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Ye Ink Stand

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Michael H. Levy

Alpajpuri .

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Mythcon 51: A VIRTUAL “HALFLING” MYTHCON

July 31 - August 1, 2021 (Saturday and Sunday)

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Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

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Abstract

Letters from fans in *Mythril* #6

Keywords

Mythril; Mythopoeic; Letters



Ruth Berman
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I liked the drawing you put with my poem in Mythril--and, of course, got much pleasure out of seeing my very own words in print.

Trading Mythril for No //one of her two 'zines--see notices/--well, I'd be happy to, but it may be unfair to you, as M costs more than N. As I look over (the back issues I have on hand), it occurs to me that I publish a fairly large amount of material likely to interest Mythopoeic members. Not surprising, seeing I share Mic interests, but it hadn't occurred to me before. Anyhow...Yes, I'm still doing T-negative. (Maybe you'd like me to add a trade for it to the trade for M? that'd make it about even.)

I just had a fantasy story published, "The Blood Thereof," in the January Jewish Frontier. Not a myth type story--a comic vampire story. In current projects...

just finished typing a long short story (c. 10,000 words) of what might be called sword and sorcery, although I guess it really isn't. (No sex, for one thing.) (What I hope is that Ferman will consider it an F&SF story!) It's more a juxtaposition of universes story.

Are you familiar at all with the fan-nish world of Coventry? It was created by several fans--Paul Stanbery, David McDaniel, Bruce Relz, etc.--some years back, and was used as the setting of a lot of fantasy-adventure stories. It eventually broke up in much bitterness, because of arguments to the effect that it was an unhealthy wish-fulfilment set-up, combined with disagreements among the creators over where its history should go next. Anyhow, this story is based on a Coventry story I wrote at the time.

//Wish I were familiar with Coventry. Anybody care to revive it? And what are the sub-universe Rules and Regs, if any? hope the new story clicks for you. The argument seems to have been over whether the Quest Hero/ine should have it easy or rough. Can see that debate between Jung, Aristotle, Wagner, Plato and Marx. (Jos. Campbell as moderator).//

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Concerning Mythril 2,1

You always seem upset about lack of artwork but to my way of thinking what art you do have is often superior. In this issue the cover illustration is easily of prof. caliber. Pages 7, 8, 9 & 15 are also excellent. Only Amra, of the amateur fantasy magazines, surpasses you, but then half of their stuff is done by fulltime pros.

I have one major gripe to make concer-

ning the contents of Mythril and particularly this last issue. I am disturbed by the overwhelming predominance of "whimsy" in recent stories. Now I have nothing against lighthearted fairy tales, I enjoy them, especially when they're as excellent as Tatiana Szeftel's "Juniper Hill" or your own "Pa-Mun-Ki in the Happy Country" but still I feel a better balance could be maintained. Tolkien, Lewis and especially Williams have a very dark side to their writings, and for every happy fairy tale there is a horror story of equal literary worth. (Actually this is all an under-handed argument in favor of my own writing, which is usually best known for pessimism, lack of humor and ugliness.)

In any case I thought Lois Du Lac's The Last Witch by far the best piece in the magazine. I can see why she copywrote (copywrote?) it. There is a darkness and terror to it which works very well. Your own "King Helgi" also seemed more serious in its intent. "Reflections of Sound Waves" was very funny. I still laugh when I think of the last lines.

There were only three pieces which I really disliked, the two untitled things and "Tea, Tao etc." With my luck, I'm probably criticizing the two wealthy Californians who finance your operation, or your best friends or something, and ruining all my chances of attaining fame as a writer, but really I didn't think that they belonged in a magazine as good as yours.

Oh! I have a question which you might know the answer to. Is there any news (recent or otherwise) about the Silmariillion? Perhaps 3 years ago the Tolkien Society at the U of Illinois had a distinguished lecturer (whose name I've forgotten!) who had actually worked with and/or for Tolkien collecting, editing & typing materials for it. The person said that the book was really about done, but that Tolkien insisted on polishing & repolishing it. The lecturer was of the opinion that it would not see print until after Prof. Tolkien's death. Has anything new come up?//Nope.//

Think I'll go finish Asimov's new novel and go to bed.

Sorry to have bored you with such a long letter.

//Enjoyed every word, especially the gripes.//

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...I (attempt to) write fiction myself, and I take an interest in others' efforts. Ned ((Brooks, who in ICITM #2 said Cdth was folding --ed.)) was understandably confused about Carandaith; I wrote my editorial rather ambiguously. I will continue pubbing that fanzine, only the name and content may well change. But it'll be the same entity -- i.e., my main publishing effort (ta-da).

I would certainly be willing to consider submissions of fiction -- and yes, even poetry -- to Cdth, tho I should point out that with the screaming exception of my own dubious efforts I am very strict about what I print in that line. I dislike 99% of the amateur fiction (fantasy & sf) I see, and have read only a couple of amateur poems I've been able to enjoy. A mention in Mythril would be delightful! (I'm mostly interested in articles, esp. on sf themes.)

MRLe



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...I particularly liked "The Winning of Emer," with its mythic richness and suggestions of the rhythms of Irish speech. Somehow I had the notion that MYTHRIL was devoted to fantasy fiction, so I was a bit surprised to see that "Night of the Wolves" (this instalment anyway) had nothing particularly fantastic about it, unless it's the "myth" of the ravening wolf; but it was an entertaining story. I must confess that I couldn't grasp the internal logic of "A Question of Reality," and would like someone to explain it to me. Why was the story set during a theatrical performance? Presumably the protagonist's rejection of immortality on Olympus dooms her "to wander alone, devouring (her) own soul, and avoid the paths of men till (she) die(s)," since that is the author's version of what happened to Bellerophon (as I recall the original myth, Bellerophon was killed after being thrown from Pegasus, as punishment for his hybris). Why is such a penalty called for by the story's terms? Why was she ever offered a place on Olympus anyway? As for the other pieces in the issue, I also enjoyed reading them--but enough. I'm afraid I can't take the time now to comment in any detail, and anything less won't give the authors either constructive criticism or very meaningful praise, since I won't be able to discuss my reasons for my likes and dislikes. The issue is also very attractively illustrated.

...We don't use fiction, but do publish occasional verse; and we very much need illustrations. ORCRIST is basically a scholarly journal, more like MYTHLORE than MYTHRIL, with essays (graceful, readable criticism aimed at a general audience), bibliography, parodies, book reviews, letter column, and the like, on Tolkien and other f&sf authors in literature or any other medium, and with a special interest in medieval influence on any contemporary art-form whether fantasy or not. (To illustrate, ORCRIST 7, which I pray will be printed soon, will feature articles on BEOWULF and THE

HOBBIT, medieval genres parodied in FARMER GILES OF HAM, a translation of a Danish poem on the medieval legend of Valdemar and Tove, Old Norse saga and Poul Anderson's BROKEN SWORD, Malory and T.H. White, the Welsh MABINOGION and Lloyd Alexander's Prydain books, and that sort of thing.)

ORCRIST sells for a dollar a copy; subscriptions are 4 issues for \$3.50. ORCRIST is published on a very irregular schedule: at least once a year, sometimes oftener, depending on when we have enough good material on hand to justify putting out an issue and how fast we can get it out.

Combining ORCRIST with TJ led to all sorts of awkward problems, which is why we stopped the merger even before the TSA (sadly) folded. I'm not keen on the idea of trying it again with MYTHLORE or anything else. Too much of a strain on all concerned.

Actually, CARANDAITH gave up any special Tolkienian orientation some issues ago, so there's really nothing new in that. Paj still counts Tolkien among his interests and may publish an occasional article related thereto; still, I'm sorry the 'zine's not going to do more in this vein. However, we still have MYTHLORE, PARMA ELDALAMBERON, the various Mythopoeic Society conferences with proceedings, ORCRIST, ANDURIL, probably occasional issues of MINAS TIRITH EVENING STAR, RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY and EXTRAPOLATION use Tolkien-related articles occasionally, and such articles sometimes appear in other journals. So there are still a number of independent places where a fan or an academic (or someone who's both!) can submit Tolkienist articles. That ought to keep us healthy for a while. Oh, and I mustn't forget UNICORN, which had a very good article on funeral customs in LOTR in the last issue, and may have other Tolkien-related articles at times. Actually, I don't think Tolkien fandom is badly off. There should be a number of zines or journals available, so as to provide a few different editorial perspectives; but having too many could produce a surfeit of stuff; the present situation seems rather nice, then. ((Having read ORCRIST 6, the special C.S. Lewis issue, I wonder does he mean "nice" or "N.I.C.E."--ed.))

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My copy of Mythril #5 is sitting in my car (in a filling station being worked on), but I have my other copies of Mythril with me and will try to comment on content. I don't feel I can truly comment on poems; other than this...

I rate "The Forging" and Juniper Hill" as equal.//Mythril #1// As for "Juniper Hill" I think it will outlast many of the other pieces...printed and should be considered for book publishing by the Mythopoeic Press, if it continues its present quality. It can be enjoyed by both young and old. "Night of the Wolves" is one of the best pieces, in my opinion, to appear in Mythril. //#3// It is on the same order as "The Conqueror" of the first issue. "Juniper Hill," as always, is charming and enjoyable...with illustrations by Farley and Kirk. "Richard" was our mood piece of the issue and well done. "The Homeless" fit the cover nicely...but might have been better if the author hadn't been limited to a certain length.

"The Winning of Emer" //Mythril #4// belongs in the class of epic, and as such I

have classed it with fiction. It may actually be better than "Juniper Hill," but I don't know enough to be sure. "Death Day Celebration" is on a level with "Richard." It is different from most stories appearing in Mythril, and I don't agree with the religious question it raises: that a person has the right to take his own life when he feels he has outlived his time.

As to our conversation //at a recent Inklings II meet// on the three authors: I stated that Lewis writes on the virtue of Faith, Tolkien on the virtue of Hope, and Williams on the virtue of Charity (Love). This is the reason, I believe, that Lewis so admired the works of Williams.

Lewis, in all the books on the reading list, tries to write about love, but with the exception of the Hrossa in Out of the Silent Planet, all he succeeds in covering is Faith. Faith is an outline for love, but is not love itself. Lewis thus never really succeeds, in my opinion, in showing what Joy was, in any but an abstract way. This, I believe, was why he so loved the works of Williams, which are just about all Love.

Tolkien, on the other hand, writes of Hope, which is a more concrete virtue than Faith. The LoTR theme is hope. Without hope, Tolkien's characters would perish. He succeeds in some of his works, in showing love, but (with the exception of Leaf by Niggle) it plays only a supporting role.

Williams is the author of Charity (Love) of the three authors. A good example of this is Descent into Hell...

Stanhope is used to show what love is when used correctly. The Anstruthers, Pauline and her grandmother, show what love can do when used correctly. Wentworth, on the other hand, shows what happens to a person who abuses and corrupts the virtue of Charity. He is destroyed a little more each time he goes against the virtue, and Williams points out that if at any time he would reverse himself, Charity would save him rather than destroy him.

I still think it would be nice if we could have a panel workshop for this

year's convention. We could publish in Myth-print, if Glen agreed, one or two historical events to be changed //fictionally// to create a different world. //You mean, had Harold won at Hastings, would we be speaking Saxon? or other permutations// We could extend invitations to authors living in California to make up a panel, to discuss creating a secondary world based on this change. Those that stay on could comment on any papers any aspiring author or authoress has to submit on the theme.

//The "What if?" theme is a valid and very productive one in fantasy fiction, and the suggestion might elicit many good responses. But why limit it as to subject? True, you would get more of a standard for comparison, but you could also lose anyone not interested in the particular event or events selected. "What-if"ing usually calls for a working familiarity with the period involved. I'd prefer letting those interested choose their own favorite "slice of history." For any Inklings II panel, we might get Peter Beagle, Poul Anderson possibly, but we won't be going in with WesterCon this year. I'd like to see a panel on "Faery vs. the Dark Side" with Galen Peoples, Tatiana Szeftel, Dave Hulan and Paula Marmor and any others interested. with either Gracia-Fay or Glen moderating. At least, these seem to be the people most interested in the question of fantasy mood, purpose, and style whom I have heard. About your classification, which reminds me of Dave Hulan's assignment of sins to Williams novels, it seems largely to hold up. But Lewis' Till We Have Faces is Love all the way through, the false love of Orual for Psyche, the simple love of the peasant woman for bloody Ungit's stone, the love of the God for both sisters, Psyche and Orual--which abundance of images make it for me, the most impressive of his novels. Agreed, there are no formalized "faiths" in LoTR, and love as between Aragorn and Arwen always goes on offstage. But there is love between Frodo and Sam, love even for Smeagol/Gollum. Hope in the mallorn-seed, in the curing of Theoden and of Faramir, in the Scouring of the Shire--hope gives LoTR much of its spirit. Williams and Love--coinherence, exchange--yes, that seems to describe his novels and his Arthurian poetry.--LR//

The Song of the Stars above Ladywood

for Gracia-Fay Ellwood

Oh when the Mother made the world,
We sang, we sang!
When all was young, when all was fresh,
'Fore 'Ressea was ta'en from West,
Our silver voices blent enmeshed--
The heavens rang!

The Sacred Spirit bears us up,
Sustains us all--
We cirk the Field of Arbol 'round
With tunes which make the spheres resound;
And to our own untiring sound,
No dying fall!

Yet silver trumps shall snarl our song,
Our hymn destroy--
When music shall the sky untune,
The Daughter, golden rose in hand,
Shall then pronounce each single doom,
Of joy, of joy!

by J.R. Christopher

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