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Ruth Berman

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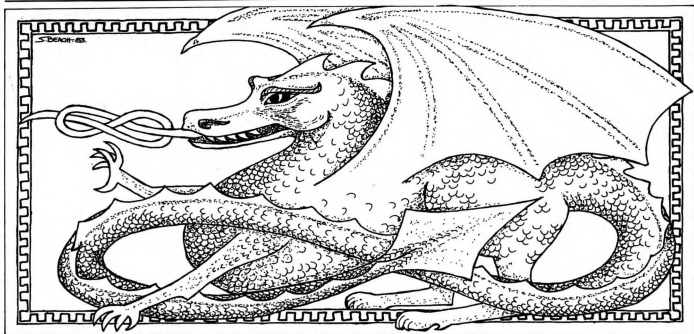


Abstract

Discusses the revival of dragons in fantasy after a long hiatus (perhaps spurred by Victorian studies of dinosaur fossils), which both influenced and was further refined by Tolkien and Lewis, with a brief look at dragons in fantasy since their time.

Additional Keywords

Dragons in C.S. Lewis; Dragons in J.R.R. Tolkien; Dragons in literature; Dragons in mythology; Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Dragons; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Dragons



Dragons for Tolkien and Lewis

Ruth Berman

When J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were boys, dragons were only just beginning to come back into literature after a hiatus of more than two centuries. During the eighteenth century, most kinds of fantasy were discouraged. During the nineteenth century, fantasy became a genre, but the absence of dragons among the wealth of ghosts, witches, devils, mer-folk, fairies, etc., is striking. Monsters in general were rare, but dragons were much rarer. Nineteenth century fantasists invented original monsters -- Lewis Carroll's Jabberwock and Snark, Lina and the other patchwork beasts led by Curdie in George MacDonald's *The Princess and Curdie* -- or they made use of less familiar mythical beasts -- Lewis Carroll's Gryphon, Frank R. Stockton's Griffin ("The Griffin and the Minor Canon"), the Salamander and his snake-daughter in E.T.A. Hoffman's "The Golden Pot," assorted snake-women in Coleridge's "Christabel," Keats' "Lamia," or Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Elsie Venner, or the unusually varied menagerie of a sphinx, a phoenix, and an ouroboros-snake/magnet in Novalis' Klingsohr's Tale (in Heinrich von Ofterdingen). In Andrew Lang's *Prince Frigo* there is a battle between a Firedrake and a Remora. The former ought to be a dragon by its name, but it has horns and hooves; the latter might as well be a dragon by its description, a long snaky ice-creature coiling glacier-like over the land, but Lang did not choose to call it one. It was not until after the turn of the century that Lang included a dragon in one of his own stories, in "The Magician Who Wanted More" (*Tales of a Fairy Court*, 1906), and even then it was a dragon that wasn't real but only the Magician in disguise.

Until almost the end of the century, the only major nineteenth century dragon was Tolkien's own favorite, Fafnir, appearing not only in Wagner's Ring Cycle of operas, but also in William Morris' translation of *The Volsung Saga*, and in his poem

Sigurd the Volsung, as well as in a version retold for youngsters in *The Red Fairy Book*, edited by Andrew Lang.

Tolkien has described his fascination with dragons in his essay, "On Fairy-Stories":

I desired dragons with a profound desire. Of course, I in my timid body did not wish to have them in the neighbourhood, intruding into my relatively safe world, in which it was, for instance, possible to read stories in peace of mind, free from fear. But the world that contained even the imagination of Fafnir was richer and more beautiful, at whatever cost of peril.²

There were a few Victorian dragons, most of them in poetry. William Morris was fond of dragons in his poetry, including several in the verse-narratives that make up *The Earthly Paradise*; the dragon-like Chimera in "Bellerophon in Lycia," a dragon-woman in "The Lady of the Land," the dragon guarding the apples of the Hesperides in "The Golden Apples" (Tennyson also had a version of the Hesperidean dragon in "The Hesperides"). He also had several dragons in *The Life and Death of Jason*, which was to have been part of *The Earthly Paradise*, but grew too long for it: not only the dragon guarding the golden fleece called for by the original legend, but a swarm of marsh dragons along the river north of Colchis, and a glimpse of the Hesperides and their guardian dragon. (He omitted the dragons that draw Medea's chariot when she flees Iolcos.) In his prose fiction, however, Morris preferred humanoid wonders -- witches, magicians, un-earthly maidens.

The reluctance to use dragons was probably a result of the too rigid identification of the dragon

with the dragon of the Book of Revelations, that is, Satan. The most important uses of the dragon before dragons disappeared in literature had been the dragon which is the devil, fought by St. George, who is Holiness, in Book I of Spenser's Faerie Queene (sixteenth century) and the dragon which is the shape imposed upon the devil when he reports the Fall in Book X of Milton's Paradise Lost (seventeenth century).

Tolkien implicitly complained of this identification in Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics, the essay in which he successfully defended the structural integrity of the monsters of Beowulf against earlier critics who had thought the poem chaotic. Tolkien stressed the dragon's non-allegorical nature in the poem:

The dragon wields a physical fire, and covets gold not souls, he is slain with iron in his belly. Beowulf's byrnie was made by Weland, and the iron shield he bore against the serpent by his own smiths; it was not yet the breastplate of righteousness, nor the shield of faith for the quenching of all the fiery darts of the wicked.³

He had already commented that conscious allegory in general might have harmed the poem: "had the matter [of the theme of man at war with the world, doomed to overthrow in Time] been so explicit, his poem would certainly have been the worse" (p. 16). In theory, there is perhaps no reason why allegory should be less effective than subconscious symbol; in the practice of such a poet as Spenser (but Tolkien did not like Spenser) allegory was supremely effective. Nevertheless, it is true in practice for many writers that a conscious allegory is harder to develop than a concrete figure with perhaps unconscious significance. Certainly, nineteenth century writers drew no inspiration from the equation of dragon and Satan.

Still, the equation was natural enough, given the primary attitude toward dragons in previous Western mythologies. The dragon was a creature of evil, an adversary to be killed by the hero, St. George, Daniel, Zeus, Apollo, Sigurd, Beowulf, etc. Sometimes, though, the dragon was not in itself evil, but was a faithful guardian, killed by the hero who has come to win the treasure -- Hercules and the Hesperidean dragon, Jason and the dragon of the Golden Fleece. These dragons do not hoard gold on their own (unlike the dragons of Sigurd and Beowulf), and there is often a strong element of pity for the unfortunate loyal guardians in the way of the marauding (however heretical) champions. Sometimes the Western dragon may even be admired, as in the dragons of Wales and King Arthur which represent heraldisically the strength of a nation.

As Joseph Fontenrose shows in his study of classical dragons, Python, the dragon is naturally ambiguous. Hero and dragon easily change places in stories, and even the Western dragon has a benevolent side while the Oriental dragon, which is primarily benevolent, has its destructive side:

The Chinese dragons are in general benevolent and beneficent deities, who send rain and bring good crops. They also bring thunderstorms, tempests, whirlwinds, and floods. Like Zeus or Baal, they bring both good and bad weather; for the god, we should not forget, can send both good and evil upon

mortal men. And at this point we should also realise that dragons and snakes did not have a uniformly bad reputation in Greece and the Near East. Greece too had its benevolent reptilian deities: snakes that were spirits of springs, genii loci, embodiments or attributes of gods, e.g., Asklepios, Athena, Apollo . . . ; Zeus himself.⁴

The allegorical identification of the dragon with Satan made it difficult to make use of the ambiguity which properly belonged to dragons. Some of the monsters in nineteenth century fantasy were not evil at all, and some were hostile without being morally evil (Jabberwocks must be killed, and it may be a good idea to try to eliminate Snarks from the ecology, but whiffing in tulgy woods and looking grave at puns are not sins). Some were evil, but not evil enough to be represented as Satanic: the patchwork monsters in The Princess and Curdie are expiating their sins, and one is a little like a dragon in appearance -- a winged serpent with tiny legs -- but to call it a dragon would be to grant it an absolute, and inappropriate degree of evil. By contrast, when C.S. Lewis had a human devolved into a monster and working back to humanity through grace, he felt free to turn Eustace into a straightforward dragon (The Voyage of the Dawn Treader). MacDonald included the corpse of an actual dragon in Phantastes, but only briefly, described in one paragraph (in chapter 23).

When nineteenth century writers did want to write about Satanic evil, they generally chose a human shape. The use of a monster to represent absolute evil, after all, implies that evil is an outside influence imposed upon innocent humanity. The writers in the same age that produced Freud were more interested in evil as an element of humanity -- the Doppelgänger of James Hogg's Justified Sinner, Mary Shelley's embittered Monster, Goethe's Mephistopheles, Stevenson's Mr. Hyde.

Dragons were thus inappropriate symbols for most nineteenth century fantasy writers, and even where otherwise appropriate, too rigid, too obvious, too clumsy for use. The dragon had to be separated from its Christian allegorical meaning before it could be easily used by modern writers, Christian and non-Christian alike.

Meanwhile, dragons were being brought into favor by the discovery of dinosaurs. Stephen Prickett has shown in his Victorian Fantasy that dinosaurs influenced the portrayal of dragons; illustrators soon began drawing saurian monsters (his earliest example, apart from illustrations to books of science, is Tennial's Jabberwock, 1871), and the dragons they drew tended to be more saurian, with shorter, bulkier bodies, and less serpentine than they had been before.⁵ Prickett does not discuss the gap between the appearance of dragons in illustration and in writing (his earliest example of the written dragon is E. Nesbit's Book of Dragons, 1900). The gap is probably a result of the allegorical interpretation of the dragon. A Jabberwock drawn by Tennial as a distorted dragon is still a Jabberwock, not a dragon. Where Carroll might allow himself a simple mention of dragons as appearing in a Latin exercise-book belonging to the characters -- "Their tutor . . . had tried to extract a moral . . . as in the words 'Influence of Sympathy in United Action,' which stood opposite to the anecdote 'Balbus was assisting his mother-in-law to convince the dragon,'"⁶ A.B. Frost, the illustrator, made a full-page (p. 5) illustration

out of the sentence, showing the frustrated Balbus and his mother-in-law with heaps of reference books about them, and the dragon looking very sceptical indeed. It was a dragon, but it did not recall visually those more snaky dragons trampled underfoot in paintings of St. George or the Angel Michael.

Tolkien himself disliked the identification of dragons and dinosaurs:

I did not like being told that these creatures were "dragons!" . . . Children expect the differences they feel but cannot analyse to be explained by their elders, or at least recognized, not to be ignored or denied. I was keenly alive to the beauty of "Real things", but it seemed to me quibbling to confuse this with the wonder of "Other things". I was eager to study Nature, actually more eager than I was to read most fairy-stories; but I did not want to be quibbled into Science and cheated out of Faerie by people who seemed to assume that by some kind of original sin I should prefer fairy-tales, but according to some kind of new religion I ought to be induced to like science.
 ("On Fairy-Stories," Tree and Leaf, p. 66.)

As an "explanation" of dragons, the identification is certainly too reductive to be satisfying. (Furthermore, it is probably incorrect. Humans never met live dinosaurs, and extrapolation from existing snakes, lizards, alligators, etc. to the dragon of myth is more likely than extrapolation from the occasional bone -- the bones are more likely to have influenced the giants of myth.) But the realization that large reptiles, even flying reptiles, if not fire-breathing ones, had existed drew attention to the fictional possibilities of dragons, with perhaps an increased awareness of and delight in a dragon's physical beauty and terror (such as Tolkien praised in the *Beowulf*-poet). Tolkien eventually made use of Pterodactyl-like creatures for the steeds of the Nazgul in The Lord of the Rings, but he carefully did not use terms suggestive of dragons to describe them.

In addition to the special interest in dragons prompted by dinosaurs, there was an increasing interest in the study of folktales. As early as 1812 Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm had published their first collection of *Kinder- und Haus-märchen*. As it happened, the German fairy tales had few dragons--only half a dozen among the 210 stories of The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales,⁷ none of them including the dragons in the titles.

A much wider range of dragons became available to the general public when Andrew Lang brought out The Blue Fairy Book and its sequels. These collections mixed folktales from many cultures, re-tellings from ancient myth, and literary tales by such writers as Mme. d'Aulnoy or Hans Christian Andersen. Lang edited a dozen of the colors -- Blue (1889), Red (1890), Green (1892), Yellow (1894), Pink (1897), Grey (1900), Violet (1901), Crimson (1903), Brown (1904), Orange (1906), Olive (1907), and Lilac (1910).

Tolkien evidently read the whole series. In "On Fairy-Stories" he identified himself as "one of the children whom Andrew Lang was addressing -- I was born at about the same time as the Green Fairy Book" (p. 38), discussed in detail stories from the Blue and

Lilac books, and quoted from the Violet preface. Tolkien disagreed with some of Lang's assumptions and preferences, but his overall judgment was that probably no other collections of fairy-stories in English rivaled "either the popularity, or the inclusiveness, or the general merits of the twelve books of twelve colors" (p. 17).

Although Lang shied away from dragons in his original fantasy tales, he was willing to include them where he found them in his sources. He began cautiously: in The Blue Fairy Book dragons appear as minor characters in one story, "The Story of Pretty Goldilocks" (translated from Mme. d'Aulnoy), in which the hero's tasks include getting past two watchful dragons; dragons are mentioned in "The Yellow Dwarf" and, at slightly more length, in the cat's explanation of how she became a cat in "The White Cat" (another d'Aulnoy). But in the only story which Lang translated/compiled himself for the volume, "The Terrible Head," a version of the story of Perseus, Lang did not use "dragon" to describe the monster, but called it only "a monstrous beast" or "a sea creature." H.J. Ford, who did most of the illustrations for the volume (there were also some by G.P. Jacombe Hood), included the dragons in his illustrations to "The Yellow Dwarf" and "The Story of Pretty Goldilocks."

In the second volume, Lang was a little less cautious, and the illustrators continued to be less cautious than their editor. "The Story of Sigurd" included Fafnir, and dragons were mentioned in "The Princess Mayblossom" (from d'Aulnoy) and a Romanian tale, "The Enchanted Pig." Lancelot Speed (who joined Ford in illustrating this volume) had two drawings of Fafnir, and chose to draw the Norka (an undescribed monster) in "The Norka" and some goblins in "The Golden Branch" as dragon-like.

By the third book, Lang was confident enough of his dragons to defend them in the preface:

Probably you who read the tales know very well how much is true and how much is only make-believe If there are frightful monsters in fairy tales, they do not frighten you now, because that kind of monster is no longer going about the world, whatever he may have done long, long ago. He has been turned into stone, and you may see his remains in museums. Therefore, I am not afraid that you will be afraid of the magicians and dragons.⁸

The implicit identification of dragons and dinosaurs in this passage would have irritated Tolkien, but curiously he came close to the same answer in the problem of children's possible fear of monsters: "This is, naturally, often enough what children mean when they ask: 'Is it true?' They mean: 'I like this, but is it contemporary? Am I safe in my bed?' The answer: 'There is certainly no dragon in England today!', is all that they want to hear" ("On Fairy-Stories," p. 40).

In the stories of the third book, a dragon was a character in "The Three Dogs," and dragons were mentioned in "The Blue Bird" (from d'Aulnoy) and "Heart of Ice" (translated from the Comte de Caylus). Ford (the sole illustrator in this volume and in the rest of the series) chose the single sentence in "Heart of Ice" saying that the fairy Gorgonzola rode

away on a dragon as the basis for a splendid full-page drawing printed both as p. 119 and as the frontispiece.

In the following volumes Lang included dragons freely; the next one, The Yellow Fairy Book, had two as title characters, "The Dragon of the North" (an Estonian tale), and "The Dragon and his Grandmother" (from the Grimms -- and in the Grimms' version titled "The Devil and his Grandmother"); there were also several less important dragons, including the inevitable dragon rapid transit so popular among French fairies.

Suddenly, at the very end of the century, three writers turned dragons to effective use in stories of their own creation, by turning the stereotype of St. George slaying the Satanic dragon topsy-turvy: Kenneth Grahame with "The Reluctant Dragon" (in Dream Days, 1898), E. Nesbit with the collection of short stories, The Book of Dragons (1900, printed first the year before in The Strand Magazine), and in America L. Frank Baum with A New Wonderland (1900; reprinted with a change of title and place-name as The Magical Monarch of Mo in 1903), featuring a Purple Dragon as the main antagonist.

The Reluctant Dragon, as Grahame imagined him, is a good dragon, indeed, a lovable dragon; Saint George is able to recognize the dragon's goodness (once it is pointed out to him by the Boy), and the fight between them is a put-up job to satisfy the conventional-minded villagers. Nesbit's dragons and Baum's Purple Dragon are evil, but comically evil; because they are amusing they are likable in almost the same way as the Reluctant Dragon, even though they lack his sweetness of temper. It is not entirely surprising when one of Nesbit's dragons ("The Dragon Tamers") is tamed by kindness and deceit -- and turns into a pussycat. These dragons are defeated not by heroic, militant virtue, but by non-heroic ingenuity.

Two of Nesbit's stories in The Book of Dragons and one of Baum's later stories (the episode of "The Royal Dragon of Spor" in The Enchanted Island of Yew, 1903), are like "The Reluctant Dragon" in explicitly upsetting the legend of St. George. In Nesbit's "The Deliverers of their Country" the statue of the saint refuses to wake up and fight a whole horde of dragons; instead he gives two children some weatherlore from his fellow saint Denis so that they can rain the dragons out. In Nesbit's "The Fairy Kingdom" Princess Sabinette (grand-daughter of George and Princess Sabra) is protected by her inherited dragon-proof equipment, aided by the power of love. Baum's Royal Dragon of Spor, although terrifying to behold, quietly and firmly refuses to fight Prince Marvel, having learned a lesson from St. George's defeat of his (the dragon's) father. The Magical Monarch tries to fight the Purple Dragon heroically at the start of A New Wonderland and fails completely, getting his head bit off for his pains. It takes a mass attack with a giant dental forceps and some luck to defeat the Purple Dragon.

After these three works at the turn of the century, many comic dragons were created -- e.g., Lord Dunsany's "Miss Cubbidge and the Dragon of Romance," Lady Gregory's play The Dragon, the dragons in A.A. Milne's "Us Two" and "Knight-in-Armor" (in Now We Are Six), or the circus Draco in P.L. Travers' Mary Poppins Comes Back. Even Tolkien wrote one, Farmer Giles of Ham (1949), in which the unheroic Farmer Giles defeats and tames the dragon Crypsophylax.

(Considering Tolkien's attachment to Fafnir, it seems a little surprising that he was able to enjoy comic dragons, too.) A rare example of good and primarily non-comic dragons appeared in Kenneth Morris' Book of the Three Dragons (1930).

The comic dragons might have resulted eventually in a stereotype as rigid as that of the Satanic dragon, but Tolkien restored the dragon's potential for primarily non-comic evil in Smaug (The Hobbit, 1937). Smaug has his comic moments -- necessarily, since the chief opponent to this mighty evil is the timid Hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, and seeing the mighty tripped up is one of the basic elements of comedy.

This mixture of comedy and heroism corresponds to Tolkien's moral vision of ordinary humanity as a force for good. As Gandalf said several times, there is more to Hobbits than meets the eye; Elrond's characterization of heroism attempted by the small is: "This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere."⁹

Bilbo, timid though he is, reaches a comic heroism of his own in dealing with Smaug: "Confound you, Smaug, you worm!" he squeaked aloud. "Stop playing hide-and-seek! Give me a light, and then eat me, if you can catch me!"¹⁰ Smaug doesn't answer; it takes more than Bilbo alone to conquer such a dragon. But it takes the unheroic protagonist Bilbo to get the information which enables the heroic minor character Bard of Dale to shoot the dragon.

Tolkien used evil dragons twice more, Glaurung in The Silmarillion (and Unfinished Tales) and the unnamed dragon of the poem "The Hoard" in The Adventures of Tom Bombadil. Glaurung is entirely and uncomically evil:

The Dragon crawled with slow weight to the edge of the cliff, and he did not turn aside, but made ready to spring over the chasm with his great forelegs and then draw his bulk after. Terror came with him; for he did not begin his passage right above, but a little to the northward, and the watchers from beneath could see the huge shadow of his head against the stars; and his jaws gaped, and he had seven tongues of fire. Then he sent forth a blast, so that all the ravine was filled with a red light, and black shadows flying among the rocks; but the trees before him withered and went up in smoke, and stones crashed down into the river. And thereupon he hurled himself forward, and grappled the further cliff with his mighty claws, and began to heave himself across.¹¹

Yet Glaurung is not a symbolic equivalent of Satan. Like most nineteenth (and twentieth) century writers, Tolkien preferred a human figure to symbolize Satan -- Sauron in The Lord of the Rings, Morgoth in The Silmarillion and Unfinished Tales; Morgoth is Glaurung's Master.

In "The Hoard" Tolkien portrayed an ambivalent dragon -- like the elves, the dwarf, and the human hero who have also tried to possess the hoard, the dragon is to be pitied as well as condemned. It has

given way to greed and destroyed its own happiness in the process:

There was an old dragon under grey stone;
his red eyes blinked as he lay alone.
His joy was dead and his youth spent,
he was knobbed and wrinkled, and his limbs
bent
in the long years to his gold chained,¹²
in his heart's furnace the fire waned.¹²

The greed for beauty is a theme Tolkien used many times over. In The Lord of the Rings it is subordinate to greed for the power of the ring, but one form of that temptation is to perceive the ring as too fair to destroy. In other works, the beauty matters more than the power. Thorin's desire to possess the Arkenstone contrasts with Bilbo's generosity in giving it up (and later in giving up the One Ring); the desire to possess the Silarillion destroys many of the Elves. The mythical figure of the dragon and its hoard of gold fitted in well for Tolkien's use in developing this theme again in "The Hoard."

C.S. Lewis did not create any dragon as important in its story, or as memorable as Smaug, but like Tolkien he was fascinated by the idea of dragons -- strong, beautiful, and dangerous. And like Tolkien he mentioned the idea of "the little scaly body of Fafer¹³ as desirable -- although unlike Tolkien he chose to give a list of several figures in Norse myth that brought him joy, instead of singling out the dragon.

As noted, Lewis made use of the dragon as a symbol of (redeemable) evil in the transformation of Eustace in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. He made an unusual use of the Miltonic dragon-as-devil by parodying it in The Screwtape Letters, except that the dragon is omitted in the process. Screwtape is not transformed into a dragon, hydra, or chimera dire, but into a centipede.

In his allegory Pilgrim's Regress Lewis used dragons allegorically with some effectiveness as the final shapes of the excesses of North (rigidity, lack of emotion) and South (carelessness, irrationality). Each dragon is portrayed in a poem (reprinted in Poems as "The Dragon Speaks" and "Dragon-Slayer"). The victorious chant of Vertue the dragon-slayer seems to me to dwell too much on the joy of pulling the brute to pieces; it leaves me wondering if Vertue couldn't have found it in him to give the brute a quicker and more merciful death. "The Dragon Speaks" is the more interesting, with the dragon's song tempting John to greed and at the same time portraying (sympathetically, somewhat as in Tolkien's "The Hoard") how the dragon itself had been tempted and given way to greed. It complains, "In winter night the gold/Freezes through toughest scales my cold belly,"¹⁴ but it is unable to give up the freezing gold.

A dragon-related figure is the giant green serpent, the other form of the green witch, in The Silver Chair. Unlike the nineteenth-century snake-women, she is entirely evil. (The salamander's snake-daughters are apparently good; Keats' Lamia seems to love her human sweetheart genuinely, as does Morris' dragon-woman, and Elsie Venner struggles against her venomous nature; even Geraldine at moments seems to repent of what she is doing to Christabel.)

Morally neutral dragons appear briefly in The Last Battle in a kind of unwinding of evolution. The

modern animals are called out of Narnia by Aslan, and then dinosaur-like creatures come out to eat away the vegetation: "great dragons and giant lizards and featherless birds with wings like bat's wings . . . They went to and fro tearing up the trees by the roots and crunching them up as if they were sticks of rhubarb."¹⁵

In his logical way, Lewis even wondered what an unfallen dragon would be, and included one in Perelandra. Ransom

saw a strange heraldically coloured tree loaded with yellow fruits and silver leaves. Round the base of the indigo stem was coiled a small dragon covered with scales of red gold. He recognised the garden of the Hesperides at once.¹⁶

It is a guardian, not a hoarder, and its gold is uncoinable. It fears no theft and is free to leave the tree to eat, or drink, or nudge Ransom to pat its head.

Lewis apparently considered using dragons as symbols of goodness, in the aspect of terrifying godhood, but in both cases he decided against it. In Dymer the Brute is described in terms that sound as if it is a dragon of some kind -- "The pale and heavy brute, rough-ridged behind, / And full of eyes, clinking in scaly rind"¹⁷ -- and in III We Have Faces the version of the myth of Cupid and Psyche given refers to her as taken by a dragon. Within the body of the story, however, the Shadow-Brute is never described specifically. Lewis may have decided against dragon-gods partly because of the Satanic association, but the symbol of shadowiness is so important in both Brutes that using so specific a monster as a dragon would have been inappropriate in any case.

Tolkien, then, and (in a lesser degree) Lewis were important in bringing the non-comically evil side of dragon nature back into use. Both made use of sympathetic aspects of dragon nature as well, but the majority of their dragons were evil, including among them the best known of their dragons, Tolkien's Smaug.

Other writers then proceeded to create memorable evil dragons, as in John Gardner's Grendel, Ursula K. LeGuin's The Beginning Place and the Earthsea books (Earthsea dragons, however, are amoral rather than immoral, creatures of elemental nature, not of darkness), or Andre Norton's Dragon Magic. Good or comic dragons also continue popular, rounding out the complexity of values proper to dragon myth. Some examples are My Father's Dragon (and the sequels) by Ruth Stiles Gannet, Poo-Poo and the Dragons by C.S. Forester, The Dragon and the George by Gordon Dickson, the smithing dragons of The Swordsmith by Eleanor Amason, Smarasderag in Peregrine: Secundus by Avram Davidson, or the trained dragons of the Fern books by Anne McCaffrey or of Dragon's Blood by Jane Yolen.

Footnotes

¹ MacDonald included a dragon in Phantastes, but only briefly: in chapter 23 a paragraph is given to the description of the body of a dragon slain by the knight. In Lilith, with its stress on the redeemability of all, the word "dragon" is avoided in the description of worm-like and snake-like large monsters buried in "the bad burrow" (chapter 10; also chapter 40).

- 2 Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," in *Tree and Leaf* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 40; originally published in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, 1947.
- 3 Tolkien, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics* (Folcroft, PA: Arden Library, 1980), pp. 21-22; originally published 1936.
- 4 Joseph L. Fontenrose, *Python, A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 491-492; see also pp. 469-474 for discussion of the interchangeability of hero and dragon.
- 5 Stephen Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy* (Bloomington, IN, and London: Indiana University Press, 1979), pp. 79-91.
- 6 Lewis Carroll, *A Tangled Tale* (NY: Dover, 1958), p. 6 ("Knot II. Eligible Apartments"); originally published 1885.
- 7 *The Complete Grimms Fairy Tales*, translated by Margaret Hunt, revised by James Stern, with introduction by Padraic Colum and commentary by Joseph Campbell (NY: Pantheon, 1944).
- 8 Andrew Lang, *The Green Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, Green, 1892), pp. x-xi. It is interesting to note in this volume "The Enchanted Ring," translated from Fénelon, a story in which a ring with the power to make the wearer invisible is given back to the fairies by the hero, as too dangerously powerful for mortal use. Another ring conferring invisibility is found in "The Dragon of the North," an Estonian story in *The Yellow Fairy Book*; King Solomon's ring is given the hero by a witch-maiden, and she takes it away from him after he has slain the dragon (he is also aided by a good magician).
- 9 Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954), p. 283 ("The Council of Elrond").
- 10 Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 247 ("Not at Home"); originally published 1937.
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