichus -- perhaps just as well considering his ambitions -- but maybe someone else has run across *this* name elsewhere. (See what you started, Mary?!)

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I would like to add a footnote to Jessica Kemball-Cook's discussion of the name *Beleriand* (February *Mythprint*). She links it to *Belerion*, presumably the Celtic name of Land's End in Cornwall, and derives it from the stem *Bel-* which appears in many Celtic personal names. A more precise clue to the origin of the name may be found in Alwyn and Brinley Rees' *Celtic Heritage*: [in a discussion of the name *Balor*] ". . . there is some evidence to suggest that the *Bellerus* whose story (according to Milton) was linked with the Cornish St. Michael's Mount was, like the Balor of folktales, a one-eyed thieving giant" (p. 365). *Belor* is indeed a plausible British equivalent (or variant) of *Balor*. Since it appears the Celts were fond of ascribing local habitations to their gods (Manannan/Manawyddan on the Isle of Man, Nudd/Lludd in England, Lug (Lleu) in Gaul), it is not unreasonable to suppose that *Belerion* represents the earthly residence of Balor/Beler, and that Balor was thus the tutelary god of ancient Cornwall (remember that as a Fomor he would have been a god to the pagan Celts, not a mere bogey).

I don't know whether, at the time he invented the name *Beleriand*, Tolkien's delvings into Celtic philology were deep enough to have made him aware of all these implications. But surely he must have been aware of the Celtic root *bel-* 'bright', and of its phonetic similarity to the Finnish root *val-* (same meaning) which he also used prominently.

LETTERS OF COMMENT

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