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Abstract

Considers Sayers as the Inklings-related author who best articulates the theme of man as sub-creator. Finds this theme manifest in the Lord Peter Wimsey novels—the criminal plotting the crime and the detective re-creating it are both practicing sub-creativity—as well as more explicitly in her religious plays. Also discusses the themes of academic and intellectual honesty essential to the novel *Gaudy Night*.

Keywords

Sayers, Dorothy L. Lord Peter Wimsey novels; Sayers, Dorothy L. Plays; Sub-creation in Dorothy L. Sayers

An Introductory Paper On DOROTHY SAYERS

by Christe Ann Whitaker

Everybody knows who the Big Three are. When a Mythopoeic is trying to explain the Society to an outsider, he almost invariably begins with "Well, we read these three authors, Tolkien, Lewis and Williams, who were all part of a literary movement at Oxford during the War. They wrote theological fantasy. . . ." Which is all to the good, since that is the primary purpose of the society. What many people don't realize is that the Oxford Christians, otherwise known as the Inklings, did not limit their membership to the Big Three. There were other members over the years who shared with this core group the conviction that subcreation is the primary purpose of man, the act in which he becomes most God-like. Among them was Dorothy Leigh Sayers Fleming.

Dorothy Sayers wrote no fantasy. To most people she is simply the author of detective fiction, the creator of the inimitable Lord Peter Wimsey. To a smaller group she is known for her translations of the *Song of Roland* and the *Divine Comedy*, and her series of scholarly papers on Dante. And, unfortunately, to an even smaller group she is the author of outspoken articles on a wide number of controversial subjects, including the doctrine of Christian theology.

She is important to the genre of mythopoeic literature not only because she was a close friend of Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis, not only because she wrote Christian theology, and a number of neo-medievalist religious dramas, but precisely because she saw herself and all authors, and in their own fields, all men, as creative beings, and perhaps because, of all the Inklings, she defined the act of subcreation in literature the most explicitly.

Dorothy Sayers was born in Oxford in 1893, and moved to her father's new parish in East Anglia when she was four. The town where she grew up, Bluntisham-cum-Earish, lies on one of the great drainage ditches of that area, not far from Duke's Denver. She graduated from Mary Somerfield College at Oxford with First Class Honors in Medieval Literature in 1915. She then taught German for several years, and published two books of poetry, *Opus I* and *Catholic Tales*. She worked in London at an advertising agency while she wrote the first Lord Peter novel, which was published in 1923. With the appearance of *Whose Body?* she quit her job and began writing full time. By 1936 there were ten Lord Peter novels, and three collections of short stories, some of which concerned her other detective hero, Montague Egg. In 1936 there also appeared on the London stage a Lord Peter play, a collaboration with Muriel St. Claire Byrne, which eventually became the novel *Busman's Honeymoon*. A year later the play *The Zeal of Thy House*, was produced at the Canterbury festival.

The play marks the dividing line between the two halves of Dorothy Sayers' career. It is the first work whose prime purpose was to demonstrate a doctrinal point of the Christian faith. It was partly the reaction to her play that caused Miss Sayers to turn completely from a highly successful career as a detective novelist to the writing of Christian theology. This eventually brought her back into the world of Oxford, and into the Inklings. While Charles Williams expressed the mystical experience of the Christian, and C. S. Lewis the more practical aspects of the Christian life, Dorothy Sayers became aware of the loss of drama about the central figure of the faith. She wrote articles in *Punch* and *The Spectator*, attacking the Church for watering down the creeds and making Christ palatable. She presented to the British radio audience

twelve plays concerning the life of Jesus of Nazareth, plays in which the Humanity of Christ was stressed. Then she turned back into the academic world, and began the translation of the *Divine Comedy*. When she died suddenly in 1957, the London Times Obituary stated that she at least was one person whom "sudden death would not find unprepared or afraid," that "through her life and works there ran a central unity. . . ." This was the theme of the Christian Creator. In "Problem Picture," the last article in the book *The Mind of the Maker*, she wrote:

I know it is no accident that *Gaudy Night*, coming towards the end of a long development in detective fiction, should be a manifestation of precisely the same theme as the play *The Zeal of Thy House*, which followed it and was the first of a series of creatures embodying a Christian theology. They are variations upon a hymn to the Master Maker; and now, after nearly twenty years, I can hear in *Whose Body?* the notes of that tune sounding unmistakably under the tripping melody of a very different descant. . . .²

Whose Body is, I suppose, a fairly typical murder mystery. It begins with an unidentified corpse, deposited one night in an unsuspecting contractor's bathtub. There are the succession of clues, some false, which lead to false solutions; there is the error of the criminal which eventually leads to the correct solution. Lord Peter is given a certain character and a set of eccentricities; except at one point he does not yet stand out as a separate developing individual, but remains in the class of Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, who exist solely for the sake of solving the mystery. That one point is Lord Peter's collapse when he knows the solution but does not yet have proof. He recognizes his responsibility to the truth, but shrinks from delivering a man he knows and respects to the hangman.

Where, then, does the theme of the Master Maker come into this detective story?

The first manifestation is a fairly obvious one, in the creation of the crime itself. This plays a less direct theological role in most detective novels, including Miss Sayers' later works, but here it is of primary importance. The murderer's purpose is not merely to murder and get away with it, but to create the perfect crime--to create a work of art. In his confession, he writes:

I will not hesitate to assert that a perfectly sane man, not intimidated by religious or other delusions, could always render himself perfectly secure from detection, provided, that is, that the crime were sufficiently premeditated and that he were not pressed for time or thrown out in his calculations by purely fortuitous coincidence. You know as well as I do, how far I have made this assertion good in practice. . . .

If all had turned out as I had planned, I should have deposited a sealed account of my experiment with the Bank of England, instructing my executors to publish it after my death. Now that accident has spoiled the completeness of my demonstration, I entrust the account to you, with the request that you will make it known among scientific men, in justice to my professional reputation.³

This attempt at perfection oversteps the boundary between the Creator and created being. The criminal's pride in his own creation leads him to make the fatal error of assuming that no one would see the connection between two see-

mingly separate incidents; in underestimating other men he seals his own doom. In the supreme pride that will not let itself be ridiculed by those "lesser" men, he tries to commit suicide, leaving behind his confession to show the world his genius. This is corruption of the creative effort, both in its destructive intent and in its egotistical self-satisfaction, and it cannot, for those very reasons, succeed in achieving its goals.

The second manifestation of creative effort is Lord Peter's reconstruction of the crime. In the overall view it is more consistent with the subcreator position of man. Its intent is constructive in that Peter would remove a murderer from society, but Peter's motives are not purely altruistic. He generally gets involved in an investigation because his own curiosity will not let him rest until he is intellectually satisfied with the answer. This can precipitate tragedy. In *Unnatural Death*, Peter's actions frighten an otherwise "safe" criminal into committing two more murders and attempting three others. In the end, when she is caught, the girl commits suicide. Peter's sense of responsibility troubles him; he feels that he should take the blame for the deaths, since his meddling indirectly caused them. He seeks out the village priest:

"Ought I to have left it alone?"

"I see. That is very difficult. Terrible, too, for you. You feel responsible."

"Yes."

"You yourself are not serving a private vengeance?"

"Oh, no. Nothing really to do with me. Started in like a fool to help somebody who'd got into trouble about the thing through having suspicions himself. And my beastly interference started the crimes all over again."

"I shouldn't be too troubled. Probably the murderer's own guilty fears would have led him into fresh crimes without your interference."

"That's true."

"My advice to you is to do what you think is right, according to the laws which we have been brought up to respect. Leave the consequences to God. And try to think charitably, even of wicked people. You know what I mean. Bring the offender to justice, but remember that if we all got justice, you and I wouldn't escape either."⁴

For Peter, the responsibility at times becomes too much, and he collapses into delirium and shell-shock, or at the end of a case goes tearing off to Europe to forget. But as long as there is truth to be found, he remains to find it. He has a personal commitment to his own intellectual honesty and accepts his responsibility to society in general; these hold him to the hunt regardless of the cost to himself.

The third manifestation of creative effort is the author's own in creating a world and its characters. Miss Sayers is not mythopoeic in one sense: she does not create worlds--or even myths--like Narnia or Middle Earth. Nor is there the sense of Otherworld that is in Williams' books: there are no Powers, no Solomon stones, no doppelgängers. There are instead, the worlds Dorothy Sayers knew well: London between the wars; Duke's Denver, which she made Lord Peter's ancestral home; the fens of East Anglia, where the Nine Tailors ring out over the flood; and the spires of an Oxford that houses Shrewsbury College in *Gaudy Night*. Within the historical and social structure that already existed, Lord Peter moves with ever increasing involvement and personal growth.

In her essay "Gaudy Night," Miss Sayers states that towards the end of Peter's first decade of literary existence, she was determined to marry him off and close his detective career. She found it impossible. Lord Peter had finally become popular, and her books were beginning to sell widely. Keeping Lord Peter posed a major problem, however. She would have to develop his character to make

him completely human. His love-interest was introduced, but she was hardly the most lovable woman to find Peter's interest. Harriet Vane had no obviously attractive attributes other than a deep speaking voice. She is neither beautiful nor graceful--two qualities which Peter had come to expect in his women. She has moreover had a devastating experience which has left her bitter against Lord Peter in particular. In her first appearance, Harriet is on trial for the murder of her ex-lover, and Lord Peter, having suddenly found and fallen in love with an honest woman, becomes desperate in his attempts to find the real murderer. Harriet will not marry Peter out of gratitude; and the two spend the next five years (and three novels) working out their relationship to a position of equality on both sides. The prime vehicle for this is the novel *Gaudy Night*, the most complex of all the Lord Peter novels. It has already been analyzed elsewhere⁵ and I wish to talk about it only to emphasize another aspect--or habit, if you will--which runs consistently through all of Dorothy Sayers' works. That is the practice of the scholarly mind, which had hitherto shown itself in Lord Peter's constant pre-occupation with quotations, and in the deep-rooted philosophy of intellectual honesty which drives Peter through each case to its solution.

In *Gaudy Night* there are three major problems: the abstract problem of the mystery, the personal problem between Lord Peter and Harriet, and the universal problem of academic honesty. The three are presented in terms of each other, and while the first can be completely solved (that is, there exists only one set of facts which are true), the second problem involves a choice of answers and the third cannot be resolved at all, except on the personal level of each character and each reader. Harriet's problem, once she accepts the new relationship between herself and Peter is to choose between the academic world of Oxford, the City of the Mind, and the emotional and intellectual world of London and Lord Peter. She seeks security, and chooses London only when she realizes that the security of Oxford is an illusion and that the ideal security of the scholar from emotional attack can never be achieved. Peter has a place in the academic world, for he stands "planted placidly in the middle of the High, as though he had grown there from the beginning,"⁶ but Peter realizes the illusion for what it is:

"God! how I loathe haste and violence and all that ghastly, slippery cleverness. Unsound, unscholarly, insincere--nothing but propaganda and special pleading and 'what do we get out of this?' No time, no peace, no silence; nothing but conferences and newspapers and public speeches till one can't hear one's self think... If only one could root one's self in here among the grass and stones and do something worth doing, even if it was only restoring a lost breathing for the love of the job and nothing else."

"But Peter, you're saying exactly what I've been feeling all this time. But can it be done?"

"No; it can't be done. Though there are moments when one comes back and thinks it might."⁷

Honesty requires that Peter show Harriet the solution to the mystery despite the fact that the truth may drive her away. But he cannot accept her on any other terms. He wants no security, only a kind of tense balance in his life, and his reason for wanting Harriet is her "devastating talent for keeping to the point and speaking the truth."⁸ Harriet's own concession to her honesty is to admit that she does love Peter, and to leave the City of the Mind for the more demanding and rewarding life of the City of London.

The final abstract problem deals with the price one must pay for academic honesty in a world where pure academics has no immediate market value. The criminal of the story is a woman whose husband has lost his doctorate when he was discovered cheating on his thesis. The loss cost him any hope of a position in an academic institution; despair eventually drove him to suicide. The woman

sought to revenge her husband on the particular professor who had discovered the cheating, and finally turns her hatred against the whole academic world of Shrewsbury College. She attacks the women students, her hatred towards them intensified by her own conviction that women should be in the home serving men, not out in the world taking their jobs away from them, or wasting their time on old books. Her accusation against women scholars is answered when Harriet insists that each person should do his own job, regardless of the glory, social justification or gain involved. The justification of academic honesty in the face of resultant poverty and death is more complicated. Peter accepts the necessity for honesty, because he sees it as a part of his own unified outlook on life. He recognizes, as few people do, that such a principle--indeed, any such principle--eventually kills, because it eventually crosses the path of someone who doesn't share it. Yet without principles, the world would be completely chaotic. Hence the necessity for honesty, and the inevitable downfall of those too weak to survive. The situation can be mitigated only if the strong are willing to risk their own profit and care for those who fail.

Scholarship does not always arise as a major issue in her works, but it is an integral part of all Dorothy Sayers wrote. Lord Peter quotes constantly, and always to the point, in Medieval Latin as well as the modern European languages, until Harriet says he should be set free to turn phrases for a living. Accuracy in small details shows itself in Miss Sayers' execution of her craft as well as in her characters' idiosyncrasies. When Peter makes a mistake about the location of a manuscript, she gravely footnotes the page with the correct location. In writing *Nine Tailors*, the detective novel structured on the art of change-ringing, she spent two years researching the exact methods until she could write changes herself. In the entire book, the experts of campanology could find only three slight errors.

Gaudy Night marks the end of the serious Lord Peter epoch. In her next work Dorothy Sayers turned from detective stories, took the theme of the Master Maker and used it for the basis of the play *The Zeal of Thy House*. The play concerns the twelfth-century architect William of Sens, who rebuilt the Cathedral Choir at Canterbury. William's motives were only to build the best building he could, not necessarily to build it to the glory of God. He cheated to get the proper materials, and made love to raise the necessary funds. This he was forgiven, so long as his joy was to create:

Behold, he prayeth; not with the lips alone,
But with the hand and with the cunning brain,
Men worship the Eternal Architect.
So, when the mouth is dumb, the work shall speak
And save the workman.
..... to labor is to pray.

8

But William eventually saw himself as co-equal with God:

We are the master-craftsmen, God and I--
We understand one another....
O but in making man
God overreached himself and gave away
His Godhead. He must depend on man
For what man's brain, creative and divine
Can give Him. Man stands equal with Him now.

9

William is brought to realize his true position only after he is crippled and unable to complete the work himself.

Creation is defined in the archangel Michael's speech as a reflection of the Triple Personality of God:

For every work of creation is threefold, an earthly trinity to match the heavenly.

First, there is the Creative Idea, passionless, timeless, beholding the whole work complete at once, the end in the beginning: and this is the image of the Father.

Second there is the Creative Energy begotten of that idea, working in time from the beginning to the end, with sweat and passion, being incarnate in the bonds of matter: and this is the image of the Word.

Third, there is the Creative Power, the meaning of the work and its response in the lively soul: and this is the image of the indwelling Spirit.

And these three are one, each equally in itself the whole work, wherof none can exist without the other: and this is the image of the Trinity.¹⁰

This was a central concept of the faith, expressed in its Creeds, and the play was meant to show the reality of the Creative Energy, the expression of the Idea in the Incarnation of Christ.

The reaction to the play startled Dorothy Sayers. It wasn't that the reviews were bad, it was the simply overwhelming consensus of opinion that the dogmas expressed were "astonishing and revolutionary novelties, imported into the Faith by the feverish imagination of a playwright."

¹¹ Miss Sayers protested that she had imported nothing, but merely let the drama of the dogma speak for itself, and she discovered that to most people there could be no drama, that she must have invented it. The Christian religion in the popular mind could never be anything but unutterably dull, and in her opinion, the blame for this misconception lay in the Church:

So that is the outline of the official story, --the tale of the time when God was the underdog and got beaten, when He submitted to the conditions He had laid down and became a man like the men He had made, and the men He had made broke him and killed Him. This is the dogma we find so dull--this terrifying drama of which God is the victim and the hero.

If this is dull, then what, in Heaven's name, is worthy to be called exciting? The people who hanged Christ never, to do them justice, accused Him of being a bore--on the contrary; they thought Him too dynamic to be safe. It has been left for later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround Him with an atmosphere of tedium. We have very efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified Him "meek and mild," and recommended Him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies. To those who knew Him, however, He in no way suggested a milk-and-water person; they objected to Him as a dangerous firebrand.¹²

But to many people, Jesus Christ remained dull, and part of the reason was that no one, not even Christians, considered that Christ was real in the Historical sense. He was mystical, and they believed in Him, but they insisted that one must judge Him by different standards:

One used a particular tone of voice in speaking of Him, and He dressed neither like Bible (characters) or classics--He dressed like Jesus, in a fashion closely imitated (down to the halo) by His disciples.¹³

And as for the Bible itself, it had after all, been written by "Bible" authors, not by real authors. The Bible required the techniques of Higher Criticism, which was then in its destructive stage, and the result was a nonsensical analysis which could never have happened to modern works written by real people. Dorothy Sayers, along with G.K. Chesterton and Monsignor Knox, applied those techniques to the Sherlock Holmes canon, with, as she says, "the aim of showing that, by those methods, one could disintegrate a modern classic as speciously as a certain school of critics have endeavored to disintegrate the Bible."¹⁴ The problem of Christ's historical reality was not solved by protests and satire; there still remained the attempt to present it as the dogma of the Church in a non-dull way.

The theatre, with good reason, fostered the concept of the unreal Christ. It was against the law to portray any figure of the Divine on the stage. Consequently, Miss Sayers wrote,

the Humanity is never really there--it is always just coming on or just going off, or being a light or a shadow or a voice in the wings. If our modern theatre had anything like the freedom of Oberammergau or the medieval stage, I believe one could find no better road to a realistic theology than that of coaching an intelligent actor to play the Leading Part in the world's drama.¹⁵

The feeling of any religious play was ruined from the beginning by the consistent approach that the actors must be cautioned to play it straight, because the consistent philosophy was that it wasn't straight, wasn't real.

In 1942, the BBC radio decided to give Dorothy Sayers a chance to do the writing and coaching of a series of radio plays about the life of Jesus Christ. The plays were opposed by some people on the grounds that all representations of the Christ on stage were "intrinsically wicked," a notion fostered by the aforementioned law. They were misunderstood even by those who supported them. As an author, not of symbolic theology, but of history, Dorothy Sayers felt the second reaction was worse than the first:

In writing a play on this particular subject, the dramatist must begin by ridding himself of all edificatory and theological intentions. He must set out, not to instruct, but to show forth; not to point to a moral but to tell a story; not to produce a Divinity Lesson with illustrations in dialogue, but to write a good piece of theatre. It was assumed by many pious persons who approved the project that my object in writing The Man Born to Be King was "to do good"--and indeed the same assumption was also made by impious persons who feared lest it might "do good" in the Christian sense, as well as by pious but disapproving persons who only thought it could do harm. But that was in fact not my object at all, though it was quite properly the object of those who commissioned the plays in the first place. My object was to tell that story to the best of my ability, within the medium at my disposal--in short, to make as good a work of art as I could. For a work of art that is not good and true in art is not good or true in any other respect, and is useless for any purpose whatsoever, even for edification--because it is a lie, and the devil is the father of all such.¹⁶

The author, whether engaged in the propagation of Christianity or the entertainment of the mystery-reading public is primarily a maker, and to fail in making to the best of one's talent is to prostitute both the talent and the subject. The work itself is true, because the subject is an honest creation--a reflection of historical reality, portrayed according to the records of the time. The theology of a sentimental, or a pure mystical or milk-and-water Christ would not stand up to the test of drama:

You might write an anti-Christian tract making Him out to be weak-minded and stupid; you might even write a theological treatise of the pre-destinarian sort making Him out to be beyond morality; but there is no means whatever by which you could combine either of these theories with the rest of His words and deeds and make a play of them. The glaring inconsistencies in character would wreck the show; no honest dramatist could write such a part; no actor could play it; no intelligent audience could accept it. That is what I mean by saying that a dramatic handling is a stern test of theology, and the dramatist must tackle the material from his own end of the job.¹⁷

The plays themselves reflect the "hymn to the Master Maker." The dedicating poem is a reconciliation between Architect, Craftsman and Stone, each of whom vies for the most important position, and each of whom wisely relinquishes it to the One Who is all three. There are references to God the Maker throughout, as when Lazarus, returned from the grave, explains the afterlife in these words:

This life is like the weaving at the back of the loom. All you see is the crossing of the threads. In that life you go around in the front and see the wonder of the pattern. . . . Beautiful and terrible. And--how can I tell you? It is familiar. You have known it from all eternity. For He that made it is the form of all things, Himself both the weaver and the loom.¹⁸

The creative effort is the truest effort because it is the image of God, the image in which man was created to resemble God. In The Mind of the Maker, Dorothy Sayers sums the philosophy which she has been developing and practicing throughout her works. God is the Master Maker, the disembodied Spirit beyond our physical reality.

Man, very obviously, is not a being of this kind (spirit, without parts or passion), his body, parts and passions are all too conspicuous in his make-up. How then can he be said to resemble God? . . . It is observable that in the passage leading up to the statement about man [the author of Genesis] has given no detailed information about God. Looking at man, he sees in him something essentially divine, but when we turn back to see what he says about the original on which the "image" of God was modeled, we find only the single assertion--"He created." The characteristic common to God and man is apparently that: the desire and the ability to make things.¹⁹

We hear the echoes of this elsewhere: "We make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made; and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of a Maker."²⁰

The Mind of the Maker is a book about the "metaphors about God," a definition of the analogy between God and the artist in man. It is one of those books which are impossible to talk about without quoting it extensively, so I will make short what could only be an inadequate summary at best. The main point is that the craft of writing is the closest example we have of how God works. Within the creation itself, the characters move of their own volition--and anyone who has tried to write fiction knows this by experience, for there are always some characters who do not perform as you would like them to, and to make them do your own will is to destroy their own truth. In so far as the author allows them freedom, they develop their existence without destroying the previous existence of other men and their achievements. The world of imagination is infinite, as is God's creative ability, because it creates out of nothing, at the expense of nothing.

The last works of Dorothy Sayers may be her greatest work of scholarship and expression of the created world. For ten years she labored to translate the masterpiece of the medieval model of the universe, the Divine Comedy, into terza rima English verse. The effort is marred by the unavoidable fact that English does not lend itself to this verse form, but the scholarship behind the effort reveals itself in a wealth of notes and commentary. The Paradiso was left unfinished at the time of her death, and was afterwards completed by Barbara Reynolds.

Dorothy Sayers did not confine herself to detective novels, Dante and Christian theology. She wrote articles and speeches on every topic that interested her--on the history of detective fiction, the place of woman in the modern world--and in the fabric of the Maker's pattern--as well as articles on the failure of the Fen Drainage Boards, the success of Oxford, children's literature and better ways of

teaching Latin. Everything she wrote was permeated with humor, for no matter what the subject, if it was worth writing about at all, it was worth the effort to write with humor as well as scholarship, wit as well as honesty and understanding. The English language was a tool but it was also a creation, and deserved the respect and proper manipulation due all works of art. In the end, she wrote her own epitaph:

The artist knows, though the knowledge may not always stand in the forefront of his consciousness. At the day's end or the year's end he may tell himself: the work is done. But he knows in his heart that it is not, and the passion of making will seize him again the following day and drive him to construct a fresh world. And though he may imagine for the moment that this fresh world is wholly unconnected with the world he has just finished, yet, if he looks back along the sequence of his creatures, he will find that each was in some way the outcome and fulfillment of the rest--that all his worlds belong to the one universe that is the image of his own idea.²¹

FOOTNOTES

1. London Times, Dec. 19, 1957, p. 10.
2. Dorothy Sayers, The Mind of the Maker (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941), p. 207.
3. Dorothy Sayers, Whose Body, in Three for Lord Peter Wimsey, (New York: Harper & Row, 1940), p. 126.
4. Dorothy Sayers, Unnatural Death, in Three for Lord Peter Wimsey, p. 490.
5. In "Gaudy Night" by Dorothy Sayers, printed in Titles to Fame, edited by Denys K. Roberts, (London, 1937), in The Mind of the Maker, and in Charles Morman's The Precincts of Felicity, (Gainesville, FL.: University of Florida Press, 1966).
6. Dorothy Sayers, Gaudy Night, (New York: Avon Books, 1970), p. 232.
7. Gaudy Night, p. 236.
8. Dorothy Sayers, The Zeal of Thy House, p. 38, quoted in The Precincts of Felicity.
9. Zeal, p. 67.
10. Zeal, p. 37.
11. Dorothy Sayers, "The Dogma is the Drama," reprinted in Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 23.
12. Dorothy Sayers, "The Greatest Drama Ever Staged," reprinted in Christian Letters, p. 13.
13. Dorothy Sayers, "A Vote of Thanks to Cyrus," reprinted in Christian Letters, p. 50.
14. Dorothy Sayers, Unpopular Opinions, quoted in Christian Letters, p. 55.
15. Dorothy Sayers, Unpopular Opinions, (London, 1937) p. 21.
16. Dorothy Sayers, The Man Born to Be King, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 3.
17. Man Born, p. 15.
18. Man Born, p. 204.
19. Mind of the Maker, p. 22
20. J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," in The Tolkien Reader, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), p. 55.
21. Mind of the Maker, p. 207.

I would also like to thank Mary Shideler, who made a great deal of material available to me.

(Continued from page 39)

the ninth time around she screamed so that it pierced his ears and rang in his skull, and she brought forth a man-child.

(AS, pp. 12-13)

The second sentence of this passage is unaltered in the revised edition, but the first sentence suffers a strange shortening:

Thereafter he walked nine times widdershins about her where she squatted, singing a song no human throat could have formed.

(BB, p. 9)

I must say that I miss the reference to the "certain beings" who were singing and "shambling around a strangely carved monolith, to bring forth the fruits of a quaking steamy world." Possibly Anderson omitted them because he felt they were distracting from the essential point of Imric's making the changeling. Possibly he felt this was a needless additional mythology. I do not think of any other artistic reason for the omission. But I regret the omission: it suggested the "dark backward and abysm of time" (quoted by C. S. Lewis from somewhere in Surprised by Joy (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955), p. 21). If the reason for the omission was because it slowed down or distracted the reader in the paragraph, perhaps the cause for this effect was that it is both definite and indefinite at the same time. Who are these strange beings, singing in a non-human way, who dance around a stone and bring forth vegetation? I picture them as the Stone Age gods, the half human/half animal forms painted on cave walls by Paleolithic man. But I may be wrong. Even if I am right, perhaps the fact that I ask myself such a question about them may indicate that Anderson was right in omitting the passage. Perhaps it needed either more explanation or complete omission. But I regret it.

The other passage goes the other way, appearing only in the second version. I could have included it as an example of Anderson picturing a scene more clearly, but I reserved it for this conclusion of my paper, for it also reflects the prehistory of the book's milieu. The 1954 version reads:

The elves were driving into Valland with the trolls retreating before them---a retreat that became a rout and finally, caught against the sea, a butchery.

(AS, p. 236)

But in 1971 Anderson had revised the sentence to read:

The elves were thrusting into Valland with the trolls in retreat before them... a retreat that became a rout and finally, caught against the sea under the cromlechs and menhirs of the Old Folk, a slaughter.

(BB, p. 178)

Certainly the added details are an improvement for the reader in his visualizing of the scene. But where the obvious details to be added were a description of the beach--sand or pebbles or shingles--Anderson's addition not only creates a scene but also adds to the richness of the novel's historical mythopoeics.

I began this paper with a parable of maybe and perhaps, but as it developed, I entered into a number of conjectures about the author's growth in maturity in making certain revisions (sometimes with loss of lyric intensity). A critic's guessing about the author's state of mind is always dangerous, but in this particular case Anderson invited it in his preface to the revised edition by calling his younger self more "headlong, ... prolix, and ... savage" in his writing (BB, p. xv). At any rate, leaving the author out of it, I think I have suggested that the changes are not all simplifications of style but often show a greater awareness of the precise scene, that some are plot improvements, and that some show a greater psychological awareness in characterization. I do not recommend the second edition without reservations--I miss some of the prolix adjectives and some of the intensity of the first--but the majority of changes are improvements. The reforging of The Broken Sword was done with good craft.